

Putting Creativity to Work

by Kris Nelson and DeAnna Cummings



A mural titled "Putting Creativity to Work," by TATS CRU, Inc. (www.tatscru.com), commissioned by the Minnesota Bruner/Loeb Forum to illustrate the discussions and ideas from the two-day conference. The mural is located on the corner of West Broadway and Emerson Avenue North.

Arts and culture-based revitalization strategies have been widely heralded as relatively easy fixes that can provide cities with a competitive economic edge. However, recent research has also shown that when cultural strategies are not socially rooted in the local communities they inhabit, economic disparities can be exacerbated. The Twin Cities metropolitan region has some of the worst racial disparities in employment, housing, and education in the nation.¹ Despite the region's overall historical prosperity and a national reputation for a thriving arts scene, it continues to struggle with how to extend to everyone the strengths and benefits the region enjoys. North Minneapolis is a community that suffers disproportionately from seeming unequal access to opportunities and uneven life outcomes. Its burgeoning arts and cultural community are central to discussions about how to close the gaps in health, education, and employment that exist between various racial/ethnic groups, and to support communities that have experienced disinvestment and have been left out of the

regional affluence of the past several decades.

The 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum in Minneapolis, titled "Putting Creativity to Work: Stronger Communities through Locally Rooted Art and Design" demonstrated how cross-sector leaders from around the country are working to lessen inequalities and build thriving cities and localities using arts and cultural engagement as the spark, the catalyst, and the foundation. Through the lens of the Bruner/Loeb Forum, which was cosponsored by CURA, this article makes a case for neighborhood-scale participatory arts and culture as an effective metropolitan community-development strategy, especially in areas stratified by class and race.

Stronger Communities through Locally Rooted Art and Design

In recent years, creativity has gained recognition as an economic-development strategy. Cities have embraced the theories of author Richard Florida, who proposes that a "creative class" is a central element to bolstering regional comparative economic advantage. However, Florida himself acknowledges in his 2005 book, *Cities and the Creative Class*, that the growth of the creative class can also increase economic inequality. Professors Mark Stern and Susan Seifert from the University of

Pennsylvania have studied the economic and social impact of the arts in cities. In "From Creative Economy to Creative Society," they conclude, "Public policy promoting the creative economy has two serious flaws: one, a misperception of culture and creativity as a product of individual genius rather than collective activity; and, two, a willingness to tolerate social dislocation in exchange for urban vitality or competitive advantage" (p. 1). They also state that, "By building social networks within and between neighborhoods, cultural engagement fosters collective capacity, especially in low-wealth communities" (p. 5). They propose that revitalization efforts that support a neighborhood-based creative economy have the potential to create "shared prosperity and social integration" (p. 1).²

It was within this context that organizers convened the 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum in Minneapolis (see sidebar, p. 20). The purpose of the forum was to explore the central role that the arts, culture, and the creative sector play in revitalizing neighborhoods, growing economies, and bringing together diverse groups of people in meaningful ways. North Minneapolis was examined

¹ In Minneapolis, for example, Blacks are 3.1 times as likely as Whites to be without jobs, regardless of income and education. See A. Austin, "Uneven Pain: Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race," *Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief 278* (2010) 1-11, www.epi.org/publications/entry/ib278.

² M.J. Stern and S.C. Seifert, "From Creative Economy to Creative Society," *Creativity and Change* (January 2008), 16 pp.

with special focus as a case study in which the debates about creative economy and social capital are at play. The 120 invited participants included designers, artists, developers, planners, funders, resident leaders, elected officials, and policy makers. Local tours and an exhibition complemented presentations from nationally known leaders in the field (see sidebar, p. 21)

What's Possible?

The Bruner/Loeb Forum illustrated how positive equitable transformation is possible when art-and-design-based initiatives grow out of the local neighborhoods that they inhabit and are intended to impact. Presenters shared their insights and real-life examples of their work. They demonstrated how arts and cultural engagement is stimulating cross-interest collaboration, stemming neighborhood decline, and in some cases leading to systemic change. Five best practices emerged as instrumental to the success of this work.

