



(Philadelphia Skyline Photo: Nolan Borgman)

Public Art and the Identities of Philadelphia and Los Angeles

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(Los Angeles Skyline Photo: CRA/LA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper looks at the relationship between public art and public policy in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Public policy, as a means of regulating the built environment of cities, has a process of implementation that is very different from the process through which art is created. This paper juxtaposes these two cities approaches to public art and public art policy. Through interviews, participant observation, and by being a stakeholder, I curate a dialectic on how public art can enhance the ideals of democracy, community, civic participation, and place-based identity. I lay out three theses, which I explore in a literature review, case studies on Philadelphia and Los Angeles, a synthesis of my case studies, and ultimately apply in 5 policy recommendations.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Dialectical Structure: Topic and Research Question

This paper on public art and identity in Philadelphia and Los Angeles started as a seed in my brain when I read Plato's *Republic*, in which the philosopher kings govern the Kallipolis, which is Plato's imagined ideal city. Plato's *polis* idealized and prioritized public spaces, where public discourse could be held. He believed that exchange of ideas between multiple parties enhances both the idea and the individual because the product of conversation is greater than the sum of its participants. These dialectical exchanges serve as the model for my paper as I aim to incorporate the many interacting ideas that I have encountered through conversations, interviews, and literature. I have refrained from attempting to define art, which is a pursuit worthy of a million dialectics. For Plato, the dialectic was essential in the governance of the city. I wholeheartedly agree, and wondered how cities can be more conducive on the local level to this exchange of ideas outlined in Plato's *Republic*.

The same semester that I read *The Republic*, I saw a lecture by Professor Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris on her book *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation of Public Space*. She talked about how sidewalks have played an important role in hosting pedestrian and civic participation since the days of ancient Greece and Rome. Ever since that lecture I have been acutely aware of even the most overlooked facets of the built environment as catalysts of society, culture, and democracy. We learned in biology class that the shape of the cell determines the function of the cell. I want to look at when and how art fits into the shape of the urban built environment, and use art to address the ways in which the urban built environment determines and encourages behaviors, attitudes, and use.

After reading David Harvey's "Right to the City," where he writes, "the city is man's best attempt to shape his environment to his heart's desire" I started to think of the city scape as a dynamic space—a constantly tailored environment reflective of the cultures and identities using and shaping the space. This can be planned or unplanned. Realizing that the ability to control one's immediate environment requires power (or conversely, neglect), I began to think about how claiming space is empowering; especially when space is limited. Revolutions often seek to reclaim identity from oppressors, often by reclaiming public space. How the space is used is reflective of the empowered identities' desire.

Public art, both planned and unplanned, is not only a topic of conversation, a probe of the dialectic, but it is a manifestation of identity in space. Whether funded by the government, permitted by the government, done in protest of the government or anything in between, controversy can excite in ways that enhance civic participation. Yet, public art does not pique the interests of many people and artists, who either find that it is not challenging enough or of a high enough quality to engage viewers consistently and on the deepest levels, or for any number of reasons, the viewer does not engage the piece and vice versa (Anonymous Interview 15 February 2012). What I have come to learn, however, is that art does not need to be political in order to catalyze political change. People react to public art. Reactions happen in chains. Chain reactions spark movements, and movements shape democracy.

I am a native Philadelphian and as such have logged countless hours of participant observation there. I have done so in a natural and somewhat passive way until the onset of this project. I have seen and engaged pieces and I have walked by others without ever

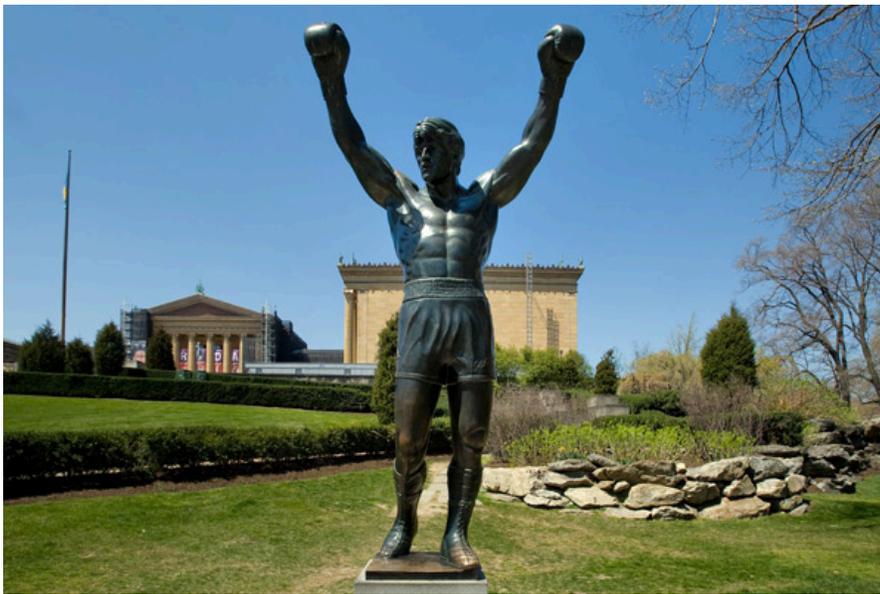
lifting my head. I am unsure whether or not my engagement is linked to the pieces quality or can be attributed to luck, circumstance or mood.

My middle/high school was on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, which has more museums than any other single street in the world. In middle school, I did a project on public art and learned that Philadelphia has the most murals of any city in the world. I also learned of the 1% for art policy, which allocates 1% of construction costs towards public art. Created by Michael Von Moschzisker, then head of city's redevelopment authority, 1% for art was designed in Philadelphia so that "true functionalism in man-made edifices must include artistic expression...Sterility and her handmaiden, monotony, must be banished" (Paradise of Public Art 100). Philadelphia is where my education first intersected with an urban context, and part of that intersection involved public art.

In the winter I would run the parkway from Robert Indiana's *LOVE* sculpture past 19 sculptures including Henry Moore's *Three Way Piece Number 1*, Alexander Calder's *Three Discs, One Lacking*, Dudley Talcott's *Kopernik*, Logan Circle's *Swann Memorial Fountain*, J. Otto Schweizer's *All Wars Memorial to Colored Soldiers*, and meet Thomas Schomberg's *Rocky* statue at the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (FPAA Museum Without Walls Audio Brochure). I would do conditioning on the steps just as Rocky did in the movie. Afterwards, I would bask in the view of the city—a view neither monotonous nor sterile, before retreating to the dank basement for wrestling practice.



Alexander Calder's *Three Discs, One Lacking* (Photo: Museum Without Walls)



Thomas Schomberg's *Rocky* (Photo J. Smith for GPTMC)

I have now lived in Los Angeles for four years, but feel that in spite of my efforts, true participant observation of art has eluded me. As muralist, teacher, organizer and director of Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) Judy Baca explained to me, Los Angeles is an “unapparent city,” full of vibrant culture, class struggle, and sprawl

(Judy Baca Interview 18 November 2011). As John Arroyo writes in reference to Thom Anderson's film *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, "Understanding Los Angeles is a challenge because it is both a physical and a fictional place. No other city in the world comes close to this dichotomy" (Arroyo 53).

At first, as I sought justification to use Los Angeles and Philadelphia as examples, I would write down every urbanism as either a similarity or difference: cities are segregated, have industry, rivers, public transportation systems, bohemian districts, etc. As I have begun to research art in Los Angeles, I have found Philadelphia and Los Angeles to be linked by more than urbanisms, but by their desire to use the arts as a means for social change and to create a unique urban identity. Their efforts face different environments and cultures, are of different ages, and cater to very different physical make-ups (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012).

Living in the Eagle Rock community, home of the massive Eagle Rock Music Festival, has given me the opportunity to observe mass mobilization around the arts. The adjacent neighborhood Highland Park, which surrounds the east/west corridor of York Boulevard, is a predominately Latino community with lots of small businesses, many of which have privately painted murals and signs. The restaurant and bohemian arts culture in Highland Park reflects the largely Mexican-American population, and there is a strong urban and graffiti aesthetic to the art along the corridor. York Boulevard's development has attempted to build on the arts culture that has formed by using the North East Los Angeles (NELA) Arts Walk as a key piece of the "New York Vision Plan" for community improvement. Other improvements to York Boulevard will include building more public spaces such as terraces and pocket parks to better accommodate pedestrian

traffic and mass mobilization. The “New York Vision Plan” is crafted with an understanding that infrastructure tailored towards public use and community discourse is crucial to a successful arts culture.



Street Art on Guerrero’s Produce Market at Avenue 54 and York Blvd
(Photo: Cheryl Johnson)

It was at a Highland Park Heritage Trust Meeting that a community member told me that in order to understand art in Los Angeles, you have to understand the River and the freeways. Other historical accounts of Los Angeles’ art identity cite the Boosters development of Los Angeles’ aesthetic image, which occurred very consciously in the early 20th century, and was followed by the establishment of private arts infrastructure such as the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Getty, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) (Schrank). However, history does not always tell the whole story. These institutions are widely considered inaccessible to most Angelenos, and are far from reaching the public despite their prominence and affordability. This paper will examine the arts and arts-oriented development that exists

in public space only (it does not have to be outdoors.) I will examine public art as an alternative to private art, a response to issues of access, expression of identity, representation and class.

My research question: How does arts-oriented development of the walls, rivers, and transportation infrastructure of Los Angeles and Philadelphia enhance their communities' sense of urban identity, democracy, and civic participation?

This question guided my research, especially as I explored the ways in which public art happens in these cities and whether its process is conducive to enhancing identity, community and democracy. Ultimately, however, I feel that my main findings are better articulated by structuring my paper around three main theses rather than an answer to my research question:

- 1) Art funding should be structured around the message of the piece rather than the use of the piece. Public art does not need to have a use in order to be important or relevant. Art, despite its intangible importance to humanity has been proven to be valuable for society in tangible ways.
- 2) Art catalyzes change in many different ways. This includes but is not limited to its creative process, reactions to art, the art's message (intended or otherwise), and its ability to influence behaviors and attitudes.
- 3) Art operates on many levels and is created through many channels and processes. Channels and processes are the trajectories of a piece's existence from start to presentation to reaction. They should be minimally defined because they are unique in every circumstance. Art is successful when it is not limited to a pre-determined process, allowing for its creation and reactions to

be a candid reflection of place and identity. Government often seeks to define some of the channels and processes of art during the funding and implementation stages; however, as a non-human, utility driven entity, government is ill equipped to define the human value of art and prescribe the channels through which art is created. Art must be challenging, diverse, and multi-faceted in order to be effective on many levels.

In a lecture on Appiah's notions of identity, Occidental Professor Elmer Griffin said: "I want my identities to be dynamic and flexible; and to see a reflection of them in culture" (Professor Griffin Lecture 9 February 2012). Art can reflect identities. It can facilitate and allude to new place-based ideas and place-based identities, which contribute to a strong and unique sense of community. Art activates citizens in democratic ways through its ability to inspire, empower and mobilize people.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

My primary research consists of a mixed-method that is qualitative, analytic, and interpretive. My methods include semi-structured interviews, active stakeholder participation, and participant observation.

Semi-Structured Interviews

This primary research is infused throughout the paper, as the wide discussion of topics is useful commentary during the literature review and has profoundly impacted, inspired and informed my recommendations. I am grateful to those I interviewed for their passion, knowledge and generosity. It is crucial to me that the reading that inspired my questions is able to interact directly with my subjects. Together, secondary and primary research can fill in the holes and create a more complete picture of the massive field of

public art. Because of the wide range of stakeholders I am studying, and the nature of civic participation, I chose not to limit myself with a strict plan. Because I am looking at the culture and landscape of place, themes manifest themselves in very candid ways that I felt more able to capture without a set of predetermined questions. I gathered my sample through snowball sampling, recommendations from friends, family and acquaintances, knowledge of the field, as well as searching for names in books and online. My interview list includes planners, program directors, authors, professors, administrators, artists, and organizers that live and work in Philadelphia or Los Angeles.

My questions are place and context based, and sometimes, in the spirit of the dialectic, I simply asked my interviewees to talk about an experience or a topic. I ask questions that allow me to view the dynamics between individuals, organizations and the literature within the field; understand changes that my subjects would like to see in the field; and view how changes are planned and executed.

Active Stakeholder Participation

During my research period I attended events including the Eagle Rock Music Festival, the NELA Arts Walk on York Boulevard, the kickoff event for the restoration of the Great Wall of Los Angeles at the Tujunga Channel in Burbank, a members meeting of the Highland Park Heritage Trust (HPHT) at Café de Leche, Known Gallery's exhibition "Whitewash" featuring Graffiti artist and illustrator POSE with photojournalist KC Ortiz, and a Mural Ordinance Meeting at the Cactus Gallery. I photographed art as I saw it and have included it throughout this paper along with images I found online.

At the Great Wall kickoff event I walked along the mural, ate garlic fries from a food truck, and wrote a message onto a van that was spray painted to function as a chalkboard.

At the HPHT meeting I spoke with several community members with interest and expertise in the arts and Los Angeles. I came away from that meeting with the names of several people and books that have been seminal to my research.

At the Mural Ordinance Meeting, planner Tanner Blackman explained the mural ordinance being written at City Hall and took questions and input from a room that was full to the brim.

Participant Observation

Since the onset of my research, I have visited many public art sites both intentionally and coincidentally. The places I have visited are discussed throughout the paper, especially in my case studies where I interpret pieces in Philadelphia and Los Angeles through the lenses of their process, urban context, my viewership and how they relate to my theses.

Structure

The core of this paper will be split into a literature review and two case studies: Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Both case studies will examine the arts culture, history, infrastructure, process and stakeholders in each respective city. I will conclude with a discussion of themes and recommendations. Art has always been a fascinating topic and probe of dialogue for me. Thanks to the countless conversations I have had with friends, family, and acquaintances on public art, this paper is at its core a discussion on art and the city.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

Because my aim is to take a holistic approach to the potential for and nature of art in the urban landscape, I have curated the literature I have read into a discussion of common themes. I have included segments from my interviews to give a relevant voice to a body of literature represents a small piece of a massive field. The main goal of my literature review is to prove that public art matters and is a worthy investment for cities. I do so by looking at the value of art and the ways in which public art addresses and enhances themes that are vital to a societies well being such as community, identity, democracy, economy, the built environment, and culture. I am less interested in defining public art than in suggesting that all art that exists in public space reflects our society and plays a role in our daily experience of the themes above.

Does public art matter?

