Preface

While at first glance, the arts and civic engagement may seem to be from two very different disciplines, they are indeed closely integrated. The arts have the ability to inspire people, to tell stories, and to preserve moments in time. They also have the ability to stimulate discussion, bring people together, and heal those after crisis. No longer is art defined primarily by its aesthetics, but also on its power to make a statement. This text highlights community-based art which Cohen-Cruz (2005) describes as “a field in which artists, collaborating with people whose lives directly inform the subject matter, express collective meaning” (p. 1).

Civic engagement is similarly broad in scope. Adler and Goggin (2005) describe it as “how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community’s future” (p. 241). Traditional civic engagement has focused on performing civic duty such as voting and paying taxes. However, recent shifts have stressed the importance of volunteering, social concerns, and the welfare of others in one’s role of citizen (Dalton, 2016). These engaged activities are the ones that are impacting communities today. Civic engagement often is closely tied with the idea of social capital, or the “social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance, and trustworthiness” (Putnam, 2003, p.2). Although Putnam’s early research showed a decline in social capital, he highlights some of the ways it is alive and well. One such story is of how choreographer Liz Lerman worked with citizens of Portsmouth, NH on a participatory dance project that told the stories of the town’s shipyard history (Putnam, 2003).

This text hopes to bring to light some of the ways civic engagement and the arts are interconnecting to have an impact on the community. Reaching across a number of disciplines, it hopes to answer a number of questions on how not only artists and art organizations are engaging, but how public administrators, community developers, and foundations are realizing the importance of having arts play a role in establishing community. Today’s arts organizations realize they “must interact with and understand its community in order to know at which community development table it should sit” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015a, p. 7). This text collects many examples of how arts leaders and practitioners are sitting at table and creating arts that impact their communities.

However, the use of arts to increase civic engagement is not limited to those studying or working in the arts. In fact, the primary federal funding organization for the arts, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), provides grants for nonprofit and government partnerships that support “arts engagement, cultural planning, and design projects (that) represent the distinct character and quality of their engagements” (NEA, 2015b; para. 1). Through this funding, the NEA has supported projects like Over. Under. Pass, which used public art to connect neighboring communities along a greenway in Greensboro, N.C. Now the greenway is one of the busiest trails in the city and is re-energized the economic development
Preface

of the downtown area (NEA, 2015b). Based in the idea of public art, government agencies and nonprofit organizations see the value of art in engaging the community. Achieving engagement can take place through numerous avenues, including those created by the public sector, by the nonprofit sector and through the classroom.

The text also hopes to bring about the diversity displayed through art that is civic engaged. While many secondary education programs incorporate art, the chapters here also explore art in higher education and community. Art has been a sign of resilience, helping victims of domestic violence heal, empowering urban youth, and providing refugees a voice they may not have had otherwise. Other chapters demonstrate how the arts have created economic vibrance and the built capacity of neighborhoods. Art has brought people together to share experiences and ideas, even when they started on different paths.

Community arts is the “specific approach to creative activity that connects artists and local communities in using the arts as a means of expression and development” (Barraket, 2005, p. 3). Throughout this book, the reader will see examples where citizens are active participants in the creation of the art around them. This idea of an active participant is contrary to the traditional view of citizens merely being spectators, or passive participants in the arts. It has been shown that community arts programs can “build social capital by boosting individuals’ ability and motivation to be civically engaged as well as building organizational capacity for effective action” (Guethkow, 2002, p. 7). The examples provided in this book will show how citizens and students are involved in the development of the arts, how this experience impacts them, and how it impacts the community.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book has 4 sections consisting of 27 chapters. A brief description of the chapters follows.

Section 1: Arts-Based Civic Engagement in School Settings

Chapter 1: Socially Engaged Art Education by Ross Schlemmer

This chapter examines the long and distinguished history of art education – a history that is continuing to evolve. As part of the evolution, the author proposes Socially Engaged Art Education (SEAE) as a method to bring together the varying discourses of civic engagement in the arts. The author also suggests that SEAE will focus on a community-based art program that are socially responsible and ethically sound. In addition, they will go beyond aesthetic quality and achieve improved quality of life.

Chapter 2: Drawing in Kindergarten: The Link to Learning in Reading by Gretta Wright

The author of this chapter presents the connection between art and the development of early reading skills. The chapter supports the notion that classroom teachers should be trained and urged to utilize the arts as ways to improve classroom instruction. By including drawing in the curriculum, the author maintains that children will remain more engaged in learning and be better prepared for higher level learning later in their academic careers.
Chapter 3: Collaboration, Teamwork, and Service Learning within an After School Community Arts Project: After School Mural Arts Project by Hazel L. Bradshaw-Beaumont Young

This chapter documents an after-school mural art project at two elementary schools. Through this project, students were able to express ideas as they were brought together within the community, leading to unity and cooperation. Participants in the mural project experienced increased confidence, and were exposed to teamwork, planning, brainstorming, organizing and collaboration.

