
*Art, Community and Environment: Educational Perspectives*, edited by Glen Coutts and Timo Jokela, presents a series of chapters by different authors about the relationship between art and environment, and specifically how art functions within and as part of communities. Coutts and Jokela divide the book into three sections. The chapters in the first section, “Environment,” focus on the impact of the environment on the subject matter and creation of art, the importance of the natural environment in the learning process specifically relating to the creation of art, and the techniques of design in the construction of urban environments. The second section, “Communities,” explores the importance of art in empowering subgroups within communities, the use of new media and virtual learning environments in finding participants and audiences for community art projects, the empowerment that cooperative community art education gives to communities as a whole, and the ability of community art projects to transcend physical boundaries such as districts and neighborhoods. The final section of the book, “Education,” is also the longest. It addresses such issues as the importance of including art education in school curricula, the questions of what defines art both in the community and in schools, programs for training prospective art teachers and community artists and arts facilitators, and the advantages of community art programs. Coutts and Jokela stress that the subjects of art, community, environment, and education are so intertwined that they cannot be so neatly divided that all the connections a reader should make are isolated in their separate sections. Although the book has a broad focus, I believe that many of the chapters, particularly those in the “Communities” section, will provide my research with balance. Much of my personal research and interviews will most likely be more focused on what the community does for the arts district, so this scholarly perspective will balance that out by discussing what the arts district does for the community.


In “The Concept of Arts/Cultural Management: A Critical Reflection,” Ebewo and Sirayi reflect on and critique arts/cultural management as an academic discipline. According to Ebewo and Sirayi, arts/cultural management is the use of promotional techniques to publicize culture-related events, activities, and organizations. The authors compare arts/cultural management to business management, claiming that it involves many of the same tasks, such as organizing, recruiting and leading workers, and problem solving. According to Ebewo and Sirayi, the discipline of arts/cultural management until this point has been substandard in its expectations of practitioners’ knowledge. Ebewo and Sirayi propose that arts/cultural managers should have strong backgrounds in the arts and social sciences. According to Ebewo and Sirayi, subsequent courses of study should include finance and marketing, psychology, and public relations to create well-rounded, interdisciplinary educations and training programs. This academic article is useful to my
research because it indirectly addresses the challenges faced in the creation of arts districts. In proposing a knowledge base necessary for arts and cultural planners, Ebewo and Sirayi are also specifying what sort of knowledge community developers in general should have.


In “Cultural Development Strategies and Urban Revitalization: A Survey of US Cities,” Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris seek to differentiate their study of cultural planning from others by distinguishing between three different strategies of cultural planning used by municipal governments. The authors first present the Entrepreneur Strategy of cultural planning, which is marked by financial incentives for prospective businesses, downtown locations, and an anticipated audience of tourists. According to the authors, the Entrepreneur Strategy of cultural planning is often criticized for catering to outside tourists rather than the community in which the strategy is put to use. Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris’s second type of cultural planning strategy is the Creative Class Strategy, which seeks to attract individuals in professions considered to be creative through the establishment of arts and entertainment districts in the hopes that these professionals will adopt an economy-stimulating lifestyle based on heavy consumerism. The authors argue that the Creative Class Strategy, like the Entrepreneur Strategy, targets only one favored group rather than the entire community, the favored group in this instance being the creative professionals. The third type of cultural planning strategy identified by Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris is the Progressive Strategy, which typically uses community arts centers and art education programs for the purpose of developing a community identity and appealing particularly to marginalized groups. According to the authors, the strongest criticism against the Progressive Strategy is the difficulty involved in developing these centers and programs without the assistance of private investors. Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris suggest that these apparently incompatible strategies can be used in conjunction with each other by municipal governments that combine elements of each strategy. Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris present their quantitative research, a survey of U.S. cities in which they investigated what percentage of cities had recently created different categories of art, music, and culturally specific attractions. The authors conclude that most cities employ the Entrepreneur Strategy of cultural planning, but combine elements of the Creative Class and Progressive Strategies as well. This scholarly article will guide my research by helping me identify how Millville uses these strategies in planning and publicizing its Glasstown Arts District.


In *South Jersey Movie Houses*, Allen Hauss presents a history of movie theatres in Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, and Atlantic counties, plus the region known as the Jersey Shore. Hauss accomplishes this task primarily through pictures of each of the historic movie theatres he discusses. In the captions for each picture, Hauss provides much of the factual information that make the book valuable as a research tool, including dates, seating capacity, admission prices, and notable builders, owners, and performers. The author divides the first four chapters by counties. In the fifth chapter, Hauss details the technology used between 1925 and 1980 in these movie
theatres, specifically the technical specifics of the projectors. Hauss uses the final chapter to revisit the historic theatres in their current forms. Although most of the theatres have been closed down and put to use for other, non-cinematic purposes, Hauss states that efforts to renovate certain theatres are currently underway. This creative/journalistic source will be useful if I am able to include the Levoy Theatre preservation project in my research, which I hope is the case.