- ▶ **Building and linking the social, human, and cultural assets of a community with the development of its physical and economic capital is necessary to achieve equitable neighborhood revitalization outcomes.** Project Row House, based in Houston's Third Ward, was founded on the principle that art and the community it creates can be the foundation for revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods where capital investment has waned. In 1993, local artists came together to establish a positive creative presence in this historically Black neighborhood. Starting with 20 abandoned row houses that were restored to provide 12 exhibition and residency spaces for Black artists, Project Row House now spans five city blocks, includes 30 units of affordable housing, and has spawned a community development corporation. Founder Rick Lowe described seeing the abandoned houses as an opportunity to bridge a community need. He stated that intimate listening and active engagement of community members (often over a game of dominoes) was critical for this transformative process to be successful. Project Row House partnered with other community institutions—including nearby K–12 schools, universities, and a hospital—to understand the broader role the iconic houses could serve

The Bruner/Loeb Forum

The Bruner/Loeb Forum is a partnership between the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/) and the Loeb Fellowship Program (www.gsd.harvard.edu/loebfell). The goal of the Bruner/Loeb Forum is to advance the thinking on a wide variety of challenges facing cities, and to make the learning and creative thinking inherent in Rudy Bruner Award winners and in the work of Loeb fellows available to practitioners and policy makers across the country.

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, a national award for urban places, was established in 1987 by the Bruner Foundation. It discovers and celebrates urban places distinguished by quality design and by their social, economic, and contextual contributions to the urban environment. The selection process involves mayors of major metropolitan areas and other experts in the urban-built environment in honoring five urban places in each biennial award cycle.

The Loeb Fellowship Program, established in 1970 at the Harvard University Design School, offers midcareer fellowships each year to 10 to 12 outstanding professionals working to improve the built and natural environment. Fellows are drawn from many professions, including architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, design journalism, the arts, and community development.

The Bruner/Loeb Forum brings together Rudy Bruner Award winners and Selection Committee members, Loeb fellows and alumnae, and distinguished practitioners from across the country to discuss the challenges facing cities today and to present innovative solutions to those challenges. Two forums are offered each year—one in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the fall and one in a different part of the country in the spring.

in the city. The work of Project Row House demonstrates the power of the arts to engage community members and local institutions where they are to link social, human, and cultural capital with neighborhood revitalization efforts.

- ▶ **The vision, creativity, and voices of youth are central to building strong communities.** Inner-City Arts (ICA) is an oasis of learning, achievement, and creativity in Los Angeles's Skid Row neighborhood. Skid Row, with its concentration of social-service organizations, is the epicenter for the more than 100,000 homeless people living in the city. More than 30,000 children live in dire conditions within 2.5 miles of ICA. Cynthia Harnisch, ICA president and CEO, described how the organization takes a stand for kids in the midst of these conditions. It serves as the after-school program for 10,000 Los Angeles public school children every year. Schools bus children to ICA for art classes taught by professional artists in well-equipped studios in a range of subject areas within visual, performing, and media arts. Children who attend ICA classes have higher

achievement on statewide standardized tests, reduced dropout rates, and are better able to manage their lives and participate in their education. The creative skills they master equip them to participate in the 21st century creative workforce and help make their communities stronger.

- ▶ **Art has the power to catalyze change, activate space, and engage and organize community. Art builds wealth.** Theaster Gates is an artist, musician, and director of arts program development at the University of Chicago. His work is focused on the South Side of Chicago, a Black community that has seen tremendous population declines due to deindustrialization and foreclosures. Gates's goal is to help build a community where people choose to stay, rather than flee to "better" neighborhoods, when their lives improve. His projects include art installations in forgotten vacant spaces, pop-up venues in the neighborhood where his musical group Black Monks of Mississippi performs, and converting an abandoned building into a library to give the public access to a collection from an out-of-business

architectural bookstore. Using reused materials and vacant buildings, he creates spaces for workshops, exhibitions, and other public events. He is currently pursuing a project with the Chicago Housing Authority to convert some public housing on the South Side into an artist community for residents. Gates's work demonstrates the potential for cross-interest collaboration across multiple scales to stem disinvestment in low-income communities.

► **Rooting the work in communities through authentic engagement with residents and place-based efforts is the foundation for sustainable neighborhood revitalization efforts.** The Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) is an American Indian community-development organization—the first of its kind—created by and for American Indians. It is an alliance of the major American Indian nonprofits and several Indian businesses in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Executive director Justin Huenemann has integrated the arts into NACDI's work to build consensus in the East Phillips neighborhood, brand this historic American Indian community as the American Indian cultural corridor, and achieve broader community and economic-development goals to develop and promote the corridor as a regional asset and destination. Based on the belief that community transformation must be led by the people most affected by change, NACDI has used a community-organizing process to increase youth leadership, intergenerational interaction, and collaboration between American Indian and non-American Indian neighborhood groups that have historically been fractured. NACDI's work is centered on culture as a community asset, organizing tool, and economic-development strategy.