Chapter 4: Significant Spaces of Freedom Summer: Recognizing the Power of Community Art as the Inbetween by Stephanie Harvey Danker and Stephanie Baer

The authors present examples of civic engagement through the 50th anniversary celebration of Freedom Summer. This chapter describes how the various communities came together to remember and celebrate this part of history. Numerous art forms played a role as community members gained an empathetic and compassionate attitude toward the event. The authors share implications for teaching, learning and civic responsibility.

Chapter 5: Summer Art: Sustainable Community Engagement by Karin Tollefson-Hall

This chapter spotlights the Summer Art Program, an arts enrichment camp held at James Madison University in Virginia. The author explores the purposes and goals of youth arts camps in various settings as a basis for providing engaged community arts services. The Summer Art Program is described in much detail, creating a blueprint for others wanting to create a similar program in their communities.

Chapter 6: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art at Charles White Elementary School by Elizabeth Gerber

This chapter discusses a partnership between Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and Charles White Elementary School. The museum presents exhibitions and related programs at the school. The program strengthened the museum’s relationship with community members in the neighborhood surrounding the school. The museum is also able to present its artworks in innovative ways and support contemporary artists through this partnership.

Chapter 7: Creating Authentic Preservice Art Teaching Experiences through Service-Learning by Kathy Marzilli Miraglia

This chapter centers on service-learning with preservice art teachers and outlines ways to design, conduct and evaluate service-learning projects. Criteria and recommendations on building community partnerships is included.
Chapter 8: Surviving the Partnership: Sustaining a Culture of Engaged Learning in Design by Jennifer Barker, Jennifer Thompson, and Pamela Hurley

Developing and maintaining cultures of engaged learners require commitment for all partners. The authors share their experiences of developing and applying community engagement projects within a department of architecture, at an urban-serving research university. They have developed sustainable practices that lead toward impactful work in the community.

Chapter 9: Connecting the Past and the Present: Using Our Deep History of Learning through Community Art to Inform Contemporary Student Engagement by Carolina Eve Blatt-Gross

This chapter approaches community art through the multiple lenses of anthropology, neuroscience, psychology, and educational research. It builds on the deep roots of community art and explores the use of communities of practice to cultivate student engagement. The author demonstrates how such practices can also strengthen social relationships.

Chapter 10: Technology and Created Spaces: Reframing Interpretations of Public Art through Digital Augmentation by Justin Makemson

The author of this chapter presents research-in-teaching initiatives to reframe student interpretations of public art spaces and promote civic engagement, interest, and investment within the vicinity of the interpretive exercise.

Chapter 11: Promoting Civic Engagement through University Curricula by Bryna Bobick

The author discusses introducing university students to civic engagement practices through the exploration of the arts and cultural institutions. The course was conducted with sixteen university honors freshman. Surveys were conducted with the students who participated in the course, collecting the student’s insights into the course and its curriculum.

Section 2: The Role of Arts in Empowering Citizens

Chapter 12: Dewey, School Violence, and Aesthetic Response: Healing the Community through Arts after Disaster by Patricia Louise Maarhuis and A. G. Rud

This chapter focuses on the application of Deweyan thought to school shootings and aesthetic responses. Aesthetic response allows for reclamation, restoration, and re-presentation of the experience. The authors suggest that continued use of aesthetic response and associated living practices can lead to the understanding of, and future prevention of gun violence.

The author uses participatory action research (PAR) to demonstrate the importance of artmaking with immigrants. The study focuses on Somali women living in Columbus, Ohio. The women use narrative participatory photography to document the many issues they face entering a new community. The program is able to foster a reciprocal exchange between the participants and the author.

Chapter 14: The Arts, Civic Engagement, and Urban Youth by Amy M. Grebe

The author explores methods for using arts to empower urban youth. Through their engagement, these youth are able to be active members in their communities and improve their quality of life. The author addresses barriers that prevent youth from becoming engaged and how the arts can respond to these injustices. This arts-integrated methodology has the potential to offer the youth opportunities for hope and healing.

Chapter 15: Art Empowering At-Risk and Opportunity Youth: A Case Study of artworxLA by Denise Gray

The chapter focuses on the community art program at artworxLA, an art education organization with the mission of combating the epidemic high school dropout crisis. Youth in the program are motivated to stay in school through the use of progressive teaching and learning methodologies. Key partners for the program include the Los Angeles County schools and the region’s key cultural institutions. The program transforms the participants’ lives through art experiences, empowering them to become more civically engaged and to reclaim their futures.

Chapter 16: Engaging Communities through an Art Program at a Domestic Violence Shelter by Elzbieta T. Kazmierczak

This chapter provides a case study involving the author’s experiences of establishing and leading an art program at a domestic violence shelter. The chapter prepares those who intend to establish similar art programs and introduces readers to Art for Empowerment. The author discusses the importance of rapport, volunteers, funding, partnerships, and collaborative research in developing a sustainable program.

