Arts + Social Impact
Explorer Fact Sheet

Arts + Housing

Overview
Safe and affordable housing is a basic need that affects our health, access to education, and our access to security both financial and physical. Without it we can’t thrive, and whether you’re an artist or someone else in a community, the struggle to find housing that allows for the stability needed to be successful can be difficult and draining.

Artists play a critical role in the vibrancy and vitality of their neighborhood, community, and city. Neighborhoods where artists cluster often become cultural hubs, increasing the value of the surrounding neighborhood. Artmaking can provide innovative and unique ways of raising the profile of housing issues in a community and can be helpful in efforts to balance “gentrification” with “regeneration.”

Activism around housing, as well as the planning, financial distribution, and communications needs of nonprofit organizations, local governments, and developers have all found solutions in arts-based interventions.

Impact Points

20% Rise in Property Values
Having a cultural organization in a community has been shown to increase nearby residential property values by up to 20 percent.¹

Arts Raise Awareness
A study in the United Kingdom found that 20 percent of people who engaged in participatory arts felt differently about their housing rights after participating.²

Arts Inspires Action
The use of the arts to illustrate complicated issues can inspire 1,000s of people to take action who would not otherwise.³

Culture Anchors and Unifies Communities
A variety of research shows that common cultural history, whether hip hop, community murals, or immigrant heritage and craft, can provide unity in community dialogues about housing preservation that celebrates an area’s unique culture and reflects the needs and values of all who live there.⁴

More Art = More Value
The more art, the more desirable a neighborhood is to live. A 10-year study found that an increased presence of art in neighborhoods was correlated with a faster-than-average increase in property values in those neighborhoods over that time period.⁵
EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

National Fair Housing Alliance Poetry Slam [LOCATION?]

This annual event brings together world-renowned spoken word artists from across the country to Slam for Justice, using their vibrant words and performance skills to compel communities to do more to ensure that our society lives up to its values.


ChopArt, Atlanta, GA

ChopArt uses the arts specifically to tackle issues of homelessness for middle and high school students. By creating performing arts workshops and community engagement among the homeless community, ChopArt seeks to offer alternatives and hope and to work toward housing security for those they serve. Malika Whitley, Founding and CEO talks about her journey.

http://go.ted.com/malikawhitley
http://chopart.org/

image: Youth perform at a ChopArt event. c ChopArt

Dorchester Art+Housing Collaborative, Chicago, IL

The Dorchester Art + Housing Collaborative (DA+HC) is a rehabilitated public housing project, a block of 32 townhomes that provides housing for artists and community members with the intent of fostering dialogue and collaboration between both groups.

http://dorchesterarthousing.com/
info@dorchesterarthousing.com

image: Dorchester Art Center serves as the heart of the Dorchester Art+Housing Collaborative, Chicago, IL. Courtesy of The Rebuild Foundation; Brinshore Development LLC

Paducah Mainstreet Artist Relocation Program, Paducah, KY

Working at the intersection of artist housing and community development, this unique program offers empty or uninhabited property to artists for $1. Artist residents, through a special financing arrangement, have invested more than $30 million in restoring the community.

paducahmainstreet.org/artist-relocation-program.htm
tracy@paducahky.gov

image: An image of Vincent Van Gogh alerts artists looking for empty, fixable homes or vacant lots in Paducah, KY. Photo Credit: Noah Adams/NPR

Write a House, Detroit, MI

Write a House aims to rebuild communities in Detroit, support the arts, redevelop housing, and provide jobs. It renovates empty homes and awards them to emerging writers chosen through a competitive judging process.

http://www.writeahouse.com/interior
writeahouse@gmail.com

image: from Write a House blog <http://www.writeahouse.com/blog/were-talking-detroit-writing-and-point-of-view-in-palo-alto>

REFERENCES
Reading List

Exploring the Ways Arts and Culture Intersects with Housing: Emerging Practices and Implications for Further Action

This report is a field scan that outlines key goals or needs in the housing sector that arts and culture might address, a typology/framework for understanding how the arts might partner with the housing sector, barriers to partnership, and strategies to advance collaborations.

https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100637

How Art Spaces Matter II

How Art Spaces Matter is a study of five affordable housing for artist developments built by Artspace across the country.

https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100634

The State of the Nation’s Housing 2017

Report from Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University reviews the state of housing across the United States.

https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100639

Arts and Culture in Urban or Regional Planning: A Review and Research Agenda

This overview of current and proposed future work around planning and community development offers a variety of ideas related to housing, property values, and neighborhood cohesion.

https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100777
ORGANIZATIONS

- **National Fair Housing Alliance**
  The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) is the only national organization dedicated solely to ending discrimination in housing.
  [http://www.nationalfairhousing.org](http://www.nationalfairhousing.org)

- **Rebuild Foundation**
  Theaster Gates’ Rebuild Foundation is a platform for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation.
  [http://www.rebuild-foundation.org](http://www.rebuild-foundation.org)

- **NeighborWorks America**
  NeighborWorks is a national organization with local affiliates that works around issues of affordable housing and community development, including a subset of work about how the arts can be used to address housing objectives.
  [http://www.neighborworks.org](http://www.neighborworks.org)

- **ArtPlace America**
  ArtPlace is a creative placemaking hub that includes numerous key areas of focus.
  [http://www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org)

- **Artspace**
  Artspace is a nonprofit that uses the tools of real estate development to create affordable, appropriate places where artists and communities can intersect and live.
  [http://www.artspace.org](http://www.artspace.org)

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**LEARN MORE**

[AmericansfortheARTS.org/socialimpact](AmericansfortheARTS.org/socialimpact)

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