► **Silos do not work. New, diverse, cross-sector collaborations are necessary to address the complex, interconnected issues facing communities.** The successful passage of the Minnesota Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment in 2008 demonstrates the value of cross-sector collaborations. Sheila Smith, executive director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, was instrumental in this initiative, which mandated a three-eighths-percent increase in

2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum Speakers

Kate Barr, executive director, Nonprofits Assistance Fund, Minneapolis, MN
 Tom Borrup, principal, Creative Community Builders, Minneapolis, MN
 Brandy H.M. Brooks, director, Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, Boston, MA
 Simeon Bruner, founder, Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, Boston, MA
 DeAnna Cummings, founder and executive director, Juxtaposition Arts, Minneapolis, MN
 Roger Cummings, founder and artistic director, Juxtaposition Arts, Minneapolis, MN
 Jeremiah Ellison, artist, Juxtaposition Arts, Minneapolis, MN
 James Garrett, Jr., AIA, chief executive officer, 4RM+ULA Architecture, St. Paul, MN
 Theater Gates, artist and director of arts program development for the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
 Edward G. Goetz, director, CURA, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
 Cynthia Harnisch, president and CEO, Inner-City Arts, Los Angeles, CA
 Justin Kii Huenemann, president and CEO, Native American Community Development Institute, Minneapolis, MN
 Seitu Ken Jones, visual artist and Minneapolis Artist-in-Residence, St. Paul, MN
 Rick Lowe, founding director, Project Row House, Houston, TX
 Dan Pitera, associate professor of architecture, University of Detroit Mercy, and director, Detroit Collaborative Design Center, Detroit, MI
 David Ralston, redevelopment project manager, Oakland Community & Economic Development Agency, Oakland, CA
 R.T. Rybak, mayor, City of Minneapolis, MN
 Jason Schubach, director of design, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC
 Sheila M. Smith, executive director, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, St. Paul, MN
 James Stockard, curator, Loeb Fellowship, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA

Presentations are available online at www.youtube.com/user/JuxtaMPLS.

the Minnesota sales tax dedicated to fund land and water conservation, parks, and the arts for the next 25 years. A coalition of more than 300 advocacy groups came together and organized to pass the historic initiative. As Smith explained, she learned that when working to make systemic changes, organizing across silos is more powerful than trying to go it alone. Despite the philosophical differences among the coalition members—which included artists, hunters, and environmentalists—all shared a common commitment to preserve Minnesota's quality of life. By focusing on this shared goal, coalition groups pooled their resources and activated their diverse constituencies, and were able to garner a record 56% approval for the amendment, which is the first of its kind in the nation.

Creativity Is at Work in North Minneapolis

At the heart of West Broadway Avenue, the main commercial corridor in north Minneapolis, sits Juxtaposition Arts (Juxtaposition). Juxtaposition develops community by engaging and employing young urban artists in hands-on education initiatives that create pathways to self-sufficiency while actualizing creative power. Through design education, youth employment, cross-disciplinary collaboration, relevant engagement with the local community, and an arts-based social-enterprise business model, Juxtaposition is catalyzing the energy and talent of Minneapolis youth for individual and community impact. Recognized nationally as one of the top out-of-school-time arts programs for young people, Juxtaposition has had an important leadership role in the Northside's developing



Attendees participate in small-group discussions at the Bruner/Loeb Forum in April.

revitalization efforts. Throughout the Bruner/Loeb Forum, participants had the opportunity to see, hear, and feel Juxtaposition's 15 years of experience using arts and culture to enrich the lives of young people and build the strength of their community. In addition, north Minneapolis was used as a case study for conference participants and presenters to apply their collective experience and new ideas sparked by the forum to brainstorm strategies for more viable, equitable community-development efforts.

Although Minneapolis as a whole is still predominantly White (64%), data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that more than two-thirds of north Minneapolis residents are people of color. The majority of residents are Black (44%), with a significant and growing Asian (13%) and Latino (8%) population. According to the American Community Survey, 2005–2009, the Northside community poverty rate is 31%, compared with 11% for Hennepin County. Nearly one-third of the community is under the age of 18, and young people on the Northside represent more than 25% of Minneapolis youth. At the forum, Ed Goetz, director of CURA, sketched the history and present socioeconomic outcomes for Twin Citians, which are graphically unequal for White residents and racial minorities (many of whom are concentrated in north Minneapolis). Goetz stated that north Minneapolis

residents suffer disproportionately from the seeming inability of the Twin Cities to “diversify gracefully” (see sidebar, page 23).