Section 3: A Global Perspective: Arts and Civic Engagement

Chapter 17: ¡Adelante! El Mundo Mágico, The Magical World Created: P-16 US Students Create an International Collage between Cuba and USA by Miwon Choe and Juan Silvio Carbera Albert

This chapter introduces readers to a service-learning project involving American preservice art educators, Cuban and American high school students, and a community cultural project in Cuba. The authors write from about their firsthand accounts of the project, which included writing letters between participants in the United States and Cuba. The role of art in Cuban context of national and cultural identity is also discussed.
Preface

Chapter 18: Arts-Based Community Engagement in Singapore: Success Stories, Challenges, and the Way Forward by Justin Lee and Jui Liang Sim

The authors of this chapter present community art and engagement in Singapore. In Singapore, many community arts efforts are not so much for a community as it is for a client. The authors discuss the funding response to the different types of arts-based community engagement. However, they point to the growing support system in Singapore that encourages artists to participate in socially engaged work.

Chapter 19: Overcoming Obstacles: The Creation of the Very First Art Museum in Portugal, in the 19th Century by Emilia Ferreira

The presence of museums in cities around the world is often taken for granted. However, creating new museums in the 19th century was seen as a social and political battle. This chapter describes the process of how the first museum was created in Portugal. The establishment of a museum in Portugal was instrumental as the country was behind many others in its development of the arts.

Chapter 20: Watching the Walls Crumble: Conversation and Community-Building through a Weekly Youth Art Workshop by Kira Hegeman

The author writes about a nine-month experience with the Young Lion’s Global Artists, a youth arts program based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The chapter spotlights a community-based art program and social engagement, taking it from the program’s creation to selected activities and group dynamics. The account provides an example of the potential for community-based art programs to cultivate conversation and social engagement.

Section 4: Arts and Civic Engagement in Action

Chapter 21: Orchestrating Community Change through Music and Heritage: Soulsville USA by Charles A. Santo

The chapter describes the process of the creation the collaborative “Memphis Music Magnet” plan. The project originated with a group of students and built on a long-term community-university partnership. The plan was developed in Soulsville USA, a Memphis, TN community rich in music heritage, but facing economic and social hardships. Building on creative placemaking, the author explores the relationship between creativity, culture, and community development.

Chapter 22: The Role of Collaboration to Encourage Civic Engagement through the Arts: The Blurring of the Government and Nonprofit Sectors by Tina Dippert, Erna Gelles, and Meg Merrick

This chapter examines how partnerships between the government and nonprofit sectors have the potential to encourage community engagement. The two cases presented illustrate how the sectors can work collaboratively to strengthen communities through art. One case examines the passage of a local tax to
fund arts education and arts organizations. The second case explores a cross-sectoral relationship that provides art programs which promote tolerance in an increasingly diverse community.

Chapter 23: Art and Community Capacity-Building: A Case Study by Ferdinand Lewis and Eleanor K. Sommer

The authors of this chapter focus on a successful partnership involving an arts in healthcare program and a community health coalition in Franklin County, Florida. It was developed to promote civic engagement with art and rural health. The case study involves the University of Florida Health Shands Art in Medicine and Franklin’s Promise Coalition. The partnership sustained engagement with a variety of communities and institutions to conduct community assessments, develop public murals and mosaics, create community gardens, gather stories, and employ Boalian theater strategies.

Chapter 24: Crank it to Eleven: Music Festivals Breathe New Life into Cities by Amelia A. Pridemore

Recognizing the increased popularity of music festivals, this chapter identifies the strengths and challenges cities face when hosting them. Such festivals can bring in additional revenue for cities, promote community development, and improve quality of life for residents. However, city managers must also address the significant challenges that come with the festivals. The author points out those involved in music festivals need to consider economic and policy matters when developing these events for their communities.

Chapter 25: A Foundation’s 20-Year Experiment in Art and Civic Engagement by Frances Neff Phillips

This chapter acknowledges the important role that foundations play by granting funds that support community-based art. The author explores five such grants awarded between 2008 and 2013 through a collaborative of four family foundations in San Francisco. Each project focused on a distinctive goal, from increasing cohesion among a community of recent immigrants from Africa, to incorporating public art into the development of an historic waterfront.

Chapter 26: HOWL for UWG: An Example of Artful Leadership for Art-Inspired Fundraisers on Campus by Clint Samples

Geographically-specific sculpture has been an important way of creating identity in a community. This chapter explores the development and success of HOWL for UWG, a public art fundraiser inspired by Cow Parade, which used the University of West Georgia’s wolf mascot to bridge art, academics, and athletics. In addition to raising funds for the university, the project also strengthened relations between the campus and the community. The chapter demonstrates the important resources that university art departments can bring to such endeavors.
Chapter 27: From Conflict to Constructive Engagement: Mediating Public Art by Beth Roy

History shows us that not everyone agrees on what is art. This chapter provides a first-hand account of controversy over a mural project at a San Francisco library. The author mediated the conversation among residents that led to a compromise accepted by most. The account demonstrates not only the dynamics of the engagement surrounding public art, but also what art means to different people.

REFERENCES