The simple answer, as Heather Keafer points out in her 2001 Temple University Master's Thesis entitled, "Public art and the negotiation of class, culture, and identity in the urban community," requires some backwards thinking: every city in the world allocates funds for public art; therefore, public art must be important. In thinking this way, we not only answer the question of whether art is important, but the question of whether the government should pay for it (Keafer).

Economy

Art and the economy have a mutually beneficial relationship. A strong culture can lead to a strong economy and a strong economy can stimulate the production of cultural capital. Lambert Zuidervaart's *Art in Public* lays out his "social philosophy of the arts" and provides a case for public art in which he asserts that three of the most common

economic questions surrounding public art, 1) Is government funding for the arts better than laissez-faire market competition? 2) Should government money for the arts come with standards and expectations attached? 3) Are artists progressive to social change or a menace to society? are counterproductive questions to public art and arts oriented developmental theory. He makes a case for art, and more broadly, culture, as critical to democracy and vital to civil society, saying that “what we need [is] a robust public sphere and a thriving social economy” (Zuidervaart 12). He points out that government support for the arts goes beyond funding, and includes legislative and regulative measures, which can encourage or discourage the creation, maintenance, and civic dialogue surrounding art.

Artist, Attorney and President of Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs Commission York Chang explains, “Art reflects the economic structures that it is produced within. Some art is a direct function, like an input-output relationship. Other art premises its creativity on transgressing power relationships and from a position of criticality, and that’s the type of art that lends itself to democratic principles in the sense that it’s fulfilling a role that most media doesn’t. It questions our conditions and our times” (York Chang Interview 26 January 2012).

Zuidervaart also points out that formal “Paretian welfare economics” (Zuidervaart 42) assume conditions that are not the reality in which art is made and experienced; the participants are not all the adult individuals with clear cut self interest and rationality found in traditional markets. He takes a liberal economic perspective when he maintains that the two economic roles of government are to correct market inefficiencies and to

counteract inequities, even if they are efficient (Zuidervaart). Whether private or public, economy is always a factor in the arts oriented development of public space.

Murals

One of the most efficient public art markets in the world is Philadelphia's mural market, because the largest piece of the market, the Mural Arts Program, is the largest public art program in the United States (Mural Arts Program). Their popularity, ability to obtain funding, and efficient process have contributed to their success.

Heather Keafer writes about the process that led to the Mural Arts Program putting up a mural of a cross-country skier's trek across the city's snow scape in South Philadelphia's Bella Vista neighborhood. Through interviews and background research, Keafer writes of the emergence, power, popularity, and methodology of the Mural Arts Program. The wall owners and the Mural Arts Program control production, but Keafer argues for more community involvement not just in the content of the mural, but in the process. She concludes that public art should take its direction from the people for whom it is intended, and that "perhaps it is the program's zeal to act as a healing agent for the city that causes people to blindly think that public art is always a good addition to the landscape and make the process go largely unquestioned" (Keafer 54).

In Los Angeles, the 2012 Mural Ordinance questions the lack of distinction between signs and murals, an omission that led to a "moratorium on murals." Since 2002, murals have been:

...Generally banned in the City of Los Angeles and only allowed in specified areas. But, the problem goes back to the current definition of murals, written in 1986, which defines murals as a type of sign. This definition was created to exempt fine art murals from new sign regulations. However, the exemption was challenged legally. In response, the City Council placed "mural signs" under the same general ban as

outdoor advertising, with exceptions for specific plans, sign districts, and development agreements. Over the years, the 2002 ordinance has proven very limiting to the creation of new murals in the City of L.A. (The Mural Ordinance. CPC-2008-2142-CA)

As District 14 Planning Deputy Tricia Robbins explains, the argument was that by allowing murals but not signs, the city was favoring one type of free speech over another, breaching the First Amendment. Los Angeles City Planner Tanner Blackman drafted the ordinance using some of the key facets Portland's 2009 Original Art Murals Program to allow for the creation of new murals on private property with content-neutral, time/place/manner regulations that exist independent of the sign code. Blackman envisions a "wide open" policy for murals, and wrote the policy understanding that today's innovative policy solutions can become tomorrow's policy nightmares. The policy aims to "permit and encourage" Original Art Murals on a content-neutral basis with certain terms and conditions." An attempt to limit outdoor signs and the corporate logos that signs carry led to the free speech debates, ultimately and inadvertently causing a moratorium on murals (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011 8 December 2011 and Tricia Robbins Interview 26 January 2012).

On the other hand, in Philadelphia murals are constantly going up thanks to a union between the city, corporate sponsors, and the non-profit Mural Arts Program, but the process is not "wide open." The murals are easily accessible and highly visible to passersby. The impact murals have on community and community aesthetic is overwhelming. Murals can beautify, but they can also expose a neighborhood's flaws. Both can be good things, actually, because in Philadelphia murals are often put up either during or as a result of community improvement efforts. They can serve as an organizing victory that gives people a sense of their own power.

Blackman, in distinguishing between the different benefits that signs and murals confer, he includes as purposes and benefits of murals:

Improved aesthetics; avenues for social artistic expression; public access to original works of art; community participation in the creation of original works of art; education about the history of communities depicted in original works of art; and a reduction in the incidence of vandalism.

(Sec. 14.1.1 The Mural Ordinance)

Professor and Artist Jason Manley, who has public works in Manhattan Beach and Omaha, Nebraska does not agree with “beautification” or “improved aesthetics” as a defined objective of public art. “An idea can be beautiful, too” he maintains. Manley’s sculpture, coincidentally, was deemed a sign during the permitting phase in Omaha. Manley, who appreciates the public as a broader audience, reflects a popular attitude amongst artists who work in public, but not necessarily through the public process. “A lot of my work has been done in more of a guerilla fashion. Not going through any channels, it’s temporary, and it usually is tied to some kind of exhibit that makes its way to the pedestrian view” (Jason Manley Interview). Consequently, his first commissions have come from winning competitions and private exhibitions with public viewership.



Jason Manley's *Believe* (Photo: Jason Manley)

Regardless of whether “beautification” is an objective, murals can change the way we look at our environment. All over Philadelphia, murals go up and expose an empty, underutilized lot underneath them while the organizing momentum of the mural still exists. This phenomenon is wonderful if the mural becomes the first step in fixing the lot. This idea, that art can critique the environment, be a part of the environment, and guide change, needs to be understood and remain central to public art. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of arts funding, meaning that many community victories lay in the balance. The Mural Arts Program's services are competitive. There are over 2000 murals on the waiting list in Philadelphia (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2011 27 December 2011).

Democracy

The Mural Arts Program has demonstrated the power of democratic process in the community, but making the art itself democratic is a different thing. Joan Ockman, in her article “What is Democratic Architecture? The Public Life of Buildings” attests to the difficulty in realizing democracy through form, especially given its predisposition as a “hurrah word or a safe-conduct pass” and the difficulty in representing democracy through form rather than rhetoric. Public art is commonly advocated because it encourages democracy, but how can a shape or a form be democratic? She writes that “‘democratic form’ is an organically unfolding process and an object of symbolic representation; that it emerges from the collective imagination of a modern, progressive society and is an act of individual poetic genius” (Ockman Fall 2011). Further, not only is art informed and inspired by the collective context in which it is conceived and created,

but also the process of viewing art is a democratic process. There is rarely consensus, but trends are formed at every level, whether it is a self-defined level such as a community or a border-drawn level such as a town, the art evokes a chain of reactions that interact and grow. Every viewer of art is given a voice.

Ockman's assertion that every viewer of art is given a voice would suggest that art couldn't be separated from the context of the immediate environment, viewership, and medium, something that modernism sought to do. As a large and natural space, Fairmount Park, the unprecedented park system in Philadelphia that was one of the first to incorporate art is an interesting forum, interacting directly with the modernist question of whether art's autonomy has led to a desire to "detach works of art from their public context" (Bach 15).

The Fairmount Park Art Association's publication *New Land Marks*, which includes sixteen detailed project proposal descriptions and essays by Penny Balkin Bach, Ellen Dissanayake, Thomas Hine, and Lucy Lippard posits the example of the 50,000, one dollar contributions raised by the Philadelphia Inquirer to fund the President McKinley statue at City Hall. This is a wonderful example of democratic vision. It illustrates the wide civic participation that art receives, and the mutually beneficial partnership of community and art. In this case, it was Philadelphia's large Irish population who felt that honoring our 25th president was important to their sense of community and American-Irish identity (Bach 14). "Identity is thought in terms of shared characteristics...it refers to self defined groups who act in their own interest" (Keafer 14).



Charles Albert Lopez and Albert H. Ross' *William McKinley Monument*
(Photo: CivilWarAlbum.com)

Democracy is alive in mobilization around the arts. The Fairmount Park Art Association (FPAA) has sustained itself since 1872 and expresses a real desire for community involvement; the Mural Arts Program has a long waitlist of walls and communities eager to start the communal process of producing a mural. In Los Angeles, democratic participation has also been overwhelming, as 6,400 people have signed ex-Graffiti artist Saber's petition to end the "moratorium on murals" in Los Angeles. In addition, Saber sent five jet planes to write "No Mural Moratorium" over City Hall (Saberone.com). Stakeholders participate in a public art process that is not always democratic, but nevertheless seeks democratic and community participation. The reason that Saber's petition has received so much support is that any person who paints a mural on his or her own personal property in Los Angeles risks having it painted over. This flaw makes public art need to be publically sanctioned, virtually removing the freedom of

expression vital to popular democracy. Art must seek to represent its constituents or be made directly by its constituents.

FPAA's *New Land Marks*' proposals incorporate "public art into ongoing community development, urban greening, public amenities, and other revitalization initiatives." Their reasoning for arts-oriented development in Fairmount Park and citywide engages deeply in the power of claiming public space to claim identity. Graffiti artists practice the same ideology, claiming space for identity, but do so illegally. *New Land Marks* discusses the ways in which Fairmount Park, as a decentralized and unapparent space is a perfect host for public art, which speaks to those who seek it. Whereas the murals of Philadelphia utilize their exposure to popularize a message, the art in the park parallels the ways in which these issues actually exist: on the fringes of society, in its corners, and in its nature. By making democracy, discourse, community and public themes of the art, *New Land Marks* sought to reconcile the stakeholders by making art a reflection of the community. "*New Land Marks*' theory has a single, central directive: to understand the community, not merely to decorate it" (Bach 22).

Fairmount Park is a source of civic participation in Philadelphia, but Los Angeles has the lowest park acreage per capita in the United States, meaning fewer sites for civic participation. As a Highland Park native, John C. Arroyo attests to growing up with this lack of civic space. His MIT masters' thesis "Culture in Concrete: Art and the Re-Imagination of the Los Angeles River as Civic Space" explains:

The [August 2008 Green Visions Plan for 21st Century California] report stated: "The City of L.A. has 7.3 park acres per 1,000 residents, its communities that are predominantly Latino only have 1.6 park acres per 1,000; African Americans have 1.7 park acres per 1,000 residents; and tracts dominated by Asian Pacific Islanders have 0.3 park acres per 1,000 residents. In contrast, L.A. City's predominantly White neighborhoods

enjoy 31.8 park acres per 1,000 residents, where in sections of primarily Hispanic East Los Angeles there are only 1.2-4.8 acres per 1,000 residents” (Arroyo 37).

A lack of park-acreage means a lack of civic space in Los Angeles, and so Arroyo honors the ways in which the Los Angeles River, seen as “an underutilized void,” actually fills the civic void.

Arroyo grew up using the Los Angeles River as civic space in one of the many ethnically different underserved communities it runs through. He writes, “My motivation to explore this topic developed out of my concern that traditional planning strategies for waterfront development were too narrow, too prescribed, and lacked the inclusion of dynamic arts and cultural interventions” (Arroyo 19). He argues that as a result of its use, the river has become a “cultural production center and living exhibition,” and that protection of the multiple forms of art, many of which are unplanned and/or illegal, is essential in maintaining the value of the space as a forum for interactive cultural discourse.



Los Angeles River (Photo: Mark Mauer)

Arroyo suggests that a revitalization plan of the river should increase access, but be very careful not to sterilize and overdevelop an organically developed and place-based gem. Some of his recommendations include more directional signage, entryways, increased awareness and support for art projects, and the treatment of the river as an open canvas (Arroyo 136-142). Arroyo recommends many of the policies and organizations that led Berlin to an arts enlightenment after they were liberated from the confines of their East-West dividing concrete wall. Yet, “Considering current civic consciousness to envision a revitalized River, artists along the River share a valid concern that many of their projects will be compromised if civic space along the River becomes over-commodified and over-regulated. This tension proves that the River is not just a desolate

spot on a map, but rather a hyper-real space that should not be conformed by authority” (Arroyo 20).

There are two economic worlds of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles River, while a dividing line between East and West LA culturally, connects many of the underserved communities of the bottom economic world. When the Army Corps of Engineers paved the river in the 1930s to control floods, it became a unique space prime for questions of further development. Arroyo’s thesis makes the case that the Los Angeles River, not an ideal but the space Los Angeles has, host of world-renowned culture, needs to be addressed with gentleness and respect for what was created through civic participation and community culture. The current mural debate in Los Angeles is addressing many of the same instances of yesterday’s creative solutions becoming today’s policy nightmares (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011). The Los Angeles river represents public civic space in communities that have the least park acreage per capita in the world, so changes made to the river should preserve the cultural and organic elements of the river while making it a more accessible and useable space for community interaction.

Competition

As Harvey points out, individuals contribute to the process of creating a city and its identity, bringing their respective context. The more space for civic participation, the more individuals can contribute. As in all things democratic, battles over public space exist within the regulations of the built environment written by the city, and often have a winner and a loser. Public space and how it is used is hotly contested as individuals try to realize their vision. Not only is this competition a microcosm of capitalism, but also the technological advances made to the city to satiate conflicting interests while counteracting the burden of non-renewable resources is likewise capitalistic (Harvey).

Harvey advocates for a dialectical approach that can aim to reconcile the individual interests of urban stakeholders, who operate on continually expanding scales of production with lessened regulations.

Place Based Identity

Immigrants use art to attach identity to neighborhood, because unlike borough, city, state, or country, neighborhood is defined from within, not by its borders. Art, on the other hand, can make space a testament to its constituents. Sarah Schrank in her book *Art in the City*, writes about Chicano artist and communist David Siqueiros' popularity as an artist and forced exile by the U.S. government to speak of the fear of the emergence of organic, place-based and controversial art; especially art in a city that has been self-conscious in its arts-oriented development. Siqueiros's belief was that the process of painting directly onto cement, meaning that it could not be removed or sold, was invaluable to its political message. "His desire to improvise and devise what he called the 'vehicles of dialectic-subversive painting' used Los Angeles as the optimal destination" (Schrank 46).