Juxtaposition Arts artistic director and cofounder Roger Cummings described how the organization is engaging the community's greatest assets—an abundant youth population—as creative problem solvers who use arts and culture as an avenue to build a vibrant and more equitable community. Juxtaposition has had great success in convening cross-disciplinary individuals and groups who engage in trust-building creative endeavors that accomplish significant shared goals. For example, since 2008 the West Broadway Business Association and the City of Minneapolis have employed Juxtaposition youth and artists to design and build two “pocket” sculpture parks on previously underutilized lots in north Minneapolis. Juxtaposition has an ongoing partnership with Kwanzaa Church, and in 2007 the organizations received a CURA grant to partner with youth and artists from the community to create sidewalk art with public health messages about preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS to be displayed during a day-long festival. In addition, Juxtaposition worked with Minneapolis Artist-in-Residence Seitou Ken Jones on a design and research process that informed the public art component of the West Broadway Alive master plan, which proposes art as a focal point for

development in the area during the next 20 years.

Much of this work has been undergirded by a synergistic working relationship with the University of Minnesota's Department of Landscape Architecture and CURA that has been ongoing since 2005. Three courses are at the center of this work: a Juxtaposition after-school program for students ages 13–18 on art and design, urban spaces, and hip hop; a University of Minnesota Department of Landscape Architecture graduate design studio; and a University of Minnesota College of Design undergraduate seminar on urbanism. More than 200 University students and 60 middle- and high-school students have participated. They have explored the ways physical environments shape people's daily lives and imagined new, vibrant, people-focused futures for West Broadway and the people who live and work in the community. This work has contributed to the City of Minneapolis West Broadway Alive master plan, which the West Broadway Business Area Coalition is helping to implement through an arts-façade grant program.

The Twin Cities is widely recognized for its vibrant arts and cultural economy; however, there is a growing concern that the industry is losing its competitive edge. Governor Mark Dayton's office recently convened a conversation of art and design leaders to discuss strategies for maintaining tourism and the other economic advantages of a thriving creative economy. One significant challenge to the industry is its lack of diversity. The major arts institutions, art schools, and advertising, design, and architecture firms in the Twin Cities have not kept pace with the changing demographics of the population, and their staff are overwhelmingly White.

North Minneapolis is underrepresented in terms of formal arts venues, businesses, and creative services available in the area. Recognizing that an abundant population of youth of color is the Northside's greatest asset and a wellspring of untapped creative genius, Juxtaposition leaders, artists, and youth are working with neighborhood and city stakeholders to build consensus around two premises: locally rooted arts can be the engine for social and economic development in north Minneapolis; and developing and engaging the natural creative genius in north Minneapolis is key to the growth and sustainability of the creative industries in the Twin Cities.

Snapshot of North Minneapolis

- ▶ Since the 1890s, north Minneapolis has been identified as the working man's neighborhood and a gateway for new immigrants. It has been a transitional community that provides affordable housing, as well as social, education, and economic services. Beginning in the 1920s, strict housing covenants forced Blacks and Jews—who were legally prevented from living in other areas of the city—into north Minneapolis. Black migration from Chicago and other nearby Midwest cities in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in White flight, and Black residents become the majority.
- ▶ The Twin Cities' Black population has its cultural roots in north Minneapolis. The Phyllis Wheatley Community center opened its doors there in 1924 as a settlement house founded by a group of local women who were concerned about the living conditions of the area's Black population. The Grammy-award winning musician Prince performed his first show in 1979 at the Capri Theater on West Broadway in north Minneapolis. It is also home to the Center for Communication and Development/KMOJ Radio, which was created in 1976 to provide broadcast communications training for people of color living in the Twin Cities. The station call letters were inspired by the Swahili word *umoja*, which means "unity."
- ▶ Two-thirds of north Minneapolis residents are people of color, compared to one-third of the population in the rest of the city, and one-fourth of the Twin Cities regional population.
- ▶ A 2010 study found that Blacks in the Twin Cities are more than three times as likely as Whites to be unemployed, the worst disparity in the nation.^a Economic, crime, health, education, and housing disparities in Minnesota, which are amongst the worst in the entire nation, are acutely concentrated in north Minneapolis neighborhoods.
- ▶ Rates of mortgage denials to Blacks in Minnesota—even after controlling for income, credit history, and employment history—is among the worst in the nation.^b
- ▶ As in most cities across the country, predatory lending was concentrated in communities of color in the Twin Cities. Almost half of the foreclosed properties in Minneapolis are on the Northside. As of September 2010, there were 3,500 vacant properties in north Minneapolis.^c
- ▶ In 2008, Minneapolis's four-year high school graduation rate for White students was 69.5%; it was just 33.5% for African American students.^d
- ▶ Teen pregnancy rates are more than twice as high in north Minneapolis as they are in the rest of the city, and babies on the Northside are also more likely to be born with a low birth weight.^e
- ▶ The Fourth Precinct, encompassing the entire Northside, contained only 18% of the city's population in 2006, but 48% of its homicides.^f

