Innovative Community Engagement at Contemporary Performance Art Institutions:
A Comparative Study

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A Comparative Study

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Arts and Administration Program

University of Oregon

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to provide information on the best practices of innovative community engagement at contemporary performance institutions. Through a comparative case study, this project explores the process and inferences of broadening curatorial methods of community members. Each case study describes the process and implementation of an innovative community engagement project, and the theoretical implications of inclusion and audience development. This study serves to provide information about innovation community engagement programming for arts administrators to consider when seeking to develop increased audience engagement within their geographic community.

Keywords: Innovation, Community Engagement, Contemporary Performance, Participatory, Curatorial Methods, Community Development

Acknowledgements

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Education and Awards

Master of Science, Arts Management

University of Oregon, 2012-2014

AAM Fellow, 2013

Arts and Advocacy for the Lesbian Community 2013-2014

Bachelor of Art, American History, Minors: Museum Studied and Gender Studies

Lynchburg College, Virginia, 2012

Outstanding Achievement in Museum Studies 2011-2012

Westover Honors Fellow

Curatorial Art Practice

- **Artistic Director** of The Feminist Museum's exhibition "Object/Subject" 2013-2014. Exhibition located at LaVerne Krause Gallery at the University of Oregon.
www.thefeministmuseum.wordpress.com

- **Curator** of "Women's Stories, Women's Lives" in Spring 2013 at Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art for the Center for the Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon.
Presented Curator's Gallery talk on October 18, 2013.

- **Curatorial Laurel Award Recipient** at Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) in Eugene, Oregon. Researched JSMA collection and developed copy for museum publications and text panels for temporary exhibitions. Worked with Associate Curator to develop exhibition design curriculum for newly acquired Pierre Daura works.

- **Full Portfolio** can be accessed at www.sarahturnerarts.wordpress.com.

Professional Experience

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA), Eugene, Oregon

Student Member Group Coordinator, Graduate Teaching Fellow, 2013-Present

Created and managed brand new student group, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art Student Member Advocacy Council (JSMAC), to increase student participation at Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. Worked with JSMAC to develop and implement student programming including: InFlux: A Night of Performance Art, In Touch: An Exhibition of Student Art Relating to the Five Senses, and In Tune: A Night of Live Student Music.

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Portland, Oregon

Performance Art Programming Intern, Summer 2013

Provided logistic and hospitality planning for nationally and internationally acclaimed contemporary performance and performance artists. Provided hospitality for artists during the two week Time-Based Art Festival for performers such as The Julie Ruin and Body/Head.

Emerging Leaders in the Arts Network, UO Affiliated Chapter of Americans for the Arts

Co-Chair, 2013-2014

Created community of emerging art professionals at the University of Oregon. Worked to create collaborations and partnerships with students and art professionals in Eugene and Portland Oregon. Co-lead annual fundraiser event Beats & Brushstrokes as exhibition designer, artist booking, and venue contractor. Currently planning professional development lecture to bring Nina Simon to campus.

Out/Loud Music Festival

Planning and Production Committee, September 2012- May 2013.

Worked with planning committee at University of Oregon's Women Center to curate musical performances and program a one-day Queer Women's Music Festival in downtown Eugene, Oregon. Individual projects included creation of website and artist services. www.outloudmusicfestival.wordpress.com.

Eugene Contemporary Art, Eugene, Oregon

Programming Intern, Spring 2013, Fall 2013

In Spring 2013, worked with team and Executive Director to create an outreach program through exhibition of emerging artists in local businesses. In Fall 2013, created strategic plan for fundraising program "ECA Prints."

Daura Gallery, Lynchburg, Virginia

Gallery Assistant, May 2010-May 2012

Worked with Executive Director on installation temporary exhibitions, inventory of permanent collection, special event planning, children's art workshops, and gallery publications. Specialized tasks included the creation of condition reports, photo documentation, and art handling. Curated student exhibition "Their Finest Hour: Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and the End of WWII."