David Alfaro Siqueiros *America Tropical* on Olvera Street, 1932 Restored by Judith F. Baca and Martha Ramirez-Oropeza 2008
(Photo: University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States)

Keafer, however, using Guinn's Snowscape mural, describes the ways in which the process of putting up a mural was less of a fluid dialectic and more of a series of

irreconcilable disagreements between artist, community, and property owner. SPARC's proposed mural ordinance for Los Angeles in the wake of the previously hostile policy which didn't actually define what a mural was, specifically forbids monetary compensation for property owners who host murals. Still, the advantages that would come from a freer, more art conducive policy, would create more holes in which property owner could use his or her space to convey his or her message.

Schrank's history of Art in the city of Los Angeles shows how art, in its production and use, functions as both an instrument for discourse and a projection of identity. Discourse, democracy and claiming space can necessarily leave some people satisfied and others not, and the government's guidelines profoundly effect who controls the messages shown in space and how.



David Guinn's *Snowscape* at 10th and Bainbridge (Photo: Moore College of Art and Design)

Schrank examines power dynamics and social currents in Los Angeles during the twentieth century. She lays out the ideologies and ways that various groups, such as the immigrant populations and boosters, used art to find their voice, express their respective visions to frame Los Angeles' image on the local and national level. "Art became and increasingly volatile site for public debate over what kind of city Los Angeles wanted to be (Schrank 8)," Schrank also talks about the style choices and the cities' departure from forms such as abstract expressionism, modernism, and folk art. Keafer's assertion that "by looking at art museums to dictate cultural standards of artistic excellent, an even larger wedge is driven between public art and the public (Keafer 11)" aptly describes the inaccessibility of booster and private art to many Los Angeles that lead to the identity quest that Schrank chronicles.

Schrank's piece focuses on a few in depth examples. She writes about Siqueiros, whose controversial pieces forced Chicano/a culture, folk style and marginalized history into the public view by claiming public space for Mexican-American representation, marking the emergence of the strong movement. She writes about censorship and the closing of public art spaces to block political expression during the Cold War, a theme that has been since repeated. And she writes about the birth of a Bohemian, gallery culture and a distinct, locally and nationally visible Los Angeles style pioneered in Venice Beach and West Hollywood.

Los Angeles' constant search to bolster civic culture has been a self-conscious and dynamic process. Schrank writes:

Projecting a civic strategy of art development must understand the irreconcilable power dynamics onto a huge city with an already contentious history. The singular vision of a coherent civic identity is inherently a practice in dominance and, as the historical record reveals,

impossible to implement given art's flexible interpretations and Los Angeles' long struggles with the arbiters of cultural authority. (Schrank 168)

Attempts to provide civic culture have encountered difficulty catering to Angelenos across a steep economic divide. Los Angeles is a sharply segregated urban space, similar in that way to Philadelphia, which is divided between the affluent financial and cultural sector. "While [former Mayor Tom] Bradley's civic imagination had been realized, that of a diverse Los Angeles public was still relegated to a space outside of the civic mainstream" (Schrank 168). Schrank also uses the Watts riots of 1965 as an example of upheaval in a time when corporations were developing downtown with an eye towards civic culture. Whether or not corporate logos and branding are allowed in public art remains a very controversial subject of debate.

Graffiti

Keafer, Arroyo and Schrank all use the example of graffiti as claiming and assigning an identity to a space. The challenge, as Schrank maintains, is that Los Angeles is home to a diverse and underrepresented lower class in contrast to the Los Angeles in the movies, the one that has been bought and sold since its creation. Interactions between style and culture, and planned and unplanned art, are significant in where they exist and where they do not. "Many murals remain free of tagging, but even those that are heavily tagged were done so in ways that remind the viewer of the vision created together by the murals and the tags. Whether interpreted as authorial signatures or kids claiming turf, is one of a powerful sense of civic identity honoring local history and a collective memory of social activism" (Schrank 167). An anonymous tagger that I spoke with explained that his experience in the city is tied to his ability to interact directly with its physical structure. For this individual, tagging is like touching in that it makes things feel real,

especially things that seem to be built and used only by the wealthy.

Keafer writes that graffiti has the ability to protest and deface space or art in accordance with the views of the community or directly against the views of the community. Arroyo defends certain unplanned art as a contribution to the interactive, and diverse Los Angeles River “living exhibition” (Arroyo).

Keafer quotes Jane Golden, who worked with graffiti writers to remedy urban blight with Philadelphia’s Anti-Graffiti Network, which later became the Mural Arts Program saying, “murals are a focal point around which things can occur...They are not a solution in themselves, but they certainly show us the powerful catalytic role that art can play in healing the wounds of the city” (Keafer 21) Thus part of Golden’s model was to take a population that was “wounding” the city and empower them to alter their environment. However, Keafer later provides the counter point that murals have not made Philadelphia more secure, less segregated or safer.

Cultural Identity and Place

Schrank’s book looks deeply into Los Angeles’ cultural identity as cast through its image, highlighting moments during the McCarthy era and Cold War when the effects of government’s suppression of art included decreased civic participation, popular democratic discourse, and self expression. It is this governmental suppression and control that makes many uneasy about any art controlled or funded by the government.

Marshall Berman’s definition of modernism, which maintains that “Modernism is a struggle to make ourselves at home in a constantly changing world,” provides Schrank a lens as both a popular genre and a vehicle to embark on a history of the Los Angeles’

art scene. Arroyo would argue that the Los Angeles River was a part of his home growing up and should be accessible to and representative of those who wish to use it.

Tom Finkelpearl explores how deep the issue of ownership goes in public art, refusing to define “public” but suggesting that its essence is lower class, the opposite of “private.” He structures his book using interviews pertaining to works of art that were controversial. Much like this paper, Finkelpearl “want[s] to set up a very basic dialectic between top-down, “pro-growth” development initiated by or for business elites, and grassroots, “community-oriented” development initiated by or for people outside the traditional mainstream of power in the United States” (Finkelpearl 5). He writes, “in my opinion public art is the most dynamic field in contemporary artistic practice, but also the most frustrating. (Finkelpearl Preface 1)” He cites the waste management facility in Phoenix as a success story where artists made planning and design decisions of a public space, but explains that although “how public art comes into existence is a very important part of its meaning (Finkelpearl XII),” public art has been disadvantaged because “modernism placed art squarely in the museum context, which left no tradition public art to look forward to at the national inception of 1% in the 70s and 80s” (Finkelpearl Preface 2).

His most famous example, Richard Serra’s *Tilted Arc*, was removed from the Federal Plaza in New York City despite being very well received by critics. The piece, which functioned as a large barrier in the middle of the plaza, was considered by some to be superfluous, detrimental to the flow outside the building, and an anti-establishment mockery of the people who worked in the building. It was taken down, but provided a

forum for discussion in which stakeholders could be both critical and clear in our desires and expectations for public art.



Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (Photo: Void Manufacturing)

Conditions of the Built Environment

For those in Los Angeles who don't own a car, public transit must also operate on the enormous scale made possible by car-centric planning, adding to the huge concrete sprawls of the river and the freeways and the non-apparent nature of the city. What results is a concrete jungle that is impossible to regulate successfully. It confronts

people's aesthetic sense because it is an eyesore prime for artistic expression, but also for forms of expression such as graffiti. The vectors and instruments of art must operate on a much larger scale in Los Angeles, with much more knowledge of visual access. These negative spaces disrupt the sense of community and familiarity inherently through their monotony and inaccessibility, but they can be used to build community. "Culture in Concrete" shows the interaction of various forms of art and planning infrastructure and suggests that this intersection is necessary and empowering.

Elizabeth Currid-Halkett's article "Where do the Bohemians Come From?" uses the examples of SOHO and Chelsea to demonstrate the ability of art-centric Bohemian culture to provide economic sustenance and vibrant culture to communities. The article explains that art finds its way into every facet of society, and that it is especially conducive to fill the aesthetic bareness and spatial void that industry brings and leaves behind (Currid-Halkett 15 October 2011). Art can be planned, and art can be introduced, but you never know how a place will react to art or incorporate art until you try. After that, the local identity takes over and the ensuing dialectic shapes daily experience. Art cannot be fully planned. It has to happen, but in order to grow it needs to be in a favorable climate. For this reason, it is a dynamic, evolving, and exciting x-factor that can result in a renaissance or serve as a mode for issues to be expressed.

Form and Function

The difference between the street and the museum has led to complicated existential questions for sculpture. This paper, in its very exploration of art and its public use, exists on a fault line. Art has traditionally not been considered functional. It is a luxury, and its success is not attached to its functionality. However, this paper seeks to prove that art is a pragmatic investment for cities and is useful to civic participation,

pride, democracy and identity. Whether specified function is critical to the success of a piece of public art, and whether or not function is an externality of art rather than a goal of art depends on how you define form and function. Does a necessitation of public art to have a function that it does not have in its private context inherently doom it to be narrower in depth? The question becomes even more complicated when we take into consideration that much public art is actually private art displayed in public. Whether or not this happens is in the hands of the policy writers, and so the policy writer must consider whether function hinders form.

What is art meant to deliver?

In order for public art to find a channel of creation, it must articulate some benefits. The benefits of art are numerous, but identity, democracy and community are not the most resonant benefits. Jeffrey Bussman, a development assistant at the Institute for Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, a student in the Arts Administration Program at Drexel University and cofounder of *Title*, a Philadelphia visual arts and culture online magazine makes a case for the arts in order to secure and retain funding for the Institute of Contemporary Art. As we spoke, it was apparent that we could take turns listing thousands of things art can deliver, but he explained that it is difficult for any one reason to really get at the intangible soul of what art brings. He highlighted job creation and the work of the Works Progress Administration during the New Deal Era as being a relevant use for art in the 2012 economy, but we spoke of art in its economic, societal, and humanitarian context and agreed that the question runs very deep. Still, as an arts lover, administrator, and writer, he is in a position to see that function can hold the arts back (Jeffrey Bussman Interview 16 January 2012).

Increased accountability to stakeholders and increased expectations for the arts to display evident effects on other issues can lead to the message of a piece taking the back seat to other interests. The work simply must be relevant; something that can be accomplished through its aesthetic contribution to the environment, but often is manifest in its use or the themes that it represents. Bussman, working specifically with contemporary art, feels that art can both create new contemporary and time subjective truths and reflect already existing issues. In order to be successful, contemporary art needs to be relevant, but relevant to whom differs greatly between public and private. Relevant art in public can shift perspectives, improve daily life, teach appreciation of environment and instill a desire to take more control of the built environment, but these should not have to be the artists' primary objectives.

So Why is Art Important?

This literature review started with a simple reason for why public art was important. The literature explored above is part of an enormous body of work, which stands as a testament to the number of people who consider themselves vested stakeholders in public art. One of the writers within that field, Ellen Dissanayake, distilled the importance of art into an apt and profound list, which could stand as a literature review of its own if every sentence had a couple hundred footnotes:

Art's 10 contributions to human life through:

- 1) Provide a sense of identity
- 2) Build community and reciprocity
- 3) Allow the physical and psychological satisfaction of making and creating something with one's hands and body
- 4) Engage non-verbal parts of our minds
- 5) Enhance and enrich both the natural and man made environments
- 6) Help us deal with anxiety

- 7) Provide refreshment, pleasure and enjoyment
- 8) Put us in touch with important life concerns
- 9) Acknowledge the things we care about, and allow us the opportunity to mark or celebrate that caring
- 10) Awaken us to deeper self-understanding and to higher levels of consciousness

She explains that people, history and hope are valuable urban resources that can be informed, inspired and taken to new heights through art. Explaining that “We are creatures who evolved, biologically, to require the social and emotional satisfactions they bestow. If I am correct, it follows that without the arts, we are incomplete human beings” (Bach 27-29).

CHAPTER IV: CASE STUDY: PHILADELPHIA

Introduction

At the intersection of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, Philadelphia has had to grow up rather than out. It is a city characterized by very intentional planning, a tight and rigid grid of mostly one-way streets lined with row-homes and historic buildings. It is diverse culturally, ethnically and demographically, but deeply segregated and riddled with issues of education, poverty, crime, and blight.

Philadelphia, as the first capital of the United States, is home to many innovations including the U.S. Constitution, the first water irrigation system, the first hospital, the first percent for art program, and the first instances of art as an endeavor of urban planning.

The Wyeth and Calder families hail from Philadelphia, as did Mary Cassatt and Thomas Eakins, yet Philadelphia’s high art culture is generally limited to a few spaces, most notably the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The Parkway was constructed to alleviate the congestion of industry and restore Philadelphia’s artistic beauty.

This product of the “city beautiful” movement was built diagonally bisecting the city in 1917 to host a high density of cultural buildings (History of the Parkway). While the Parkway is lined with public art and art institutions, this concentration of art culture to a few places polarizes the accessibility of public and private art to the underserved periphery of the city. Despite its rich and established architecture, sculpture and painting culture, most of the public art that we see in Philadelphia is relatively young.

Demographics

Philadelphia county has 1,528,306 residents, 41.5% White and 43.8% African-American. There are 575,413 householders, an 80% high school graduation rate and an unemployment rate of 9.1% (2010 U.S. Census). 39% of the household incomes made under \$24,999 in income and benefits. The minimum wage is \$7.25/hour. 21.3% of families in 2010 were considered below the poverty level. From 2000-2005, Philadelphia had the highest incarceration rate in the United States, a number that quadrupled from 1980, but has been declining dramatically since because of reforms and prisoner relocation (The Pew Charitable Trusts).

Philadelphia industry is comprised of 30.5% educational services, and health care and social assistance, 11.8% Professional, scientific, and management and administrative waste management services, 10.1% retail trade, 9.8% arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services, and 6.5% public administration (2010 U.S. Census).

Education

Arts education not only provides legitimate vocational preparation, it teaches a way of thinking critical to living in Philadelphia, where the arts are highly valued.

Perhaps more importantly, cutting arts education is cutting a favorite subject among students. If we considered arts education more important, we could entice more students to stay in school and support the creative economy. “Kids who are involved in the arts are 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, 3 times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools, 4 times more likely to participate in a math and science fair, 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance” (National Arts Education Public Awareness Campaign).