In *Millville*, James presents photographs of the city dating back to the 1750’s. James’s concise but detailed history of Millville’s founding and entrance into the glass-making business introduces readers to the past identity of the city. For my research, this creative/journalistic source is useful because it allows me to see, through photographs, how several of the places I will visit during Third Fridays have changed over the years. For example, one of the photographs depicts High Street, the location of the Glasstown Arts District, in 1900. Although the High Street in the photograph is very different from the High Street I am familiar with, it appears that some of the buildings might still be in existence, though altered. Also useful are the three photographs of the Levoy Theatre: the original Levoy Theatre in 1909; the construction on the new Levoy Theatre, which opened in 1912; and the new Levoy Theatre after its renovations in the 1930’s. Although this book was published before the Glasstown Arts District was built, it briefly touches on one aspect of the current Arts District. James notes that the Levoy Theatre preservation project has begun by the time she was writing, which gives me a timeline for when different parts of the Arts District were begun.


In “Turning to Art to Bring in Business,” Lee outlines a community development plan to build an arts district in Orange City, New Jersey. The Valley Arts District provided for in this plan would transform a section of uninhabited factory buildings in Orange City into an extensive arts district with space for over 60 artists to live and work. Lee discusses the funding of the arts district, which is headed by the non-profit organization HANDS. Lee paraphrases the opinion of Patrick Morissy, the executive director of HANDS, on the importance of maintaining reasonable housing costs to encourage artists to move into the arts district and remain there. According to Lee, the Valley Arts District development plan is only one part of the larger Jefferson Art Walk plan, which itself is the first phase of the Central Valley Redevelopment Plan undertaken in conjunction with the city of West Orange. Lee claims that the two cities have applied to get the location designated as a Brownfield Development Area, a designation that would grant the project extra funds and personnel and speed the process of obtaining necessary permits. This journalistic source is especially useful to my research because it presents some of the financial and political challenges that face municipalities in the process of creating arts districts. It might also point out possible flaws in the Glasstown Arts District that explain why many artists, galleries, stores, and restaurants that open in the arts district are eventually forced to close.

In “Do Community-Based Arts Projects Result in Social Gains? A Review of the Literature,” Newman, Curtis, and Stephens evaluate the success of community-based arts projects. The authors claim that community arts programs have typically been successful in the U.K. However, in this article they are specifically addressing community arts programs that target demographic groups that might be considered marginalized. The authors present the issues posed in evaluating community arts programs, specifically the large numbers of investors and possible outcomes. Newman, Curtis, and Stephens explain that it is difficult to be certain whether correlations between community arts programs and the financial success of businesses can be interpreted as causation because there are many confounding variables. However, the authors urge researchers not to shy away from evaluating the success of community arts programs. Newman, Curtis, and Stephens concluded that citizens generally felt that their communities were helped by arts programs and that these programs were successful. However, the authors note that the positive effects of arts programs were not distributed uniformly through the community and that certain geographic neighborhoods and demographics of people were helped more than others. This source is useful to my research because its conclusions help explain why there are such significant discrepancies among people’s judgments regarding the success of arts districts such as Millville’s Glasstown Arts District.


In “Note: Evaluated Community Economic Development Planning Programs with a Small Number of Participants: A Non-Parametric Approach,” Rhonda Phillips presents quantitative studies of economic development planning programs. According to Phillips, assessing such programs quantitatively is difficult because they involve issues such as how to quantify outcomes and benefits of the programs and because researchers can only conjecture what might have happened had these programs not been put into effect. Phillips argues that quantitative research should be done on these programs despite the difficulty of the process because the information gained through quantitative research can help guide the processes of future development plans. The author proposes that quantitative research in this field can be done using non-parametric approaches such as creating comparison groups to simulate alternative paths of development. To illustrate her point, Phillips presents quantitative data found using these methods on seven different economic-growth related hypotheses regarding a particular technology-based economic development program in Atlanta. Although we have talked mostly about qualitative research methods in this class, I believe that this source might prove useful during my research. If I could gain access to the numerical data on the success of the businesses in the Arts District, it could add some concrete information to my otherwise qualitative and thus somewhat subjective research. Even if I am not able to find the data necessary to do my own quantitative comparison, I think the article concisely explains the problems with quantitatively analyzing the success of development plans.