Experiential Skills

- Adobe Suite, Microsoft Suite, Social Media, Exhibition Design, Art Installation

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Chapter One: Introduction

I. Problem Statement

Contemporary performance art is an alternative genre of performance art that grew from 1960's abstract and Avant Garde art movement to become an established art form in the 1970s (Goldberg, 1988; Cotter, 2013). The first widely publicized performance art ranged in locations from lofty elitist institutions, to abandoned churches, and parking garages. Today, there are dozens of art organizations that present performance art and contemporary performance representing a range of aesthetics and mediums. Contemporary performance can be defined as "hybrid performance works and artists that travel between the fields of Experimental Theatre, Dance, Video Art, Visual Art, Music Composition and Performance Art without adhering to one specific field's practice" (Manson, 2014). Performance artists speak directly to the public in an ephemeral manner, and the audience is an active participant in at the show. There is an interesting relationship that happens during a performance. As Goldberg (1988) states,

> Performance has been a way of appealing directly to a large public, as well as shocking audiences into reassessing their own notions of art and its relation to culture. Conversely, public interest in the medium, especially since the 1980s, stems from an apparent desire of that public to gain access to the art world, to be a spectator of its ritual and its distinct community, and to be surprised by the unexpected, always unorthodox presentations that the artists devise. (p. 10)

Organizations such as Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) and On the Boards present a mixture of contemporary performance that tend to challenge, yet deeply engage the audience. Contemporary performance art attendance is active, and performance art organizations consider their audience more than just passive observers.

Arts engagement has been steadily declining for the past three decades (NEA, 2010). In the National Endowment for the Art's most recent Strategic Plan, FY 2012-2016, a main goal is

"To Engage the Public with Diverse and Excellent Art" (NEA, 2010, p 8). This strategic plan urges access to the arts and encourages organizations to meet this goal through "Plan[ning] and/or Conduct[ing] Arts Activities to Foster Interaction Among Community Members" (NEA, 2010, p 25). With increased attention to this initiative, an influx of federal, state, and private funds have begun to emerge to help create relevant programs (Wallace Foundation, 2010). The NEA's FY 2012-2016 Strategic plan emphasizes the shifting cultural paradigm and audience demographics and supports innovation to achieve access to the arts. As the art field increases the importance of access and participation within organizations, it is necessary for arts administrators to utilize the best practices of innovative model programs in order to assure the creation of meaningful and engaging audience relationships.

Recent research has recognized a shift in arts organizations and cultural policy to include a focus on increased access and participation in the arts (RAND, 2001; Wallace Foundation, 2010; AdvisArts, 2013). Over the past ten years, there has been an effort to discover and document best practices in community engagement programs (RAND, 2001). State Art Agencies and private foundations have partnered to fund community engagement programs at non-profit art organizations, record their process and evaluation, and disseminate the information to the greater field (RAND, 2001; Wallace Foundation, 2010; AdvisArts, 2013). These community engagement programs incorporate innovative practices to create a more meaningful and transformative experiences for audience members. The literature on community engagement has addressed the success of innovative programs at art organizations and best practices for various types of non-profit institutions, how community engagement programs can be collaborative, creative, social capital building entities—particularly at contemporary performance art institutions still needs to be examined (AdvisArts, 2013).

This research project explores the role of contemporary performance art institutions in creating innovative community engagement programs that encourage active participation and collaboration of community members with staff and artists. By researching these programs, I hope to find a connection between increased audience attendance based on the enriched relationships between community members and organization staff. I studied community engagement programs at Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) in Portland, Oregon and On the Boards in Seattle, Washington. These two institutions are leading contemporary performance art institutions in the Pacific Northwest and have both recently implemented innovative community engagement programs in the last year. Both of these organizations' programs are considered innovative community engagement program models by AdvisArts Consulting and Washington State Arts Commission based on their report in 2012.