Keeping students in school helps keep them out of the school to prison pipeline, a trend that funnels students out of public schools and into prisons (American Civil Liberties Union). The harsh reality is that “the School District of Philadelphia faced a projected budget shortfall of \$147 million, after losing \$160 million in state funding” (Hawkins 12 Dec 2010). Given this figure, reform is necessary, but reforms which make our spending smarter and more efficient. We must emphasize what is most important to our future success: education.

Important education reforms include protecting arts education, which often is cut in the early stages of budget tightening, and increased restorative justice, a reform that attempts to help suspended and expelled students re-integrate into their school environment. Education reform is key to prison reform and desegregating Philadelphia, all three of which are critical to Philadelphia’s future.

Restorative Justice

Director of the Mural Arts Program Jane Golden started her work in Philadelphia with the Anti-Graffiti Network (AGN), an organization that had an immense role in the development of public art restorative justice models by employing vandals towards

beautification projects. She has continued that role with efforts to employ and educate on restorative justice with the Mural Arts Program. April is “restorative justice month” and the Mural Arts Program works with eight major agencies and provides art instruction to over 300 inmates and 200 juveniles each year.

Mayors and the Arts

Though the arts played a large role in how we will remember Philadelphia’s last two mayors, Mayor John Street and his successor Michael Nutter hold very different political stances on the government’s hand in arts and culture. Philadelphia’s art sector has grown exponentially over the last 20 years, in spite of suffering from a two-term infrastructural hiatus from 2000 to 2008, when Mayor John Street closed the city’s cultural department (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012). The current mayor of Philadelphia, incumbent Michael Nutter, assumed office on January 7, 2008 after making the reopening of the cultural department one of the central focuses of his campaign. Upon his election, he upheld his promise and committed not only a much higher percentage of city money toward the department, but appointed Gary Steuer as the Chief Cultural Officer, a position which interacts and answers directly to the Mayor. Nutter renamed the office, which became the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (Phila.gov).



Diane Keller's *Frank Rizzo Mural* on 9th Street (Photo: Nolan Borgman)

Neither of these mayors has been exemplary on culture, and Philadelphia has “historically not provided a robust level of support” (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012). And it seems that Nutter’s woes are economy driven whereas Street’s cultural woes were economically defiant. Nutter doubled the funding for the department, but was forced to cut funding for the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy because of a diminished city budget. His tenure has been marked by falling tax revenues, and a surplus turned deficit of somewhere between 500 and 700 million over the next five years (Phila.gov) Faced with tough decisions, he has cut funding for one of Philadelphia’s greatest cultural treasures, the Mummers Parade, and attempted to close 11 libraries until he was blocked by lawsuit. Currently, the city funds the department from the general fund at a level about 15% lower than what it was before the economic downturn. Philadelphia

gives about a third of the grants that it would like to, especially when compared with other cities (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012).

The Fight for LOVE

Mayor Street's most public cultural debate was what to do with the symbolic but downtrodden LOVE Park, which is adjacent to city hall, Suburban station, and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. He turned LOVE Park from downtrodden to underutilized by cracking down on skateboarding and loitering. Project H.O.M.E. reports that on any given day, there are 4000 homeless in Philadelphia, about 80% of which are black. Prior to its renovation, the park rested many of the city's homeless and was a world-famous icon and terrain for skateboarders (Project H.O.M.E). In the wake of the 2001-2002 X-Games at the Wachovia Center, Street turned down a \$1 million offer from DC shoes to retrofit the park for skateboarding. Instead, Street spent \$800,000 on anti-skateboarding obstacles (DC Shoes Gifts \$1 Million). The park was a global cultural icon and destination, which exposed Robert Indiana's iconic sculpture to the world as a piece of Philadelphia identity and history.

Philadelphia, in attempting to steer culture and experience rather than accepting that which came about naturally, undermined a local treasure that drew much more interest than the park does now. Street deemed the art's use as unacceptable and alienated the park's most loyal users. For me, the park carries a significantly different message after this display of use micromanagement.

Now, the park hosts a tourism office, one that I have never seen a soul enter or leave. While the sculpture is still frequented and photographed, the park is no more welcoming than it was when it was overrun with skaters and homeless. The park still hosts a few homeless, and the occasional brave or ignorant skateboarder, but I see it as an

unwelcoming public space. It is a concrete void, a sculpture, a round building, and a fountain under constant police surveillance that failed to host an organic and distinctly Philadelphian identity because its use was deemed insufficient.



Robert Indiana's *LOVE* (Photo: Vic15)

Steven Power's *Love Letter Project*



(Steve Power's *Love Letter Project* #5 Photo: aloveletterforyou.com)

Steven Power's *Love Letter Project* is the result of efforts that are almost the opposite of what happened at LOVE Park. By incorporating aspects of the graffiti and

text based art that lines the train tracks of Philadelphia into a more widely accessible medium, mural, the Love Letter Project took an organic identity and used it to encourage SEPTA ridership.

The Blue Line, aka the El train in Philadelphia, gets its nickname because it runs on an elevated platform through West Philadelphia. The El runs on an East-West Axis along Market Street through Center City and then runs up 2nd Street to Frankford Transportation Center. It gives the mostly Black residents of West Philadelphia access to downtown, Penn's Landing, and Fairmount. West Philadelphia, though one of the most historic, visually colorful, and architecturally robust neighborhoods in the city, is economically depressed and has high crime rates. Gentrification caused by the expansion of the University of Pennsylvania has forced natives of the area to move further West to the more depressed areas and the inner-rim and airport suburbs.

The train ride through West Philadelphia, which was once an overhead view of dilapidated row homes and DirecTV antennas now takes you through an art gallery thanks to the work of Steve Powers, the Mural Arts Program and the Love Letter Project. The Love Letter Project honors the aesthetic of the area, using an urban, graffiti influenced style to produce murals of a high quality. The El provides the best possible view of over 50 love-themed murals which represent the emergence of text based murals.



Steven Power's *Love Letter Project #21* (Photo: fatcap.com)

Jane Degenhardt-Kutzer's *A Celebration of Community*

Like the Love Letter Project, this West Philadelphia mural demonstrates sustainable behavior. This mural, ironically located in a KFC parking lot at Market and Powelton, is one block away from a highly trafficked vegetable cart. The mural depicts an elderly couple embracing in a community garden with a bountiful basket of vegetables in front of them. The mural displays clear themes of sustainable behavior, aspiration, love, happiness, and community. It is an uplifting mural and it has always touched me because it is my mother's favorite mural in the city.



Jane Degenhardt-Kutzer's *A Celebration of Community* (Photo: Nolan Borgman)

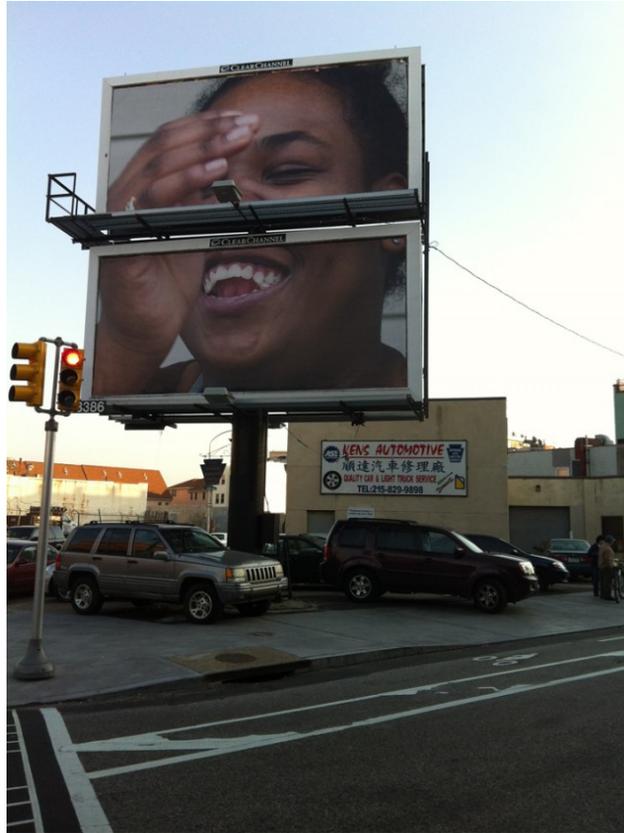
This mural shows that there is a middle ground between the use-oriented art and message-oriented art that I have discussed. Regardless of what blight this mural attempted to remedy (and it surely remedied blight during the multi-year El construction on Market Street), this mural's message serves as its primary use and thus is useful in a way that demonstrates the art's nature. For me, it is a success in the simplest sense because it uplifts my family. We enjoy looking at it and we enjoy its message. It speaks to the soul of the West Philadelphia community that I feel hosts a very strong sense of communal identity and deeply values sharing.

Zoe Strauss' Billboard Project with the Philadelphia Museum of Art



Zoe Strauss Billboard 54 on 9th and Washington Ave (Photo: zoetraussbillboardproject.com)

When I first saw Strauss' work, I had no idea that I was looking at art. The billboard seemed so oddly placed, something was surely off. I was forced to wonder if this billboard was the sign of the seafood vendor below, but that didn't make sense either. Nevertheless I noticed the bizarre sign and caught myself taking an even closer look at the 9th street Italian market throughout the rest of the day.



Billboard 50 and 51 at N. 10th, Callowhill, and Ridge Ave (Photo: zoetraussbillboardproject.com)

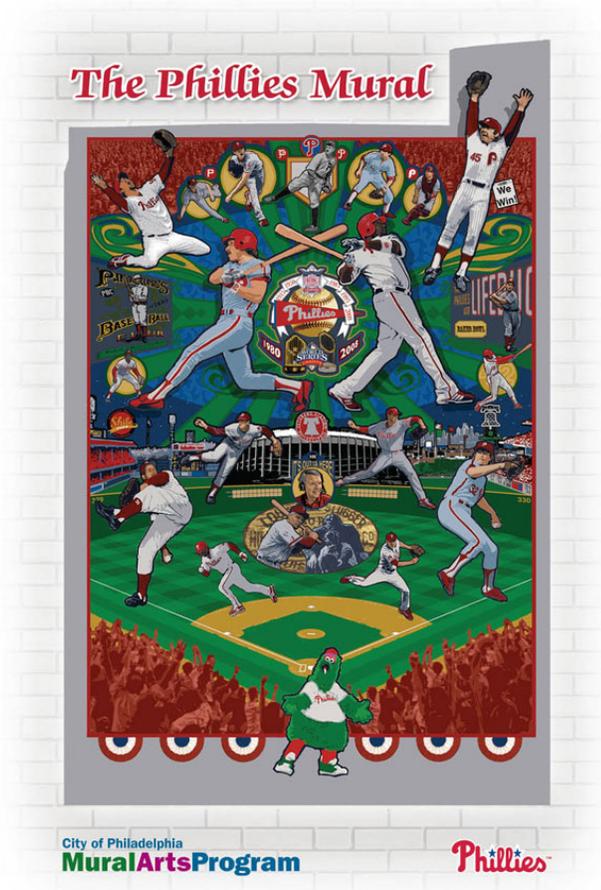
Luckily, most cities place minimums on the number of years a piece has to be displayed, so this phenomenon of confusion can happen to viewers and they can still see it again and think about it (whereas a visiting show will only be visible for a limited time). I appreciated that the public piece was available to me retrospectively, and that other examples of her work were displayed on billboards throughout the city. After all, the odd billboard was part of a ten year retrospective of the Philadelphia native Strauss.

A few days later, when Jeffrey Bussman showed me a newspaper article about Zoe Strauss', a photographer famous for her depictions of everyday people, exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and it's complementary billboard element, I was able to experience her work on another level. This place-based addition to the show, sponsored by a corporation and a museum, created a gallery beyond the walls of the museum on

billboards throughout Philadelphia. Strauss first sold her prints under I-95, a billboard lined highway, which runs North-South along the East coast. I appreciated that this artist's work, whose audience was originally public, had gone private without losing the people that supported her and were the subjects of her portraits.

David McShane's *Philadelphia Phillies Mural*

Strauss' work was first visible under I-95, the Philadelphia Phillies mural will be visible from atop the other main highway in Philadelphia, I-76. The Philadelphia Phillies mural, which will be an eight story mural overlooking the I-76 expressway from 24th and Walnut, gives a visual history of one of Philadelphia's favorite private companies. Our love for the Phillies is likely to overshadow the blatancy of the corporate branding that is occurring here. Corporate branding is an issue that comes up often in the mural community, as they occupy space that could be used for advertising and provide opportunities for product-placement. Tension between muralists and corporations run very deep in Los Angeles, where murals were made illegal because allowing them would be favoring freedom of speech for murals over freedom of speech for advertising.



David McShane's *Phillies Mural* (Photo: philadelphia.phillies.mlb.com)

This debate does not appear as hot in Philadelphia, in part because the process is facilitated through the Mural Arts Program, a public-private partnership. The hot topic in Philadelphia is the Phillies, who have an impressive sellout streak of over 200 games, and five-straight National League East Division titles, and now have an annual top-5 player payroll in the Major Leagues. The team has become a symbol of pride and identity for the city. The mural is a feel good mural that will deliver a very popular logo to the fans. Fans exercised their rights to democracy by voting on which Phillie would fill the final spot, but the ballot was so close that artist David McShane will paint both Carlos Ruiz and Greg “the Bull” Luzinski into the design.

The Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy Approach

Measuring a problem is a good first step in solving a problem. This is what the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy is doing, not so much measuring a problem, but measuring the effects of culture on the city. Going forward, the questions that the Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy are attempting to answer are: do we have any of our culture mapped? Does a robust culture help other social issues? And how can economic opportunity, transformation and increased livability of neighborhoods extend throughout the city? (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012). These questions mark an important step in creating a bridge between arts and culture and other social issues, but implied within these questions is the idea that art must be useful to the city in a manner beyond its existence as art.

Focus on Identity, Democracy, and Civic Participation

My literature review discusses the ways in which art can benefit cities through its engagement with and advancement of community, democracy, and identity, all of which play a role in confronting societal issues. Engagement in and advancement of community, democracy and identity are tied more closely to art's creative process and message whereas addressing social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and blight are tied more closely to art's use. For example, determining what themes the art may convey is a question of art's message and requires a communal democratic process to posit a place-based statement of identity. The result, if the artist internalized the process, is likely to be relevant and have an allure because of its artistic properties. On the other hand, making arguments to beautify neighborhoods through art projects or create jobs by hiring artists have no stake in what is actually created, just that something is created. Art will do far

more for a community if it is of high quality and draws people in than if its function is more important than its essence.

