ART AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: MAPPING THE CONNECTIONS
A project of the Walker Art Center’s Education and Community Programs Department

“The metaphor for the museum is no longer a church or temple, but a lively forum or town square.”
—Kathy Halbreich, Director, Walker Art Center, 2004

In 2003, with the support of the Ford Foundation, the Walker Art Center began its Town Square initiative to explore how museums might function in the 21st century. This led to the development of the Walker Town Square concept, which was focused on exploring new ways for the Walker to engage with communities through civic engagement and community partnerships. The project sought to develop a series of ideas around the concept of civic engagement, leading to the creation of the Walker Town Square and the development of the Walker’s civic engagement goals.

This page contains a diagram of the Walker’s Town Square concept, which is divided into two main sections: Civic Engagement and Art and Civic Engagement. The Civic Engagement section is further divided into two parts: Civic Engagement for the Individual and Civic Engagement for the Community. The Art and Civic Engagement section is divided into four parts: The Artist and the Community, The Work of Art, The Audience, and The Community and Art.

The Walker Art Center’s mission is to explore new ideas and offer unique programs that engage visitors in a variety of ways. This page provides an overview of the Walker’s civic engagement goals and the programs and activities that have been developed as a result of this initiative.

For more information, visit the Walker Art Center’s website at www.walkerart.org.
Organized in conjunction with Walker Art Center exhibition The Squared Circle: Boxing in Contemporary Art, this event celebrates the rich tradition of cultural diversity in Minneapolis boxing history. An advisory group of individuals from the boxing community helped organize the afternoon.

This program CONVENED a community that had become dispersed and disconnected using contemporary art centered on themes relevant for their lives. This event generated DIALOGUE among members of this community about the shared value of supporting youth and community through the sport of boxing.

PROJECT: Minneapolis and St. Paul are East African Cities Walker Artist Residency - Julie Mehretu

Paints Julie Mehretu worked with 30 high school students from the Twin Cities East African community for several weeks to document their daily activities through photographs and ambient sound recordings.

The project served as a CONTAINER by creating a space for meaningful self-exploration that encouraged participants to investigate their family histories and see their own lives as newcomers to Minnesota in a new light. DIALOGUE around these investigations occurred when the participants presented their stories at the Walker during the exhibition of Mehretu's paintings. Their project has been featured on the Web site toEastAfrica.walkert.org.

PROJECT: Radio Re-Volt: One Person/ One Watt Walker Artist Residency—Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla June-October, 2004

Artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla helped shape a residency project that addressed issues of media ownership through five months of workshops where participants built legal, low-cost transmitters to allow them to make radio stations.

The project CATALYZED awareness of the micro-radio movement and introduced ideas about the individual voice in alternative media during a media-saturated election season.

Participants used APTON's in their communities to create radio stations broadcast over the city. Additionally, a conference concluded the project and brought together local, national and international voices of media reform for a weekend of discussion and collaboration.

For more information, visit projects.walkart.org/apton.

PROJECT: Undisputed Champions: Celebrating Minneapolis Boxing History Sunday, September 28, 2003 2-5 pm

CONVENOR / DIALOGUE

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A mode of addressing an issue, policy, or event in a direct and active manner that attempts to make an immediate or measurable change? Leadership involves the ethical use of power and responsibility, leading by example, exerting influence, and motivating and inspiring others to realize their potential. Leadership may involve the ethical use of power and responsibility, leading by example, exerting influence, and motivating and inspiring others to realize their potential.

How can you organize citizens around a particular project or program or experience? For Action, consider:

- How can you lend institutional support or commitment for a new energy to an issue or debate and may set the tone or trajectory of a conversation or debate?
- How can you act as conveners by providing the purpose and direction for an initiative?
- How can you be a convener and set the direction for an initiative?
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