In the summer of 2013, PICA and On the Boards developed innovative community engagement projects in order to invite new audiences to experience their programming and to more deeply invest in relationships with current audience members. PICA established the *Enthusiast* project in which audience members were chosen to act as experts of their communities in order to increase audience attendance. On the Boards created the *Ambassador* project in which Seattle artists and creatives applied to create artistic programming alongside of staff. Both of these projects were experimental in design.

AdvisArts Consulting and Washington State Arts Commission, as a part of the Arts Participation Leadership Initiative (APLI) created a list of best practices for innovative community engagement based on research in the Washington state area at thirteen arts organizations (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013). The research and programs were funded by Washington State Arts Commission and The Wallace Foundation. PICA's *Enthusiast* project and
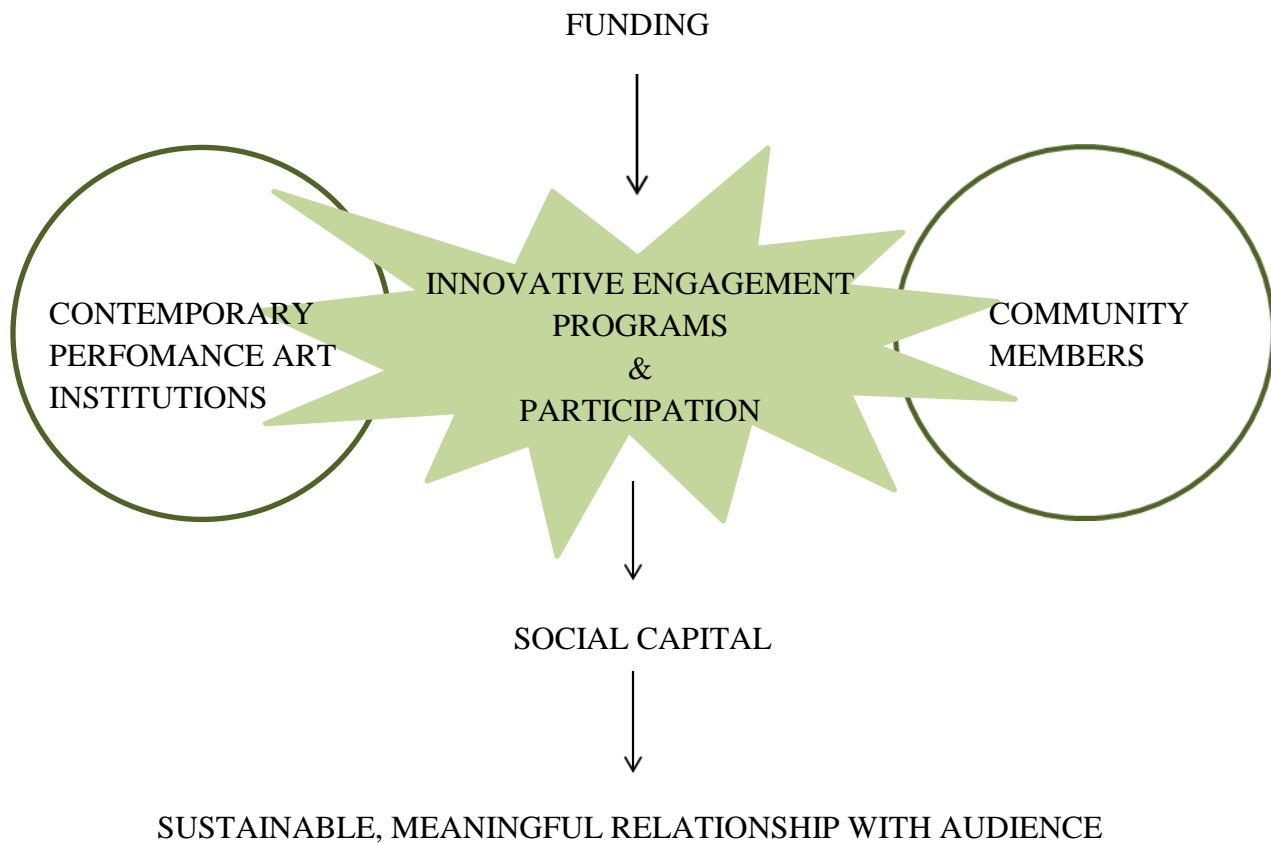
On the Boards' *Ambassador* project fit their best practice of "embedding the work of the organization within a community" by empowering community members to engage their own networks throughout the Portland and Seattle area with the organization (AdvisArts, 2013, p.6). Additionally, both projects encapsulate another best practice of "broadening curatorial methods" by inviting community members into the operations of the organization by working with staff members to create artistic programming (AdvisArts, 2013, p. 5). These developments are unique as both PICA and On the Boards were funded by separate entities and neither were necessarily directly influenced by AdvisArts research.

II. Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research project is to understand the value of implementing innovative community engagement programming and identify strategies of new programs utilized by contemporary performance art institutions. Prior to investigating PICA and On the Boards' community engagement programs, a general overview of trends in the field was necessary in order to provide a conceptual framework for the study. In reference to my conceptual framework schematic (figure 1.1), the two main constituents in the study are contemporary performance institutions (which include staff and artists) and the community members who interact with the organization. In this study, I am only examining their relationship in the context of innovative engagement programming. This relationship is possible through specific funding of these programs, as there has been noted risk in creating and implementing innovative programs (AdvisArts, 2013). An important aspect of the innovative programs includes participation in the form of collaboration. I am hoping to explore this trend in the arts management and art field that will help address these participatory elements. Ultimately, I hope to evaluate the outcome of these specific programs, and I hypothesize that the relationships and

programs formed lead to social capital of the art organization and support sustainable

engagement with community members.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

FUNDING

CONTEMPORARY
PERFOMANCE ART
INSTITUTIONS

INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAMS
&
PARTICIPATION

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

SOCIAL CAPITAL

SUSTAINABLE, MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH AUDIENCE

For sustainable, meaningful relationships with audience members, a contemporary

performance art institution must provide transformative experiences for its community members.

Innovation is key to achieving this kind of success. AdvisArts Consulting (2013) describes

innovative programs at art organizations as an "exploration of practices that are new or just

emerging in the cultural sector, venturing into fairly uncharted territory; and/or exploration,

development or implementation of practices that are known to have value in the field, but are new for the grantee organization" (p. 3). Both of the community engagement programs at PICA and On the Boards were new programs at each organization respectively.

In the 21st century, innovative experiences are marked by a convergence culture mimicking that of our online experiences (Jenkins, 2006; Simon, 2010). Society has become accustomed to a democratic creation process with the addition of increased communication which contributes to participation. The community engagement programs created and implemented at the contemporary performance art sites studied here are explicitly participatory in nature. Nina Simon (2010) describes participatory projects as programs that the institution provides to achieve "multi-directional content experiences. The institution serves as a 'platform' that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators. This means the institution cannot guarantee the consistency of visitor experiences. Instead, the institution provides opportunities for diverse visitor co-produced experiences" (Chapter one, paragraph 6). These interactions lead to empowering experiences that link institutional staff to community members in lasting and substantial ways.

In this study, community members will be defined as individuals and groups who are geographically located near the institution and have some affiliation with the art organization, particularly with the community engagement program or artistic programming. Through these engagement programs, the ultimate goal is for the art institution to create sustainable relationships with the community members to form social capital which can be leveraged to further sustain their mission and success as an organization. Social capital has been described as "a network-based resource inhering in the structure of social relations between persons and

groups" that ultimately can produce long lasting positive and successful relationships (Whitman,

2012, p. 442).

III. Research Methodology

This project will briefly explore the history of innovative community engagement

program and the best practices articulated by the AdvisArts Consulting and Washington State

Arts Commission (2013) for community engagement. The innovative best practices outlined in

the report include:

1. Embedding the work of the organization within a community
2. Broadening curatorial methods
3. Experimenting with setting
4. Cabling opportunities together
5. Integrating digital technology with strategy and programming
6. Combining arts content with socializing (p. 5)

Using these best practices as framework, this research study will investigate the design,

challenges, and process of PICA's *Enthusiast* program utilizing a case study methodology.