Philadelphia has been tremendously prolific in their efforts to create art and truly intentional in their efforts to embrace the catalyzing effect of art. However, the catalyst has too often been that there is art created rather than what the art means to people. Jane Golden admits that at the onset of the Mural Arts Program, they aimed to move quickly and as a result painted a great deal of “unicorns, waterfalls, and forests” in the name of beautification. It mattered more to the mission of the program that agreeable art was done to remedy blight than attempting to start a renaissance (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2011). With the long waiting list for murals and the myriad of communities in need of visual relief from advertisements and litter, it makes sense that the process be expedited, but then dialogue is rushed and the art becomes a testament to the stereotype that public things are inferior to private things. Nevertheless, the MAP has continued to improve by delivering high quality works to communities, keeping them intact, and employing new technologies, restorative justice, and a collaborative approach to their work. They have done fantastic work, but at times their work has served as an end for a different means besides art. Quantity has certainly ensued, but whether or not quality has depends on whom you ask. A few people that I spoke with used the term “vanilla” to describe the work of the Mural Arts Program.

Philadelphia needs more flavors. For the MAP, desire to remedy urban issues through art seems more important than their desire to create art, which suggests that their program is use-oriented. Perhaps this is why their fundraising efforts have been so fruitful, but perhaps this is also a flaw with the nature of art fundraising. Their size and

use-oriented approach means that their individual works are not as often seen as standalone. Their murals are challenged to stand out as one mural in the “mural capital of the world.”

Dialogue should be a goal throughout the entire life of a piece if the piece is to remain relevant—even useful. Lack of dialogue is not often enough thought of as a social issue, but what good is a piece of art that is not spoken of. The city is asking questions of what they hope to accomplish through cultural development, gathering hard data, and attempting to create a more robust performing arts sector, but I encourage them to look beyond the traditional variables discussed in the context of social problems. They must identify the things that art can provide by being itself; the emotions it can harness and the lasting impressions it can leave.

I argue that art has to come through a variety of different channels and exist on a variety of different levels, but most of the examples of public art that I can think of off-hand in Philadelphia are either murals done by the Mural Arts Program, street lining sculptures done by the Fairmount Park Art Association, Graffiti and Graffiti style painting, or plaza sculptures funded by the Percent for the Arts Program, which is managed by the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. (The exception being Isaiah Zagar’s mosaics, which adorn facades throughout South Philadelphia, most notably his junk sculpture mosaic masterpiece on South Street: *Magic Gardens*.) While the individual efforts of these institutions have been exemplary, and their desire to foster community engagement is evident through their respective processes and missions, there is simply not enough diversity in the art that we see in Philadelphia.



Isaiah Zagar's *Magic Gardens* (Photo: Uwishunu)

It is difficult for large, centralized entities; especially given their consideration of funders, to create art through the multiplicity of channels necessary to represent the diversity of a city. Smaller institutions, or individuals, are more able to create art that comes from unique vantage points and marginalized positions. Large institutions, while they are tireless in their desire to satisfy their constituents, are less able to question power dynamics, tell less told histories, and seek the controversial and challenging nature of art that advances the civic dialogue and sets the present apart from the past.

CHAPTER V: CASE STUDY: LOS ANGELES

Introduction: Demographics, Geography and Climate

Los Angeles refers to both city and county. The county is 4057.88 square miles, home to 88 cities and 9,519,338 residents. The second largest city in the United States, Los Angeles has 3,972,621. 48.5 percent are Hispanic or Latino origin, 49.8 percent are white. 59.7 over the age of 5 do not speak English at home. The homeownership rate is

28.9 percent, meaning that most citizens will not have the opportunity to obtain a permit from the government to create a mural on their walls (2010 U.S. Census).

Despite the large majority of renters, the region is very decentralized. Art is thus able to find its way through many different jurisdictions, but a high density of art is a daunting task. The decentralized nature of Los Angeles makes it able to sustain many different art climates; however, it makes the formation of a unified identity very difficult. The regions social problems are often placed squarely on the city, without the same resources and manageable size of some of the smaller “boutique” cities (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011).

A more specific case study could look at the policies of Glendale, Studio City, Altadena or Compton. Unlike Philadelphia, Los Angeles’ troubles exist within the massive center. The city does not collect property taxes or tourism revenue from Beverly Hills or Pasadena, but is nevertheless expected to compete for tax revenue against these more affluent cities, uphold an attractive image for tourists and support the local regional identity.

Department of Cultural Affairs

While the Community Redevelopment Authority handles the art fees generated through the projects that they fund, the department responsible for encouraging and maintaining culture and public art in Los Angeles city is the Department of Cultural Affairs. Pat Gomez, a woman who has worked as both an artist and an administrator in the non-profit, museum, and city cultural sectors handles the City Art Collection, the murals, and is the Arts Development Fee Manager.

She embodies a Los Angeles art culture that I have found to be essential to the history of the city. A culture that is collaborative across designations, designs and styles.

This department has been criticized heavily for the policy nightmare that prevented murals from being painted on private property. They have not been successful in the production and advertisement of their work. Although most art in the city is the work of non-governmental efforts, the Department of Cultural affairs has funded over 700 murals, 275 of which were painted on public property during the “moratorium,” on top of cataloging thousands of murals, allowing schools to use their walls for art projects, and abating graffiti on about 200 murals per year (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012). Still, murals in Los Angeles are old, faded, tagged, or simply not displayed prominently. Their budget for murals fluctuates from \$300,000 on the high end to \$0 dollars currently (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012).

A Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds the Department of Cultural Affairs (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012). The TOT is a tax on hotels and other tourism markets. This funding source is justified because arts and culture brings tourists who are then taxed to support the local art and culture, but it is a system that I feel is deeply flawed. True, art’s power to aid social issues is tied to its ability to generate tourism revenue, but its constituents are still communities with unequal needs. It is a genuine and place-based community of art that tourists seek. Art should not be created to appeal to tourists; it should be rooted in the place of its origin with tourism as an externality. Especially considering that tourists are more likely to visit a place with a unique cultural identity. By tying art funding to tourism, there is an inherent incentive to fund projects in areas of tourism rather than areas of need. This speaks to Zuidervaart’s idea that our economic policy must counteract inequities, even if they are efficient. This flaw is made less visible because many of the neglected areas in the region are inner-city, but if this

type of concept were applied to Philadelphia, the neglect of the less frequented areas that already exists would intensify. Planners must reconcile their need to bring people in and maximize the trafficked areas without forgetting which areas are truly in need.

The organization dedicated to bringing projects to communities in need is the dwindling Community Redevelopment Network. There is a general sense that even though percent for the arts is taken for both public and private development, its presence is underwhelming in Los Angeles. Other cities have managed to benefit greatly from this allocation of funds, but Los Angeles has not figured out how to deal with so many different entities. Journalist and Muralist Ed Fuentes joked that new cross walks will be put in and then a week later the Department of Water and Power will tear them up to replace an old pipe (Ed Fuentes Interview 19 February 2012). Given this variety of jurisdiction, I have looked at examples of art from different entities to show the difference in the process and product. First, I will look at the features of an Ai Weiwei piece brought to the United States by LACMA. Second, I will look at the efforts of the LA Metro Arts Program. Third, I will look at a mural by the non-profit SPARC.

Ai Weiwei's Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads

Ai Weiwei's public piece at the LACMA *Circle of Heads* is comprised of 12 bronze cast heads representing the animals on the Chinese calendar. The heads form a circle, which surround the elevator going down to the LACMA complex parking garage. The sculpture is not place-based, although the Chinese government would like it to be, as it has traveled to London and New York. The artist, on the other hand, is essentially under house arrest and not allowed to leave China:

Circle of Animals is about China's complex relationship with its past. For this dozen are actually recreations of the twelve heads which once adorned

the imperial gardens of the old summer palace outside Beijing. The originals were constructed for the Cheng Yin emperor by European Jesuits in the Eighteenth century...In 1860, during the second Opium war...the Palace was ransacked by British and French troops...Only seven of the original heads have been recovered, and it seems tragically apt that the rooster is one of the still lost other five. Ai Weiwei, after all, was born in 1957, the year of the rooster. As things stand nobody knows if he will ever appear either” (Smart 11 May 2011).

The effect of the location—around the elevator—is very interesting. Because one must pay to park in the garage, and those who view the work are en route to the LACMA, there is very little that is public about the piece. Thus this piece’s location is a critique of Los Angeles’ greatest urban issue—access.



Ai Weiwei’s “Circle of Heads” (Photo: Reuters)

On the other hand, the piece is extremely accessible; it is the first thing you see from the elevator, it is outdoors, near the entrance, quite large and completely free to view. Most of all, the viewer is allowed to touch the heads and their base, which looks

like a string made of metal pipe cleaners. Each person, according to the year they are born, is represented by one of the animals.

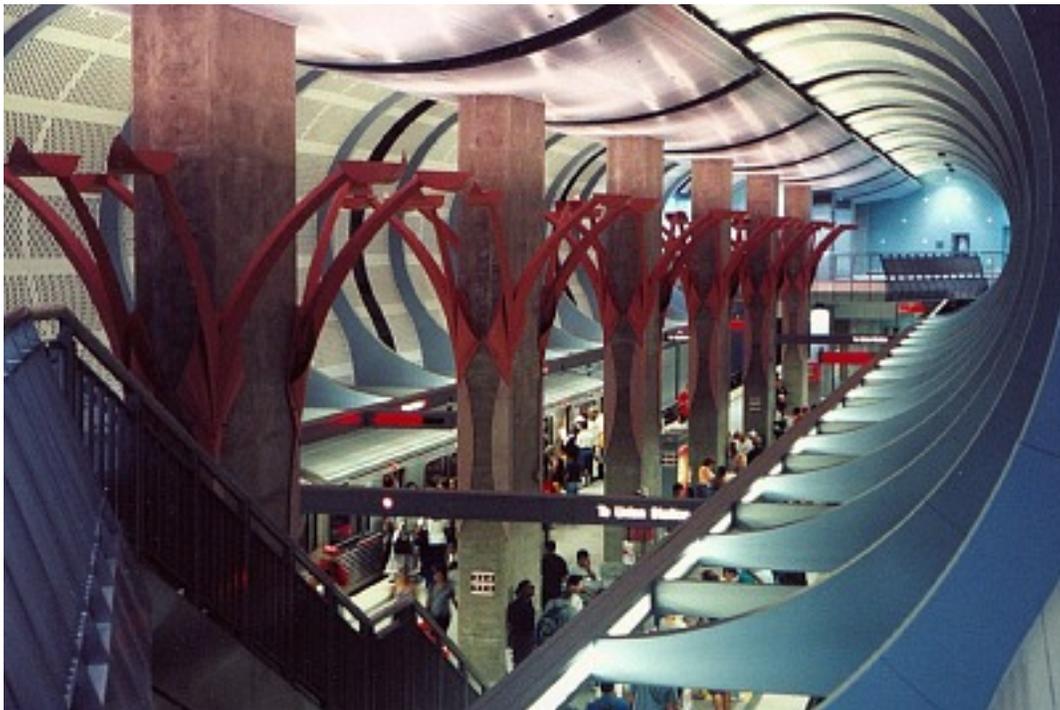


Ai Weiwei's Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads (Photo: PA, from The Observer)

LA Metro Arts Program

Ai Weiwei's piece critiques Los Angeles' car centrality, but the LA Metro has used art to change our behaviors. The LA Metro is the public transit system that undertakes the impracticable task of giving affordable transportation access to a region that is massive, decentralized, and not gridded. Their website is probably the last place anyone would think to look to see art, but what you will find is nothing short of incredible. The LA Metro's commitment to art has been unprecedented, and shifted my attitude in several ways. Their art department was created in 1989 and they have committed over 300 artists by giving 0.5 percent of rail construction costs to the creation of original art works. Municipal and corporate contributions have exceeded \$1.5 million. On their website, one can see a slideshow of all of their public art projects by station. In

addition, the artist's statement and how they approached the space are incorporated. This transparency is truly special. It demonstrates before all that the artist has articulated his or her vision for the space and the community, and puts the art's context in a place that riders visit to look at schedules.



Sheila Klein and Dworsky Associates Hollywood/Highland Station (Photo Eric Hass, nycsubway.org)

As Robert Gottlieb maintains in his book *Reinventing Los Angeles*, Angelenos unlearned their trolley ridership habits after Lyndon Johnson's Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 changed transit in Los Angeles from a trolley car system to a freeway system. In retrospect, this change created the sprawling entanglement of highways that we sit in day in and day out, sans visual stimulation, cursing Los Angeles under our radios.

Art can incentivize behaviors and shift attitudes, and Angeleno's need a collective change in attitudes and behaviors towards public transportation. A lack of access to art and a lack of useable public transportation for lower class Angelenos are issues being

actively addressed through the Metros work. Our habit is stubborn, inefficient, and dependent on limited resources. Our dependence runs so deep that the closing of the 405 freeway in the summer of 2011 garnered the title “carmageddon.” Cars encourage us to be privately rather than publicly minded. They isolate us from the daily discourse and interaction crucial to a civic identity and culture. Metro’s investment towards culture shows that their strategy goes beyond logistics and into a multi-faceted imagination of how to create the best ridership experience. “Art creates a sense of place and engages transit riders” (LA Metro Rider).

The Great Wall of Los Angeles



SPARC’s *Great Wall of Los Angeles* (Photo: sparcmurals.org)

This “tattoo on the scar where the river once ran” in the Tujunga Channel in Burbank is the longest mural in the world at ½ of a mile (Judy Baca Interview 18

November 2011). As fantastic (and enormous) as the final product is, the Great Wall of Los Angeles' greatest success was in its creation process. It is a phenomenal example of the value of the public art process to community. It employed over 400 youth over five summers starting in 1974. The mural is a historical landmark in itself, and chronicles injustices throughout history (JudyBaca.com).

The creation of the work was an enormous collaborative effort highlighting two of SPARC's values: "engaging youth in art and creating community-based work that becomes part of public memory and landscape" (Deitch "The Great Wall of Los Angeles"). In Donna Deitch's short film about the mural, the artists, many of whom had little to no painting experience, share their experience. What they valued about the experience included "having a job," "making money," "getting our name on the wall," "[having] an educational experience" and "making an impression towards ourselves and the community" (Deitch "The Great Wall of Los Angeles"). The mural, as coordinator Judy Baca explains, set a behavioral example. It gave children something to do when they otherwise were told exclusively what not to do (Deitch "The Great Wall of Los Angeles"). This idea was unprecedented in community involvement and helped to establish a model of restorative justice in public art. This model has helped to teach youth to value and be a stakeholder in their environment.