In “Artful Business: Using the Arts for Community Economic Development,” Phillips examines the use of the arts to stimulate economic development. Phillips argues that this topic is worthy of further study due to the recent growth in popularity of using the arts for economic development. Phillips identifies four different approaches communities can use when putting into effect arts-based programs. According to Phillips, arts business incubators begin by housing new businesses in a centralized location where administrative services and development assistance is provided by a shared supervising organization. Phillips presents the second approach, arts cooperatives, as non-profit organizations comprised of local artists and artisans who share the expenses of advertising and publicity. The third approach Phillips describes is that of the tourist venue, where the main goal is not to stimulate the economy of the community itself by strengthening businesses but to draw in tourists in the hopes that they will stimulate the economy. The final approach Phillips presents is the comprehensive approach, in which communities regard the revitalization of the community as a whole to be more than a single part of a larger plan and instead believe that simply integrating the arts into the fabric of community life will improve the community. Phillips concludes that creating a successful arts-based community development plan is difficult but possible as long as the developers take into consideration the most prevalent needs of arts districts. These needs include the importance of government and community support for the arts in general; the resources, financial and otherwise, that can be utilized; the necessity of building a strong connection between the arts programs and the community; the value of sharing resources among artists and artisans in order to conserve them; and flexibility in terms of the type of assistance artists and artisans can expect to receive from their community. This source is valuable to my research, because identifying which approach Millville has taken in the creation of the Glasstown Arts District could give me valuable insight into how the arts district currently functions.


In “Images for Change: Community Development, Community Arts, and Photography,” Purcell argues that photography has a place in the importance of the arts in community development. Purcell presents the view of Henri Lefebvre that developing and marketing culture has become a goal of social organization. According to the author, these social organization groups are often considered subgroups of municipal governments that themselves need to be organized by a larger government. Purcell discusses the problems in the collaboration between culture and community groups. According to Purcell, cultural development plans in the UK and Ireland have frequently failed to produce positive, significant results. It is in this critique that Purcell situates his argument that certain techniques of photography can be used to help fill this gap in community development. This scholarly source is useful for my research due to its critical nature of arts districts. Purcell’s argument about the importance of photographic techniques in advancing community development may provide my research with a progressive element, or at least provide me with inspiration.

In “Art as Community Revitalization Driver,” Rosenberg chronicles the development of two successful arts districts and the process of working on a third. According to Rosenberg, the Lincoln Center on New York City’s West Side was the first use of the arts in an urban or community development plan. Rosenberg states that the initiative for this project was begun in 1955. According to Rosenberg, the project’s long-term economic benefits have been significant. Rosenberg goes on to describe the case of the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). According to Rosenberg, after a long period of neglect and degeneration into street crime, a new executive director and board of directors revitalized BAM. Rosenberg claims that the relationship between the city of Brooklyn and BAM is reciprocal, and that each positively influences the other. Finally, Rosenberg addresses the arts-based development plan being put into effect in Chester, Pennsylvania. Rosenberg discusses the problems facing the organizers of the development plan: gaining the support of civic and community leaders and organizing collaboration between the leaders of different community and arts groups. This academic source is valuable to my research because it provides a detailed, sequential account of the development processes of arts districts.


In “A Colorful Burst of Art Districts,” Sloan presents a brief tourist guide to three art districts. The districts Sloan reviews are the Crossroads in Kansas City, MO; Old City district in Philadelphia; and the Pearl District in Portland, Oregon. For each district, Sloan presents tourist information, consisting mainly of his top picks in such categories as the best galleries, restaurants, and cafes. Sloan also includes his personal suggestions of unique stores, bakeries, and specialty shops that should not be missed. This creative/journalistic article is very brief, but I consider it useful for my research because I may want to structure at least part of my final article this way. Although Sloan’s article is very subjective and so brief it hardly qualifies as an article at all, its tourist guide format helped it target an audience for whom there is a large market. My choices for categories like this will be much more in-depth and will comprise only a part of the article, of course. However, Sloan’s laid-back style of writing works well for this genre of article, and incorporating a similar style in my own writing may help my article to appeal to a wider audience.


In the journalistic article “How Many Artists Does it Take to Build a Downtown?” Vossman explores the issues facing arts district developers, focusing specifically on the East Village Arts District in California. According to Vossman, to be successful, an arts district needs financial resources, physical space, and long-term support from its community and government. Vossman states that one of the most significant changes made in the creation of the arts district was the building of apartments for artists. Although these apartments were specially designed to function as both a living space and a studio, Vossman claims that the high cost of rent is a problem for many artists. According to Vossman, the city’s provisions for affordable housing are no longer being used to help artists afford these apartments. The author notes that despite this difficulty,
the arts district has been financially successful, and plans to open a hotel nearby are currently in the works. Vossman presents a strong argument for public art, claiming that it serves to improve the image of the district and economically supports local artists. Vossman claims that the development and sustainability of arts districts is an ongoing process. This article is among the most useful I have found in explaining what specific challenges face arts district developers. Of particular interest is the process Vossman recounts in which landowners rent space to artists and businesses for a small amount of money, raise the rent steeply and suddenly so that business are forced to close, and then reduce the rate again to attract new tenets.