

Art spaces can act as community spaces

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This research was conducted by **Carl Grodach** at the **University of Texas at Arlington, USA**

Summary

This research explored the role of community arts spaces in providing public space and in this way supporting community development. It provides a comprehensive inventory of community art spaces (such as artist cooperatives, ethnic-specific art spaces and city-sponsored art centres) in the Dallas-Fort Worth region, the research showed that community art spaces play important roles related to community development, but that they also face challenges in fulfilling their potential. These challenges relate to their structures, programming, their buildings, and their location in the city.

Community arts spaces attract more diverse audiences than other art spaces

They can represent these diverse audiences through both programming and other activities, including those that are not related to art (such as community meetings). They provide increased opportunities for different community groups to engage with one another. They can provide a venue for making the work of under-represented groups (such as artists of colour) more visible. They also support artistic communities by providing peer support and networking opportunities.

Many factors may limit the ability of arts spaces to act as public spaces

These included having weak relationships with local communities, failing to turn diverse programming into diverse audiences, and physical issues, such as

geographical location, accessibility, and being isolated due to building design. There are opportunities to increase the value of community arts spaces for community development through programming changes (e.g. joined-up scheduling of children and adult programmes) and through understanding visitor demographics. Physical changes (e.g. improving the outside of buildings with art, signage and landscaping, promoting public transport and placing new facilities where there is higher footfall) could also increase their potential.

This summary was written by **Ruth Craggs, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

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