The work of SPARC and the broader Chicano/a mural movement has been dynamic and its message and has transcended the scope of public art. They have done so by using history to empower and critique the present state of Mexican-American livelihood in the United States. History is essential in the formation of identity and art has proven an effective, accessible medium for claiming space for identity representation.

Donna Haraway argues that the marginalized in our society, who are often the prey of capitalist instruments, have a unique and valuable perspective to see history and science (Haraway). The choice of muralists to use historical events, such as SPARC's *Great Wall of Los Angeles*, allows for these marginalized narratives to come through the community and artists who envision the murals. Keafer's thesis focuses on Philadelphia, but uses the example of the Los Angeles Chicano/a mural movement, written about by Schrank and profoundly participated in by SPARC, to show how art has become an outlet for subcultures to express frustration with their host culture (Keafer). Art can spark interest around history and identity in broader and more accessible ways than more traditional forms such as museums and historical sites.

The production value of SPARC's projects is an important factor of their broad access. They have employed new technologies to widen their audience and embrace new media, such as their Digital Mural Lab. By employing new technologies, SPARC has been able to keep history relevant and impactful to the present moment. Exposure to their work and mission is no longer limited to exposure to the piece itself. Their art is surely place-based, but its lessons, mission and tactics are that of a broader movement that has been exemplary throughout the nation.



Close-up of SPARC's *Great Wall of Los Angeles* (Photo: California Cultural and Historical Endowment)

The California Cultural and Historical Endowment has set aside funding for the Great Walls restoration. It will be a worthy investment because of the murals deep historical significance, a significance which could be lost if people cease to understand or have access to the mural. A kickoff event was held to encourage the community to celebrate and reinterpret the mural. Keeping the themes of the mural relevant is not only important to the message of the piece, but the integrity of the piece. Baca explains that “a new generation of taggers is on the street every seven years,” and so a piece of art must remain respected and relevant with the passage of time in order to ensure that it remains fully intact—free of tagging. This event was my first exposure to the mural, which enlightened me to periods of injustice of which I was completely ignorant (Judy Baca Interview 18 November 2011).

The Scene: Los Angeles

The Los Angeles River, the freeways, and the wide roads are some of the many features that make Los Angeles a concrete jungle. The importance of physical place in shaping attitudes and behaviors cannot be undermined. Los Angeles, notorious for its sprawl, faces challenges of access simply because of proximity issues. More sprawl means less urban density and less urban density means less pedestrian visibility for art. Citizens need cars to cover the huge distances, requiring massive private commuter infrastructure for those who have the means to own a car. A series of freeway murals funded by Nike and the Olympic Commission were an attempt to integrate relevant art into aesthetically displeasing infrastructure. The murals were covered up by graffiti and then the city.

Los Angeles is home to some of the best practices and the biggest challenges in the country. A huge area fragmented by borders, class, and access requires an approach that is collaborative and dynamic. The culture is both supportive, as demonstrated by the buzz surrounding the mural policy and the success of the nationally renowned Chicano Mural Movement, but also can be extremely challenging. Murals face challenges of age and vandalism so often that Los Angeles' mural situation is dissimilar from any other city.

Art development in Los Angeles is a massive undertaking that must, and does, transcend borders and red tape. Non-profits have been most successful in facilitating this process and have generated a sense of place, a historical identity carried through a variety of accessible media, a unique urban style, and been active in policy writing. The civic dialogue surrounding the mural debates has been strong and must continue to be strong in evaluating the result.

The places that appear art barren as we travel through Los Angeles seem to demand attention. Why is it that I rarely see public art during my daily rounds? It took me a long time, but I realize now that much of where I am looking are not communities but thoroughfares, and these types of transitional spaces are not necessarily the ones that should be developed, no matter how aesthetically void. For example, the thousands of miles of bare concrete lining the freeways where I spend my time thinking I am becoming acquainted with the city beg for paint and decoration, but that does not make them an effective place for meaningful art. They serve a large quantity of passers-by, but who would the actual community be for art on the freeway? What small-businesses could benefit from their viewership? Wouldn't painting the highways be encouraging people to use infrastructure that is over-used and dependent on limited resources? On the other side of those freeway walls are underserved communities. Instead of putting art up on the freeways, we should focus our efforts on the other sides of the thoroughfares.

I am thankful that I have not even scratched the surface of Los Angeles' public art. I have only been here for four years. Still, any time in Los Angeles is enough to realize how much potential there is for more art, but they must also learn how to respect and take care of the art that already exists.

CHAPTER VI: WHOSE MESSAGE? RECONCILING THE INTENTIONS OF FUNDERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND ARTISTS

This chapter explains and gives examples of some of the processes and channels through which public art is created. I explain how funders, stakeholders, and artists interact and why policy channels are different from more traditional art channels.

Stakeholders, funders, artists and communities are constantly changing, but nevertheless essential in understanding how to approach public art politically and relationally.

Why Policy Constrains Public Art

When public art is written into the language of policy it is constricted by language that is designed for use, function, and implementation. Examples of use include beautification, to remedy urban blight, or to function as a bench or fountain (Jason Manley Interview). The government, as a non-human entity and despite its human participants, is ill equipped to value art or understand its essence. Government has been able to work around its flaws, and governments are one of the biggest funders, supporters and enablers of the arts. Still, government's predispositions towards use, function and implementation constrain public art for several reasons. Historically, non-public art has not had to answer to questions of its use or function, nor has it been implemented (York Chang Interview). The process of art has not been controlled, except in extreme examples of government censorship, because a free and creative process is important to art's creation and meaning, democracy, and national identity.

Definitions of art vary, and defining art is not an objective of this paper. Nevertheless, I will say that art should have some sort of message, but does not need to have a use beyond that message. It is important to understand that public art's message and its use may be different things. For example, a mural of a spaceship around Jupiter may be used to beautify a space or provide visual relief, but its themes of space travel and exploration are secondary to its use. A mural about Jupiter should be about Jupiter, not beautification. If it beautifies, that is an externality.

Sometimes, when policy informs a process, it operates as a medium, like paint is a medium. Because use is embedded within the language of the medium, the art is created

more for its use rather than its message or its artistic quality. It is important that the process and the message are not inhibited by the use-language of policy.

Public art has not had the freedom to be “art for art’s sake” because it is supposed to have a written and quantifiable use. Use is something that all applications for public art funding need to articulate, no matter how direct or subtle the use may be, but I argue that the content of a piece is its use, and that no other function beyond its artistic existence should be demanded of art. Use constraints do not happen in private art, where art is neither a utility nor does it need to be written into policy. “In the last 100 years...artists have been making art for museums, places where art can be ‘strictly itself’” (Finkelpearl 15).

It is my hope that the rhetoric and themes explored in this paper can be helpful to stakeholders looking to shape policy around a better understanding of art, the urban art environment, stakeholders and funding in these two cities. This paper is also for stakeholders looking to fund projects that encourage a freer, less utility driven process. Many share in the desire to use art for social change and to bolster civic identity. While this is a use, it is a use that interacts directly with the art, the message, and the nature of the art process rather than a reason external to the art’s message or content.



Auguste Rodin's *Thinking Man* (Photo: Nolan Borgman)



Auguste Rodin's *Thinking Man* (Photo: Nolan Borgman)

Funding: The Percent for Art Process

Allocating a percentage of development money for art is a wonderful policy for any city because it is sustainable. It guarantees a continuous funding stream for public art, guarding it against budget cuts and scale backs. As outlined in Chapter II, the percent for art concept was born in Philadelphia and has made the experience of walking downtown an artistic one. This union of art and urban planning has been adopted in many cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Portland.

In Los Angeles, a general call is issued and a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) is emailed to about 7000 potential artists, then a narrowing down process leads to a specific proposal. A panel including architects, representatives, planners, community members and artists decides which piece to select (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012).

The benefits of percent for art programs are numerous. For city agencies, it creates a mechanism for funding that is legally binding, locally collaborative, and can offset the negative impacts of development. The program can benefit both agencies and developers through its ability to create a unique look, bolster civic commitment, and help stimulate the local economy.

The benefits are clear for the city, but the specificity of the process can have limiting consequences for artists. Artists put a tremendous deal of thought into their work, and throughout my research I have been impressed with how intentional and attentive to detail the artists I have spoken with have been in the creation of their work. Artists do not need mention all of the levels of their work, nor should they be able to, but are often asked to articulate their ideas and intentions before a committee. The committee should reciprocate and articulate their desires and expectations, not to prescribe but to make the selection process fairer. This articulation of expectations can combat the fear

that art be at the whim of an “I’ll know it when I see it” basis. The “I’ll know it when I see it” approach to art critiquing not only undermines the thought which goes into the art, but it also encourages selectors to be risk averse rather than challenging themselves to seek to understand and appreciate art on many different levels (Anonymous Interview 15 February 2012). Selection committees provide an incredible opportunity to foster relationships between communities and artists, understand a piece in new ways, and set a precedent of discourse. I am not arguing to universalize the process by which art is created or abolish selection committees. There is value to diverse processes. I am arguing that criteria for selection should be articulated and rooted first and foremost in art terms so that the piece that is selected has a relevance and familiarity.

All selection committees are different and have different desires. The goal is for the selection process to be a meaningful part of the art dialogue rather than an arbitrary selection based on undefined characteristics. Stakeholder committees should interact with the piece in a way that creates new possibilities and generates new ideas rather than placing strict limitations and pigeonholing what is created.

It is inevitable that certain themes will be more frequently mentioned among stakeholders. The next section lays out some themes that resonate particularly well with the community and funders; these are themes that constantly change, but are often given as a guiding theme to applying artists.

Arguments that Resonate with Funders: Economy and Culture

In the 20th century, especially around the time of the great depression and the Works Progress Administration, the “Great Nation” argument—the idea that a great nation must have great art and culture—justified many works. Today, the effects of the economic recession have shifted the use of art to be more economic, and so grant writers

have taken to talking about job creation, tourism, and the multiplier effects that art money has been proven to bring along with it to the local economy (York Chang and Jeffrey Bussman Interview 16 January 2012).

Philadelphia, with the help of the National Endowment for the Arts, William Penn Foundation and the Re-Investment Fund is gathering data to measure if a robust culture helps other social issues, as well as using geo-mapping technologies to layer their data and measure the impact of cultural activity on neighborhoods (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012). In Los Angeles, Otis College of Art and Design has been researching the effects of art on the regional economy and published five yearly reports. They report:

- 1) The creative economy is powerful in Southern California. It produces in excess of \$200 billion in total sales and receipts, and is one of the largest employment-generators with over 640,000 direct and indirect jobs.
- 2) The creative economy is even more powerful considering its high multiplier effect on other aspects of our regional economy. For example, the allure and substance of art, design and entertainment in Los Angeles enhance tourism. 20% of tourists to the region are cultural tourists, and are responsible for 30% of tourism revenues because they visit longer and spend more. (2011 Otis Report on the Creative Economy Intro.1)

Wynwood Walls, Miami: A Private-Public Art Development Model:

In the example of Wynwood Walls in Miami, investor Tony Goldman bought the economically depressed area with an eye towards street art. Goldman, who has “created chic restaurants and cafes in New York’s SOHO, Center City Philadelphia, and the other neighborhoods he had been in to help create pedestrian traffic and buzz around his developments (Parmley 22 January 2012)” gave artists free reign over the area and charges nothing to go see it, but the potential for development profits still exists.

It has become internationally acclaimed, one of the most visited art sites in the nation—and deservedly so. It boasts a dynamic gallery of street artists including Aiko, Nunca, Gaia, Shepard Fairey, Invader and Kenny Scharf. Goldman embraces hot models

of public art: graffiti art and privatization of public art. He exemplifies both the profiteer attitude that motivated stipulations on logoism and wall owners compensation for murals in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and the non-governmental support for public art attitude that is needed for a diverse arts culture. It is not surprising that an investor is enabling real art, it happens all the time. What is unprecedented is how this space, which exists at an intersection of two discriminated against forms of art, corporate art and graffiti, both of which are criticized for their branding and logoism, has created a new paradigm of art that the public is actively seeking.



Wynnwood Walls Mural by Jeff Soto, 2009 (Photo: hifructose.com)



Wynwood Walls Mural by Kenny Scharf, 2009 (Photo: lookintomyowl.com)

This strange place is further proof that art happens in ways that are difficult to create policy around. For this reason, the Los Angeles Mural Ordinance is a success in taking on the slogan “let art happen” (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011). This mantra allows multiple channels for art creation, but it does not have the money to support those channels by funding them. This is not a total hang up. As John Arroyo suggested to me at the onset of my research: “while I certainly think that government support for the arts is crucial and necessary, L.A. is a place where there is a lot happening outside of the formal realm. I find that pretty special and interesting. This type of art doesn't always get categorized, but maybe that's ok.”

Ethics: The Value of Art Non-Profits and the Challenges They Face

During my interviews, every single person I spoke with suggested that I speak with a different non-profit dealing with public art. If this paper does not properly acknowledge the presence and passion that exists for public art in non-profits, that is

public art neither governmentally commissioned nor done illegally, then this paper has failed. Public art, at the fear of creating a definition that makes it different from art, is most successful if it is place-based, and can draw on the experience of local ideas and talents. Non-profits bring an administrative and artistic expertise much closer to communities than governmental organizations can. They are more intimate, flexible, and while they often work in the technical worlds of government and funding, their interface and administration is accessible.

Non-profits are at an intersection of community, art, and policy experience. They are the engine of public art dialogue, passion, vision, and action. They know how the process works and are often made up of community representatives. Yet, with so little funding available, many have had to scale back.

When I interviewed Judy Baca, I suggested that she was powerful. I made this suggestion because she is a prolific and respected figure in Los Angeles and a household name in public art circles in Philadelphia. However, Baca has dedicated her life's work towards representing the identity of the marginalized, and she has done so through the non-profit SPARC. She was very clear that there were times when SPARC's doors would have been closed had she not used her own private commissions to foot the bill. While she is powerful in her work, her message and her field, she will continue to be marginalized until we live in a country more with more equality for non-whites, women, artists, and urban centers (Judy Baca Interview 18 November 2011).