Findings related to engagement will be compared to On the Board's *Ambassador* program. Based

on the results, this study evaluates PICA's and On the Boards' innovative community

engagement programs as models for contemporary performance art organization programming.

The community engagement projects of PICA and On the Boards are important to

evaluate as model programs because they incorporate innovative practices as articulated by

AdvisArts Consulting but have utilized different funding options than the report. This research

project seeks to explain the growing trend of innovative community engagement programs being

utilized by performance art organizations. The transformative experiences felt by the community

members involved in these programs can create deep and sustainable relationships that can go far

beyond the timeframe that it is funded for.

This research project employs the philosophical worldview of social constructivism. Zina O'Leary describes social constructivism as "theories of knowledge that emphasize that the world is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation"(O'Leary, 2010, p. 6). John W. Creswell describes social constructivism as a worldview that embraces complex "process of interaction among individuals" as their views are shaped by subjective experiences that are "negotiated socially and historically"(Creswell, 2014, p. 8). With social constructivism, it is necessary to ask generalized questions in order to elicit open-ended responses for research participants to respond uniquely to. This study investigates the experiences of community engagement directors and community engagement program managers in their participation with innovative community engagement programs at performance art organizations.

My project investigates the following question: What is the process of actively engaging community members in broadening creative/curatorial methods at PICA as compared to On the Boards? In the process of answering this question, I have also addressed the following qualitative queries: How are the organizations able to implement these programs with the participation of funders, art organization staff, and community members? In what ways are these programs in Portland and Seattle model innovative community engagement programs for other arts organizations to consider?

IV. Research Design

This research project is qualitative in nature. Creswell describes qualitative research as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Qualitative methodologies support the "search for holistic meaning," "research conducted in natural settings;" and "even the possibility of

negotiated outcomes that recognize the need for the researched to be party to the researcher's constructed meaning" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 6).

Prior to data collection, I conducted an extensive literature review in order to understand the evolving trend of innovative community engagement programs at contemporary performance art organizations. This provided a framework of reference for understanding the growing trend of innovative community engagement at non-profit art institutions. Analyzing the literature is an ongoing process, only to be completed by saturation, "to finish collecting data only when additional data no longer adds richness to understanding or aids in building theories" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 6). The review of literature informed my decisions to further investigate innovative community engagement programs at contemporary performance art organizations, as there was a lack of documentation on the subject. In order to collect qualitative data, I employed case studies of PICA's *Enthusiast* project and On the Boards' *Ambassador* project.

Data collection involved in-depth interviews with organizational staff at PICA and On the Boards who were directly related to the innovative community engagement program on site. This type of data collection was utilized to ensure a reliable case study through the perspective of those involved. These individuals had the most experience with the projects and interacted with the community. Prior to my data collection at PICA and On the Boards, I sent a recruitment letter to each of my participants (Appendix A), and they signed a consent form during our face to face interview (Appendix B). Interviewing was the main data collection tool used in this project. The interviews were semi-structured involving a series of questions relating to the community engagement program (Appendix C). Each participant was interviewed face to face at their convenience and received a follow up email for additional information. Interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participant and transcriptions were later made to ensure correct

documentation. Each participant is identified in this study with their consent. Member checks were utilized to ensure credibility and all information was secure in order to avoid loss of confidentiality.

After interviewing individuals involved with PICA's *Enthusiast* project and On the Board's *Ambassador* project, I was able to compile a case study for each site. Creswell defines a case study as "a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, of one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Both PICA and On the Boards, internationally acclaimed contemporary performance art institutions, initiated innovative community engagement programs in the summer of 2013. It is useful to study these models, as they are progressive programs in the field in relation to access to the arts. My research will employ a comparative study of the two sites through an analysis of interviews from program managers.