^a A. Austin, "Uneven Pain: Unemployment by Metropolitan Area and Race," *Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief*, #278, June 8, 2010. www.epi.org/page/-/ib278/ib278.pdf?nocdn=1.

^b Lenders were substantially more likely to deny loans to people of color, regardless of their income. The denial rate for Blacks with incomes above \$157,000 was 25%, whereas it was just 11% for Whites making \$39,250. Institute on Race and Poverty, "Communities in Crisis: Race and Mortgage Lending in the Twin Cities," February 2009. www.irpumn.org/uls/resources/projects/IRP_mortgage_study_Feb_11th.pdf.

^c U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "HUD Aggregated USPS Administrative Data on Address Vacancies," September 30, 2010.

^d Northside Achievement Zone, "Stats," 2011, northsideachievement.org/results/stats.

^e Northside Achievement Zone, 2011.

^f Northside Achievement Zone, 2011.

What Matters in Local and Regional Development

The 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum showcased innovative strategies from across the nation that leverage local

engagement in art and design to build more equitable, more economically sustainable, and more engaged and connected neighborhoods and cities. The two-day symposium highlighted

and investigated how locally rooted art and design community-development practices are transforming the physical, economic, and social landscape in communities across the country. Key to this work is understanding and taking action on what is understood about the value that art, diversity, youth, community engagement, and collaboration bring to local and regional development. Each of these plays a pivotal role in community development.

▶ **Art matters.** According to an eight-year study in Philadelphia, neighborhoods with a high arts presence were nearly three times more likely to see their poverty rates decrease and their populations increase. This trend holds across all kinds of neighborhoods, and the stabilizing effect of culture in low-income communities seems to be counter to the overstated maxim that when artists move in, neighborhoods automatically gentrify.³ The arts add value to community-development work in numerous ways. People who participate in the arts have an increased sense of self-efficacy because they learn new skills that can help them to meet new people and also potentially gain better employment.⁴ Arts and culture are a means through which communities can articulate a positive identity, which can be vitally important in inner-city neighborhoods that are often viewed through the lenses of poverty, crime, and lack. In community-development work, the increased cohesion and confidence fostered through participation in a creative experience are often a precursor for residents to become involved in other community activities.

▶ **Diversity matters.** Society's toughest human problems will be better solved if a diverse group of thinkers work together to come up with solutions. Scott Page, a professor of complex systems, has researched the power of diversity as a competitive advantage, and concludes in his book *The Difference* (2007) that diverse groups of creative problem solvers outperform homogenous groups—or, as law professor Lani Guinier puts it,

³ M.J. Stern and S.C. Seifert, "Culture and Urban Revitalization: A Harvest Document," *Social Impact of the Arts Project* (January 2007), 48 pp.

⁴ F. Matarasso, *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (London: Comedia, 1997).

“Diversity in problem solving groups trumps individual ability.”⁵ In cities with neighborhoods where populations of color are concentrated and economically distressed, diversity is often viewed through a lens of lack and social need. Engaging the diversity of communities from an asset position strengthens society’s ability to solve tough problems creatively and collectively.