In Philadelphia, what is permissible in terms of corporate support for the arts is a slippery slope, one that muralists struggle with every day, especially when the work they need is corporate and goes against their ethics. Jane Golden has walked this slope boldly

in Philadelphia. She explains that compromise is a part of life, a part of politics and a part of community. She proposes that at the end of the day, if most of what she has done is the product of compromise, she is at least happy that something got done at all (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2011). How to reconcile the need for corporate money and the desire for art to be a relief from the logos that line the city is a battle that I feel should be fought in the corner (where the signatures are).



Sidney Goodman's *Boy With Raised Arm* (Photo: Nolan Borgman)

Because the success of many non-profit organizations is a direct result of their human leadership, non-profits are not as predisposed to the limitations of policy. Art communities, even graffiti communities, reflect human views and often have unwritten ethical codes. The ethics can range from not allowing corporate logos in murals to not tagging private property. These codes have a certain ambiguity, and there are always

outliers. In Los Angeles at a Mural Ordinance, I watched as a muralist spoke with anger and passion about a young muralist who accepted a Coca-Cola contract for a mural that this man had rejected on the grounds of community ethics. In the graffiti world of Los Angeles, the work of Shepard Fairey has been scrutinized and in some cases covered up because people feel that his brand exceeds his message; that his work is too commercial; and that he does not do the work himself.

How to Cater to a Public Audience

Art is experience-based and gives way to many different interpretations. Public artists are given the exciting challenge of presenting their work for the general public. Audio tours, pamphlets, sign, online research, book, social media and word of mouth all aid the artist in conveying their piece's intention, but the vast majority of viewers have only the context of their daily experience to draw on when looking at a public piece. Good art, as Laura Griffith tells me, can take time before it is appreciated, but once it is established, it tends to withstand the test of time (Laura Griffith Interview 22 December 2012). Good art, as artist York Chang tells me, exists on many different levels. "Art is sort of like a tumbling diamond, where it is porous, and you can vest it with all types of things and it's refracting many different points of view. And in that sense, where art fails is if it has only one singular didactic purpose, and it fails on all other levels. If it functions in so many ways, maybe that's what Wilde was getting at, is that [art] could be open [by having no function]" (York Chang Interview 26 January 2012).

Viewers of public art are rarely afforded the context of knowing of who the artist is, what other works they have done, what they have to say about their piece, what others are saying about their piece, and what the piece is supposed to mean. Nevertheless, I

would argue that while this information should be more accessible, it is not altogether essential. Knowing the context of a piece does not make a person the ideal audience for a piece nor does it necessarily mean a more meaningful experience viewing it. What is important is that a work continues to be noticed and thought about. The higher the production value of the piece, the more education will result around the piece's themes and intentions, and the viewer will be prone to new understanding.

A public artist must understand that their viewership is diverse, place-based and most likely not comprised of art professionals. Public viewers will draw from different experiences and context; therefore, they will see different things when they look at the same piece. This is a reality of exposure that excites many artists. York Chang and I spoke about this, and he told me that one of the greatest spaces for interpretation is between the artist's intention and the viewer's perception. Throughout this paper, I have attempted to draw on all levels of my experience in the examples I use. From the experiences of seeing a piece for the first time sans context, to speaking with the artist, to seeing a piece after studying it, my interpretations are reflective of diversity of ways in which any person may experience a piece.

Many levels of interpretation exist within each person. There is value in all types of interpretation, especially with public art, because democracy and public discourse are not only for those who consider themselves experts. Unique insights and vantage points arise from different people with different experiences.

CHAPTER VII: ART AND URBAN PLANNING

Identity, which is a reflection of the built environment but extends further into the consciousness of citizens, is a key piece of a city's allure. A sense of city pride

contributes to a mutual self-awareness and an affirmation of a person's daily experience in a given environment. Identity does not always have to necessitate competition, but some of the best examples are competitive. Cities compete in virtually everything. They spend millions on their convention centers to interface with the rest of the world. They vie for the best sports teams, restaurant culture, symphonies, sports teams, etc. It happens in graffiti and it happened throughout the 1990s during the East vs. West rap rivalry.

Philadelphians, known for being die-hard, rowdy sports fans consider their identity very important to them, and perhaps there is a correlation between Philadelphia's civic pride and their likelihood to stay in Philadelphia. Public art and expressions of identities in public space may be a helpful tool in creating a sense of place to fight population transience.

Perhaps the most important competition that cities take part in is the fight for tourism dollars, which, as Los Angeles District 14 Deputy Planner Tricia Robbins explains, depends largely on a city's reputation for arts and culture. In 2010, Los Angeles was second in the United States hosting 3,348,000 overseas visitors and Philadelphia hosted 633,000 (2010 U.S. Census). The culture and art that people see is part of what informs their experience and opinion. Therefore, both residents and visitors would benefit tremendously from more art in places that people frequent, and more importantly, places that people are supposed to frequent.

Robbins, who as a planner must look at demographic behavior, hopes that public art will become an even stronger tool for getting people in the spaces that are underutilized or should be used more, whether by resident or tourist. She and Jason Manley both cited public transportation in Los Angeles as an area of need, the success of

which could be further augmented by more encouragement to use it. This type of use describes where, not what the art should be; it is an unfortunate reality that tourism dollars may dictate where art is placed, but incentivizing behavior that is good for cities is possible through art placement. Whereas Los Angeles' urban center is competing for tourism against the other cities in the county, Philadelphia's Office for Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy is thinking about how their initiatives can reach some of the forgotten peripheral neighborhoods (Gary Steuer Interview 22 February 2012).

Art is so much a part of urban planning that public art is a unique platform to see urban planning unfold. The Fairmount Park Art Association pioneered this relationship, and understands that development of art, or anything for that matter, is easier the earlier in the process you begin to incorporate it. The more integrated public art is the more conceptual freedom the designers have. They are less constricted by the existing infrastructure. By starting to introduce sculpture into urban planning in 1872, the FPAA practiced what assistant director Laura Griffith still considers one of her greatest hopes for Philadelphia: that the city be unprecedented in considering public art from the onset of development projects (Laura Griffith Interview 22 December 2012).

Los Angeles has many examples of art's involvement in the early stages of planning, including the FAA control tower at LAX, the North Hollywood Police Station, and the Sony Pictures Day Care Center. In the case of the Sony Pictures Day Care Center:

The Cultural Affairs Department has made special efforts to foster collaboration between a building's architect and the artist commissioned through the art program...John Oulick describes the benefits of the collaboration as follows: 'When the artist and architect work in conjunction, there is clarity to what is being accomplished and a confidence in choosing the right materials and accuracy in details and

surroundings. The artist provides a freedom of form, while the architect establishes the context and provides an application of the artwork to its surroundings.' (Gerace, Keeley and Reece 57)

It is essential that input and context come from the community as well as the architect; this is an example of architect and artist benefiting from collaborating early on in the conceptual stages of a piece.

It makes sense that art and the urban environment incorporate one another, since theories in urban planning have emerged at the intersection of sociopolitical, place-based identity, and the art of architecture. Public art can be seen as art displayed on and around art if we consider buildings as art. Urban planning approaches the aesthetic sense of a place and so do humans naturally and unprovoked. We decorate our homes just as our ancient ancestors did their caves in Chauvet, France.

Aesthetic sense is essential in attracting and keeping residents. People want to live in a nice place. But once the planner has presented the city, aesthetics, resources, living conditions and all other factors, on the open market, should the people who designed it, built it, govern it, live there, or artists put up art?

They all have a say, and the more processes and people contribute the more identities will be reflected in space. The goal should not be to satisfy every one with every piece, rather to make stakeholders more involved so that they can help realize their vision.

Who is responsible for putting up art varies depending on the context and conditions of the place. In Philadelphia and Los Angeles, two very different cities require two very different approaches. One thing to consider is whether the planning prevents things that otherwise would occur naturally, and by not planning where former plans have failed, allowing something natural to happen. Washington D.C.; Brasilia, Brazil;

Canberra, Australia; the pre 1986 Los Angeles mural policy; and the Los Angeles River, are all examples of where planning could be used to remedy the present flaws of yesterday's planning, but only at the risk of destroying what has begun to develop as a result of the city being lived in. Cities develop from the top and bottom, from the vision of those who govern and those who live there. Public and community art also develop from the top-down and the bottom-up. My recommendations will give examples of action and inaction in order to maximize the use of art as an expression of identity and vehicle for a more livable city.

CHAPTER VIII: DIFFERENT MEDIUMS, DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Los Angeles and Philadelphia approach their mural policies in very different ways, but there is far more to the range of public art jurisdiction than murals. This chapter looks at how Philadelphia and Los Angeles face different challenges and employ different models.

In Philadelphia, the community is involved in decision-making, but the power to put up art lies with a few key players. The process of shaping the environment is an indirect one for most people. This method works because the major art organizations are established and have sought and allocated funds to put towards clear projects. There is a tremendous amount of collective experience within these organizations, which include the Fairmount Park Art Association, Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy (which manages % for the Arts), and the Mural Arts Program. The organization and funding behind the arts infrastructure ensures a standard of quality, but not as much diversity in medium. The MAP deals primarily with murals, the FPAA deals primarily in

sculpture, and the Department of Arts Culture and the Creative Economy upholds a very specific protocol for percent for the Arts, The department has been focusing on augmenting the performing arts lately.

Los Angeles' policy aims to merge public art and private art done in public. To ensure that policy doesn't hinder things from naturally occurring, this hands-off policy makes it very easy for owners to use their space as they see fit. Most public art in Los Angeles is of this type, created privately within the city (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012). The potential for organic, creative and provocative art done directly by the community is great. Unfortunately, so is the potential for conflict and vandalism as a result of community disagreement, even in spite of mandatory community meetings The aesthetic of the environment will represent free speech in an unprecedented way, but as is often the case, landowners will hold disproportionate control over how to use the space and what message to convey. Despite gains in civic participation, local identity and free speech, the power of money and limited resources remain a reality. Of this inequality where landowners will have a disproportionate say, Blackman remarks whimsically, "you can't fault a shark for being a shark" (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011).



JR Wheat Paste Mash-Up with Tanner Blackman (Photo Illustration: Ed Fuentes)

By encouraging a more popular democratic structure, one in which people have some control over what goes up on their property, artists will be less likely to see paycheck or government money for their work. Prejudice and subjectivity in the artist-selection process will also be remedied. Unpopular projects will be less formally addressed and vandalism will take a more personal rather than anti-establishment meaning. Organizations will still play a large role in funding and conceptualizing projects. In both cities organizations rarely enter into the discussion without welcome.

Of the Process in Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs Commission, York Chang comments:

The dangers and the risks are to turn it into “art by committee,” where it’s lowest common denominator, the thing that least offends people. But that is why with the Cultural Affairs Council we are trying to promote a more artist centered public art process, where we choose the artist, not the proposal, and we shield them from the process, and in some ways from the community and introduce them to the site, and let them work. So, in the end it doesn’t have the potential for radical criticality that you may get in a difference context...[the work] has a sort of publicly minded mission, but is less tied up with electoral politics or the politics of a community based

idea of how art should be made...The risk is that the art will be less edgy, but when you see public art that transcends that it is a really beautiful thing to see.

In the Philadelphia example, the art entities in the city collaborate with the community, but ultimately are given the power to act on behalf of the people. Structurally, it is elite democracy because most constituents are represented indirectly. Philadelphia bestows power upon larger channels rather than expecting the average citizen to take putting up public art into their own hands. In the Los Angeles example, the designers of the city more or less allow people to create with their own space and control their own aesthetic, as long as they adhere to a broad set of rules. In both cases, those who claim space are likely to hold power, insofar as they have the backing of the government, the community, corporate money, or ownership of the space. Community involvement's place depends on how liable they make the decision makers to the constituents in the two cities. The mechanisms for ensuring liability are different. However, both landscapes host the potential for tagging and communal outcry if a work does not meet the communities standard, and both organizations and free-actors must understand that their work's quality is presently determined by two key factors: the quality of the work as art and the potential for positive change brought about by the art. My recommendations will seek to bring about positive changes through the quality of the art rather than the specified use of the art.

CHAPTER IX: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Grassroots Organizing and Building a Constituency

This recommendation deals with the potential for community organizing around public art, which can be a strong catalyst for grassroots change (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2011). Public art installation is often the result of organizing efforts. When

a piece is put up in a neighborhood, it means that there was at least one community meeting that led to a community victory. When a piece is put up, it generally means that the desire for change, the power and the networks are all in place for the next steps of community organizing. Organizing victories can lead to more victories with much of the groundwork already done or underway. If the constituents are passionate, mobilized, empowered and the momentum for change is still in place, there is huge potential for concrete change. Winning a public piece is a great jumping off point for further community improvement organizing, but this policy also suggests that there be an organization or public entity which follows up public art installations to stimulate discourse and advise further organizing efforts.

Community organizers often use tactics such as events, rallies, and coalition building to fight for equality and change in neighborhoods (Bobo). Public art provides incredible opportunities for public discourse because it exists in public space and often carries profound themes of social justice and equality. Throughout this paper, I look at how art provides access to identity, history, and community, all of which are empowering and all of which are present in the fight for social justice. Public art also provides opportunities for coalition building, where community organizations can link up with established arts organizations that have resources, an understanding of policy and power dynamics, and a desire to bring change to communities. The best time to organize around the arts is right after a piece is actualized, while the themes are relevant and people feel a sense of their power (Bobo).

Recommendation #2: Leaving the River Alone

Throughout modern history, humans have forged the Los Angeles River's course, even before the Army Corps of Engineers paved the river with 3 million barrels of concrete (Arroyo). The river has been constantly diverted, planned and tailored to suit or react to humans needs (Pat Gomez Interview 17 February 2012). Human intervention may have helped with flooding, but it has not helped the river's course. It has not been able to sustain itself, nor the humans it serves. In Los Angeles, humans need civic space. Yet, in thinking about how to encourage civic space happening, we make the same mistakes of history in influencing the direction of the river.

Initially, I wanted to propose that the Los Angeles River be left alone, but I found myself eager to encourage more things to happen there faster, so I thought of creating various "legal" sections where graffiti would be permissible. I for one am tired of seeing white patches all over the river where pieces of graffiti were covered up, and I'm not too fond of paying taxes towards these white blotches either.