The goal of this project is to understand and describe the process of creating and implementing an innovative community engagement program at a contemporary performance art institution. I seek to understand the complex relationship between funding, staff planning, community engagement, creative community development, and social capital through these programs. Particularly, I want to understand the incorporation of creative and curatorial methods of community members into programming and the loss of control of staff direction in implementing programs for other community members.

V. Data Collection and Analysis

These case studies involved in-depth interviews with community engagement directors and community engagement project managers. The interviews are made up of questions relating to funding, process and implementation of program, relationship between staff and community

members, social capital, and creative/curatorial methods. In order to secure credibility for this

qualitative data, triangulation of information and member checks are performed. This study was

conducted during the winter term of 2014 and was completed by June 2014.

After the data was collected on site, I analyzed it through specific coding and then formed

it into conclusions. O'Leary describes data analysis as involving "(1) identifying biases and

noting overall impressions; (2) reducing,…organizing, and coding your data; (3) searching for

patterns and interconnections; (4) mapping and building themes; (5) building and verifying

theories; and (6) drawing conclusions" (O'Leary, 2010, p. 262).

In order to make sense of the data, I organized and coded the information I collected.

Based on the literature review, the codes included: development of program, funding of program,

process of implementation, relationship between staff and community member, social capital,

and creative methods. The coding helped develop patterns between the case studies that made the

data more manageable to analyze. As patterns emerged greater themes were established and

distilled into conclusions about the implemented programs and their relationship to the field of

innovative community engagement.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

I. Introduction

Audience engagement is a crucial topic in the arts field, as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), private research organizations, and non-profit art organizations are all putting in effort to understand why audience members choose to visit and participate in the arts. Arts organizations hope to attract newer and younger art attendees while continuing to support traditional visitors' needs, (NEA, 2010). Several reports have focused on innovative methods as a way to explore audience engagement in the 21st century (NEA, 2010; AdvisArts Consulting, 2013; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011; EMC Arts, 2014; & Wallace Foundation, 2010). In recent years, researchers have developed an understanding of the relevance of convergence culture and participatory experiences to strengthening the relationships between arts organizations and the public (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013; EMC Arts, 2014). By experimenting with innovative participatory models of engagement, art organizations more closely involve community members and increase social capital of the arts communities in their area.

II. The Need for Community Engagement

In 2012, the NEA published a *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (SPPA). They found that since 1982, Americans' participation in the arts has fallen steadily. In 2012, only 37% of American adults attended a live performing arts event (NEA, 2013). Of the categories listed as "benchmark" art events, contemporary performance was not even listed. Of these, 18% of American adults attended musical or non-musical plays and 7% attended a performance of dance of any kind (NEA, 2013).

In order to reverse this declining trend, the NEA and private organizations, such as AdvisArts Consulting, Wallace Foundation, and The James Irvine Foundation, have

recommended strategies to improve art attendance. Education is a key approach to grow

audiences, and Nick Rabkin and E.C. Hedberg (2011) suggest that "arts education was the

strongest predictor of almost all types of arts participation (arts performance being the

exception)" (p. 12). A RAND report in 2008 suggested that arts participation is higher when

adults have a personal understanding and experience with a specific medium, which is most well

supported by education. The report suggests, that "arts participation requires capacities for

understanding and appreciating the modes of expression, symbol systems, aesthetics, and the

cultural context in which the arts are embedded" (Zakaris & Lowell, 2008, p 10). However, arts

education has also declined in the years between 1982 to 2008 (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011).