- ▶ **Youth matter.** Youth provide a unique perspective on their community and offer important insights and creative ideas for transformation. Youth are arguably the wellspring of culture and cultural exports in the United States, and have untapped potential to make significant contributions to transforming communities. The prominent role of youth in the movements for civil and human rights in the 1960s demonstrates their ability to bring about societal change. In the Twin Cities today, youth are playing an important role in assessing the needs of and implementing improvements for West Broadway and the broader north Minneapolis community. Although a large number of youth programs serve this community, these services must be more coordinated to maximize the potential of these resources and youth constituencies on the Northside.
- ▶ **Community engagement matters.** Listening carefully to residents and including a wide range of perspectives and experience is critical to draw on the cultural capital of the community. Involving residents in the development of plans and projects, and incorporating their ideas into the implementation of development efforts, can lead to successful revitalization efforts where residents feel they have the means to influence their communities’ future. Communities need to do a better job of looking at the “local” to solve urban problems. Rather than focusing on solutions that come from outside a neighborhood, energy and resources should be shifted to solutions that come from inside the community.
- ▶ **Collaboration matters.** Developing vibrant inner-city neighborhoods where residents are civically engaged, connected to financial and political power, and work together



During the creative design mapping visioning exercise, participants discussed ideas for art and creativity as a tool for regional development that is locally rooted, and implemented by and with north Minneapolis residents and leaders.

to bring about their vision for the future of the community can only be accomplished if significant proportions of the populace recognize and wield their collective power across the differences that tend to keep people separated. Participation in the arts can contribute to cohesion in troubled neighborhoods by bringing people together in ways that facilitate trust building and collaboration.

It also can provide a reason for people to connect across culture, generation, and class differences, as well as promote understanding of each other, recognition of shared human experience, and acknowledgement of the value that everyone brings to the community.⁶ Forming collaborations between community

⁵ L. Guinier, “State of the Black Union—10th Anniversary: Making America as Good as Its Promise,” Los Angeles, CA., February 28, 2009.

⁶ Matarasso, *Use or Ornament?* 1997.

Spring 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum Planning Committee and Sponsors

Planning Committee

Sara Bielawski, CURA, University of Minnesota
Brandy Brooks, Bruner Foundation
DeAnna Cummings, Juxtaposition Arts
Roger Cummings, Juxtaposition Arts
James Garrett, Jr., AIA, 4RM+ULA Architecture
Neeraj Mehta, Nexus Community Partners
Kristine Miller, College of Design, University of Minnesota
Satoko Muratake, Juxtaposition Arts
Kris Nelson, CURA, University of Minnesota
Marcy Schulte, Conway+Schulte Architects
James Stockard, Loeb Fellowship
Jessica Walton, Bruner Foundation
Sally Young, Loeb Fellowship

Sponsors

Rudy Bruner Foundation
Loeb Fellowship
Juxtaposition Arts
4RM+ULA Architecture
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota
Conway+Schulte Architects
Department of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, University of Minnesota
Family Housing Fund
Imagine Fund, University of Minnesota
The McKnight Foundation
Minnesota Humanities Center
Nexus Community Partners
The Uptake

members and other institutions and organizations takes time and creative energy, but can leverage resources, skills, and talents to address complex urban problems.

Conclusion

Speakers and participants from the 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum illuminated

examples of how social, cultural, and human capital are being rebuilt through increased attention and resources to local arts in cities across the nation. They elevated the importance of engaging youth as innovators and shapers of community change efforts. Their personal stories of triumph and failure displayed the role participatory-arts engagement can

have on strengthening community-development efforts. They demonstrated how fostering and developing a new creative class and economy can equitably revitalize urban neighborhoods. They provided fresh ideas for community engagement by sharing innovative models that build the capacity, connections, and power of neighborhood residents. They encouraged participants to push toward developing multidisciplinary, cross-sector approaches to neighborhood revitalization that grow new ideas and strategies among diverse partners. They challenged participants to take risks and to not be afraid of failure, reminded them that more can be done together than alone, and urged them to never forget the love they have for the community and the important driver that it is for such work.

Kris Nelson was director of neighborhood programs at CURA. He passed away in June while this article was being written (see tribute on back cover). **DeAnna Cummings** is the executive director and co-founder of Juxtaposition Arts, which supports young artists in north Minneapolis to develop their creative talents to improve their life outcomes and make positive contributions to their neighborhood.

CURA was a cosponsor of the 2011 Bruner/Loeb Forum. In addition to providing financial support, CURA staff members Kris Nelson and Sara Bielawski were members of the planning team for the event.

This article is dedicated in loving memory of Kris Nelson (1951–2011), a friend, mentor, leader, and advocate for neighborhoods. A very special thanks to Neeraj Mehta, program officer from Nexus Community Partners and Bruner/Loeb Forum planning committee member, who contributed significantly to this piece.