The problem with the legal wall idea is that it is not derived from listening to the artists, nor the river. Graffiti as a mode of expression fundamentally changes when it becomes legal. Many taggers tag out of frustration that they do not feel heard, represented, or valued by the systems of power. Some taggers tag because it feels good to see their name in public, because it feels good to interact with the urban landscape, and because they want to destroy things that represent a system in which they feel no stake. As long as the fight against graffiti seeks to punish, and is a response mechanism of the establishment that taggers are revolting against, there will be ample incentives to tag. Rather than teach, grant access, and make people feel like active and valued citizens;

rather than aim to give people who feel voiceless access to a mode of participation and a forum that engages them, we spend millions trying to catch and incarcerate them.

“In order to convict you of vandalism under Penal Code 594 PC, the prosecutor must prove the following facts (otherwise known as "elements of the crime"): 1. That you "defaced with graffiti or other inscribed material", damaged, or destroyed another person's property, 2. That you did so maliciously, and 3. That the amount of the defacement, damage, or destruction was either (a) less than \$400 in a misdemeanor prosecution, or (b) \$400 or more in a felony prosecution” (Shouselaw.com California Vandalism Law Penal Code 594 PC). In FY2010-11, Los Angeles has removed 35,699,200 feet in 616,792 incidents (Los Angeles Board of Public Works, Office of Community Beautification Graffiti Removal). By definition, legal graffiti is somewhat paradoxical, although painting in graffiti style has been a tremendously successful medium in its own right.

In desiring legal walls, I aimed to give access and a voice to a demographic that feels unrepresented. But I completely underwrote the idea that the river should be left alone so that more art could be seen around Los Angeles. I realize that quantity does not mean quality and that the establishment criticality that much graffiti carries looks to its rebellious history in carrying on tradition. If we allow graffiti to happen, we are changing what it means and changing its identity. If we allow graffiti to happen, we are not listening to its message, we are ignoring it when our reaction is critical to its message. If we continue to crack down, we are energizing the message and graffiti incidence will continue to rise. If graffiti were allowed on the river, would that be a victory for graffiti artists, the city, neither, or both?

Legal walls operate as a visually stimulating, collaborative space of civic participation, discourse, and imagination. Legal walls are not graffiti and are not a substitute for the graffiti message. They will not solve the graffiti problem nor should they seek to. The potential for the Los Angeles River to be, like Wynwood Walls in Miami, an awe inspiring cite for graffiti style painting is tempting; but, the Los Angeles River's history, beauty, and hideousness is far too profound and longstanding to aspire to be a legal wall. It is its own entity, has its own identity, and changing what it is and what it does would be another example of a vision for the future overlooking what is at present one of Los Angeles' most prized features. Some of the most well-known art in Los Angeles was illegally done on the river. Because the Los Angeles River serves as civic space, our focus should not be on changing the river, it should be on granting communities access to the river in the ways they desire so that it can serve us by being what it is, rather than serve us by attempting to become something else or something uniform.

Recommendation #3: Public Requirement for Museums

Many museums choose to have a public component to their outreach, but there is no firm requirement. Examples of public components include Philadelphia Museum of Art's Zoe Strauss exhibit and LACMA's Ai Weiwei sculpture "Circle of Heads." This type of public outreach should be mandatory or encouraged through incentives, grants and funding.

Most urban residents do not go to museums, a phenomenon that Golden described bluntly: "We started talking about art and people [in the neighborhood] were saying, 'Look around, the only visual stimulation we have here are billboards advertising alcohol

and tobacco. Our kids never see beauty, and p.s., we don't go to the art museum or Kelly drive to look at sculpture. We just don't" (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2012). Given this reality, the gesture of bringing the museum outdoors, as the FPAA has sought to do for over 100 years, has tremendous potential for a more inclusive arts culture (Laura Griffith Interview 22 December 2012). Art has the potential to promote equality and identity, but is less capable of doing so when it is in a place that is frequented by only a fraction of the population. In California, museums are exempt from sales and use taxation if they are free, but they do not have to post or advertise that they are free (California State Board of Equalization). In New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a listed admission price, but it states that the admission is only a suggested donation amount. This is a very helpful tactic in generating revenue, but is also regressive insofar as it dissuades less affluent visitors from entering the museum.

Public-private partnerships, like the Mural Arts Program, directly engage the question of whether the government has an ethics of art. They provide the opportunity for new processes, new channels and new ideas without being limited by a functional disposition. Private organizations are not entirely conducive to an arts ethics and an art disposition. They are disposed to corporate interest, self-interest, class hierarchy, and mechanical structure. Still, allowing non-governmental agencies to control some of the public arts production within the city could establish a stronger relationship between the public and private sector and bring new perspective to the public art process.

This policy recommendation has two main suggestions: to allow private arts organizations to advise government projects and to make museums have an outdoor or municipal component. If we put a fraction of museum endowments towards a mandatory

public exhibition, rather than trying to make museums more of a universal public good by taxing the price of admission as Pennsylvania did (unsuccessfully), museums could stimulate a wider interest in the arts. This component would ensure that a high level of experience, quality and thought goes into public art, not by giving a piece of their endowment to the government to create art but by managing the projects themselves. Because the government designates value to its possessions based on their value to the government, not people, it fundamentally does not have the same experience as museums in determining the value and quality of things that do not have a distinct utility. Allowing museums to try their hand at public art that is not directly on their campus is a great way to expand the ways in which art is created.

Recommendation #4: Inclusionary Billboard Zoning

The Zoe Strauss exhibit discussed in Recommendation #3 and in the Philadelphia case study inspires this recommendation. The Philadelphia Museum of Art wrote of the exhibit, “The billboards will exhibit Zoe Strauss’s photos without informative text, branding or logos. They effectively eliminate 53 spaces available for commercial advertising. The Billboard Project is for both residents and visitors, and can be seen simultaneously as a homecoming and a journey” (Zoe Strauss Billboard Project). Seeing Strauss’ subject matter displayed in lieu of advertisements on billboards throughout Philadelphia spoke to the everyday experience of Philadelphians that Jane Golden found when she started working in neighborhoods plagued with advertisements and blight:

I was working with graffiti writers where the only other visible city workers were the police. These were neighborhoods that were completely neglected for 20 or 30 years... the only visual stimulation [they had there were] billboards advertising alcohol and tobacco...Being in these neighborhoods was very overwhelming, but there was also a passion and a

resilience that I was taken with. It was very clear that the idea of art was a luxury...it became clear that if we could create a partnership between the artist and the community and figure out a collaborative process, then maybe art could be seen as something that was part of that neighborhood instead of something that was imposed. Someone said to me, "I want to be very clear, things are done to us or not done." So I thought this is not going to be top-down, this is not going to be prescribed, this is not going to be art that is parachuted in from the sky, this is going to be art that has great intentions between the art organizers the artists and us. (Jane Golden Interview 27 December 2011)

Strauss' candid photos capture the passion and individuality of everyday people.

They reminded me of the work of Philadelphia's anti-poverty non-profit Media Mobilizing Project, whose slogan is, "movements begin with the telling of untold stories" (Mediamobilizingproject.org). Strauss' billboards told untold stories instead of advertising brands. They advertised the identity of place and people through art using a medium that Los Angeles Company Billboard Connection Advertising calls, "a dominating presence that cannot be turned off, ignored or thrown away unopened. Billboards remain the true 24/7 form of advertising" (Billboard Connection Advertising). Billboard prices vary based on size and location, but Business Amateur estimates their cost ranging between \$700-2500 (Business Amateur).

This policy is adapted from inclusionary zoning housing policy, an unrealized proposal which would have made 10% of newly built housing units in Los Angeles into affordable housing units (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom) In borrowing a similar structure, if 10% of billboards throughout the city were dedicated towards art, it would provide visual relief from advertisements, get people talking about art rather than products, encourage a local identity, and employ local artists.

This policy, allocating billboards towards fine art, is timely given that "Los Angeles has a chance to replace New York as the world capital of advertising" (James

and Chmielewski 26 March 2012). Inclusionary zoning for billboards would leverage advertisements towards gains in quality of life, art culture, and tourism. Especially given that “advertising is proliferating at an alarming rate with 800 new digital billboards among giant super graphics that now dominate our downtown. Advertising giants simply pay the fines and continue illegal signage. Murals are replaced daily by advertising in every square inch of our eye space” (Baca “The Current Plight of Los Angeles Murals”). Even if rather than 10% of billboards going towards art and instead only unrented billboards were put towards art, cities would benefit. Even if billboards were put towards small, local businesses rather than art, cities would benefit.

This new channel for public art would give photography a more prominent forum in public. The space and installation would come from the billboard companies, who could write off the expense. The city cultural department could control the artist selection process, but a committee with representation (and potentially vetoing power) for the billboard company would be necessary in negotiating this policy. Allowing private organizations to influence what went up would be a conflict of interest, since private organizations have a more direct incentive to advertise than government. Funders could include ad-busters, art grants, and the public art requirement for museums suggested in Recommendation #2, but any advertising of funders would cripple the message of eliminating advertisement spaces.

Recommendation #5: Increased Restorative Justice

This policy employs a simple idea: spend money on art, not prison. As long as schools are funded by states, every state should aim to educate rather than incarcerate. As a tutor and observer at two different high schools in Los Angeles, I have watched

hundreds of kids doodle during class, don decorated backpacks, express themselves through artistic visual displays, and participate in the performing arts. When I ask students what their favorite subjects are, “art” is the most common response. Kids should not fear education because it does not pique their interest.

Rather than continuing the trend of failing inner-city education and high prison spending, which is an especially profound reality in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, we must make sure that we are not putting people in jails for minor counts of vandalism and tagging. “Incarceration of a single youth has been estimated at 250,000 annually and criminalization of our youth is no longer a feared outcome but a documented fact in ever increasing numbers. It is possible for example to go to prison for life with three strikes on graffiti violations that are felonies (those causing over 500.00 of damage)” (Baca “The Current Plight of Los Angeles Murals”). Putting convicted vandals towards a constructive and educational cause is a better idea than spending money to put them in jails that are overly full. “According to the National Council to Prevent Delinquency (NCPD), about 80% of graffiti is "tagger" graffiti". Another 5% are "pieces," or large visuals. Nationally, gang graffiti makes up about 10%. In some cities, however, the amount of gang graffiti may be higher” (Graffiti Hurts). In cases where graffiti is gang graffiti, additional intervention may be necessary beyond the reach of graffiti restorative justice.

As Adam Skolnick of the Fiscal Times reports, “At \$50 billion spent on corrections a year nationwide, it’s the second-largest state expenditure behind Medicaid. To put it another way, one out of every 15 state dollars is spent on corrections in this country. Not coincidentally, one in 31 American adults are adrift in this bloated corrections matrix, stretching resources razor thin” (Skolnick). Efforts to abate graffiti,

investigate offenders, and incarcerate convicted Graffiti artists are very expensive. Judy Baca describes the situation in Los Angeles:

We have lost 60% of the murals of Los Angeles to tagging by a new generation of street kids who have neither mural programs nor a relationship to the murals via having had an opportunity to work on one or knowing someone who worked on one. We have 10 million being spent to abate graffiti in the city and 30 million from the County of LA annually to remove the growing proliferation of graffiti. (Baca “The Current Plight of Los Angeles Murals”)

Using art for educational purposes and employing youth, especially convicted vandals as part of their service requirement, was pioneered by SPARC in Los Angeles and the Anti-Graffiti Network in Philadelphia (Judy Baca Interview 18 November 2011). It has since been widely practiced, thus this recommendation is as much a mention of a great practice as a recommendation in itself. It is a recommendation because there is always room for more restorative justice education. As Judy Baca maintains, we often tell the youth what not to do, but we do not tell people what to do often enough (Deitch “The Great Wall of Los Angeles”).

CHAPTER X: CONCLUSION

Public art is guided by policy, making its process a medium in itself. Private art, more commonly referred to as simply “art,” is not limited in this way. When I visit the Getty or the Barnes Foundation, I was not looking at private art but “art.” The art in this paper is seen as public art because public has become a genre and a medium, but these works are art too, and we are doing them an injustice not to approach them with the same criticality that we approach other art forms.

The differences between public art and art exist largely in funding, process, and accessibility. Differences between the definition of public art and private art should be in

funding and accessibility only, rather than in freedom of process, in quality, in content, and in message. The earlier in the process of planning that art is involved, the more freedom the artist is given to incorporate their themes into the built environment.

Currently, the process and the expectations of public art make it a completely different and more marginalized thing than art. This occurs because policy implies utility and because a wide viewership is interpreted to necessitate a safer message. As long as “art” and “public art” are considered such vastly different things, “public art” will suffer from its restrictions. Some people prefer to use the term “community art” because they feel the term “public art” has connotations of inferior quality. I do not hold such a view, but hope that the line between art and public art blurs. The line is blurred when all channels of expression from government-sanctioned art to private art in public to graffiti are employed in creating meaningful art in the public realm.

In this paper I looked at some of the great things happening when art and its urban context interact, regardless of whether I consider each piece utilitarian art or art for art’s sake. Great art will lead to a strong cultural identity, which is one of the most important factors in the fight for tourism dollars. All art is meaningful, but it is actually most useful to us as humans when we do not restrict its meaning by expecting it to serve a purpose. What I hope is that the reader came away understanding that when art (and culture) are written into policy, they are restricted by their designations; and that restrictions to art (and culture) in the public realm hinders the ability of these mediums to carry their message. Tanner Blackman has attempted to reconcile art and policy by creating a mural ordinance around the slogan “let art happen” (Tanner Blackman Interview 8 December 2011).

In order to reconcile stakeholders, and in the face of extreme examples of art that was not fit for public viewership such as Marcel Duchamp's *Urinal* or Zuidervaat's example, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, there must be a greater effort to understand that art generates public discourse, and is essential to local identity, democracy, and community. When looking at art, we must remind ourselves that there is value to things that are different, reflect differing experience and take a different stance from one's own. Accepting difference is critical to society. The diversity of cities is one of their greatest assets, and the dialectic that art stimulates is one of the best ways to turn diversity from an underutilized demographic trait into a strong identity trait.

This topic and set of recommendations both require further research. A more complete mapping of jurisdictions, power relationships, costs and available resources in these cities would help to highlight areas of need and reify the recommendations. Fostering a relationship between private and public art institutions could help to bring a more art minded constituency to the policy driven process of putting up public art. A quantitative assessment of whether citizens feel access to public art and identity representation by public art would measure whether art is enhancing local identity and actually stimulating discourse and social awareness.

Other areas of need include how to reconcile different jurisdictions and different expectations for the arts as a catalyst for social justice, how to obtain funding based on the message of art before an artist is chosen, and how to ensure that art's potential for conveying a message, carrying contemporary dialectics, and reflecting diverse identities is being maximized.

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