In the NEA's 2012-2016 strategic plan, a major goal is to "engage the public with diverse

and excellent art" (NEA, 2010, p. 8). Engagement and access to the arts are major outcomes

that the NEA will advance in the coming years. However, the NEA claims that for "most live

arts performances, audiences have aged more rapidly than the general public, and they contain

disproportionately fewer Americans of low incomes and education levels" (NEA, 2010, p.17). In

order to stay in line with the changing demographics of American society and cultural shifts, the

NEA proposes drastic new considerations for engagement in the arts to order to reach potential

audience members of a younger demographic and those who have received less arts education

than previous generations. The NEA believes that innovation in community engagement can help

achieve this goal, as they see traditional methods of engagement as no longer being fruitful. The

strategic plan states that the Agency "will also reward innovative strategies and models for

engaging the public directly" by creating access to artistic excellence" (NEA, 2010, p. 14). The

NEA plans to do this by funding "grants to provide engagement with artistic excellence across a

diverse spectrum of artistic disciplines and geographic locations" and "require that consortium

grant proposals for projects seeking to engage the public with diverse and excellent art be

focused on innovation" (NEA, 2010, p.19). NEA (2010) defines innovative programs that:

> are likely to prove transformative with the potential for meaningful change, whether in the development or enhancement of new or existing art forms, new approaches to the creation or presentation of art, or new ways of engaging the public with art;…are distinctive offering fresh insights and new value for their fields and/or the public through unconventional solutions; and have the potential to be shared and/or emulated, or are likely to lead to other innovations. (p. 14)

Innovation in engagement and in access to art is also a focus of private arts research and

granting organizations. EMC Arts, a granting agency that funds experimental and innovative

programming, defines organizational innovation as instances that "result from a shift in

underlying organizational assumptions, are discontinuous from previous practice, and provide

new pathways to creating public value" (Evans, 2013). Similarly, AdvisArts Consulting (2013)

defines innovation as the "exploration of practices that are new or just emerging in the cultural

sector, venturing into fairly uncharted territory; and/or Exploration, development or

implementation of practices that are known to have value in the field, but are new for the grantee

organization (p. 3).

III. Models of Engagement

The James Irvine Foundation has mapped how community members can interact with an

arts organization (2011). Interaction levels vary from being receptive to being creators on site

through participatory programming (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011). Two receptive stages of

engagement are "spectating"—the act of viewing art and "enhanced engagement"—which can be

defined as educational or "enrichment" programming that act as supplementary to the artwork

(Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011, p. 4).Other participatory models of engagement include

"crowd sourcing" in which community members contribute artistically; "co-creation" in which

audience members "contribute something to an artistic experience curated by a professional

artist;" and "audience as artist" in which community members focus on the process of creation"

(Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011, p.4). In participatory styles of engagement, levels of creative

control can be categorized as curatorial, interpretive, or inventive. These varying levels of

engagement are descriptive of how well entangled visitors can become entrapped in the workings

of staff or artists that produce artistic programming for the public. Each level of participation is

determined by the programming provided by the institution and the level of comfort participating

by each visitor.

Similarly, EMC Arts has described five levels of engagement in which community

members participate (2013). They include "Inventive Arts Participation" which engages the

participant as they create artwork despite any level of skill; "Interpretive Arts Participation" in

which a community member contributes to a pre-existing work of art; "Curatorial Arts

Participation" where audience members select and organize artwork to their own preference;

"Observational Arts Participation" in which community members choose specific art works or

performances to view; and "Ambient Arts Participation" in which audience members experience

art in a space that they did not necessarily choose (EMC Arts, 2013).

From these descriptions, it is obvious that audience members can have a range of

investment in their cultural experiences. Varying levels of engagement allow visitors to interact

with art at their own comfort level. This is important to recognize when dealing with

performance art, as it is a selective niche within the contemporary art field. Some audience

members may be willing to be involved in the production of a program, while others are still new

to the contemporary performance field. In order to be innovative with community engagement

programming, it is important to address the myriad of visitors who will visit a contemporary

performance venue.

IV. Process

Across the arts field, innovation in community engagement is trending. However, it is

still up to the discretion of senior staff and availability of funding to create such programs. The

James Irvine Foundation found through conducting case studies that there are diversified

approaches concerning the "costs and revenues associated with each program" (Brown & Novak-

Leonard, 2011, p. 13). Through their research, they found that four types of funding were

utilized. These included:

> 1) using unrestricted funds (not specifically designated for programming) to avoid
> confusion about what is, or is not, core programming; 2) integrating active arts elements
> into core programming, so the two become indistinguishable from a fundraising
> standpoint; 3) charging admissions or participant fees; 4) leveraging an arts activity to
> generate support from community partners (e.g. sponsorships, supplies, and materials)
> and volunteers. (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2011, p. 13).

Many arts advocacy groups are providing grants specifically to invest in innovative

community engagement. Private research organizations such as the Wallace Foundation and

EMC Arts are working to offer opportunities for arts organizations to experiment and take risks

with innovative community engagement programs. EMC Arts and AdvisArts also provide

guidance to arts organizations for planning their own unique innovation to engage their

communities.

EMC Arts describes the process of how an arts organization can work to create

organizational innovation. Innovation requires the shifting of assumptions, new behavioral

practice, and different modes of public value (Evans, 2013). Art organizations need an

innovative team made up of members from all parts of the community. This includes senior staff,

new hires, board members, experts, outsiders, artists, and facilitator from outside organization (Evans, 2013). Once a team is compiled, it is necessary to work together by utilizing each person's strengths and articulating roles of each team member (Evans, 2013). The team should spend time brainstorming, researching, and meeting for months before going on an off-site retreat to decide on a plan of action. After the retreat, it is best try out small pilot programs to see what fits with the organization (Evans, 2013). Once success is met, it is appropriate to implement the program. The team should record the successes and failures of the program in order to improve their work and relate their work to the field (Evans, 2013).

AdvisArts suggests a much less rigid way of approaching organizational innovation (2013). They suggest that individuals within the organization should "lighten the mood" by learning to navigate and embrace mistakes (AdvisArts, 2013, p.54). The organization should be "committed" to innovation and exploring new pathways, but be "flexible" in how they are created (AdvisArts, 2013, p. 54). It is important to connect to the community, employing an "advisory group" or "liaison" between staff and audience can provide information more relevant to visitors (AdvisArts, 2013, p. 7). Staff should work together and provide each other with trust and respect in making decisions. Additionally, resources should be shared from within and outside of the organization; the more information available, the better an organization can provide for the public(AdvisArts, 2013). Technology is an important asset that can support communication within the organization and the public. AdvisArts (2013) suggests using social media to provide a more informal approach to reaching audience members that can direct the conversation in a more organic way. Most of all, it is crucial to be conscious of realistic time and resources that can be put into an innovative program (AdvisArts, 2013).

V. Dissemination of research

In 2001, RAND published a study on audience participation at art institutions after researching 100 art organizations that received grants from Wallace Readers Digest Funds and Knight Foundation (RAND, 2001). The purpose of the study was to recognize the shift art institutions providing greater access to the arts and increased arts participation. RAND reported that most art organizations had a hit-or-miss approach to increasing participation to the arts and found a need to document best practices (2001). Additionally, RAND's study found that most of the available research focused on the individual participant rather than outside influences, and emphasized individual's socio-economic demographics instead of personal motivations (RAND, 2001). The outcome of the study was a behavioral model which emphasized how individuals participate directly with the art institution. RAND found that there was no set principle of best practices for art organizations to increase audience engagement (RAND, 2001). This early study prompted continued research of the field to understand best practices for engagement by the Wallace Foundation, ArtsAdvis Consulting, The James Irvine Foundation, and EMC Arts.

In 2001, The Wallace Foundation, a leading force in research in arts participation, has directed initiatives to produce greater participation in the arts. It has worked collaboratively with State Arts Agencies (SAA) by providing $12.5 million to "develop policies and practices to make the arts a greater part of more people's lives" (Wallace Foundation, 2010, p 1). Previously, the foundation (2010) supported "participation-building" initiatives with art organizations, but in the 1990s decided to make a larger stake in access to the arts by working with SAAs (p. 5).

The State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation initiative (START) documents the work of participating SAAs who received funding from the Wallace Foundation to implement new engagement initiatives. Thirteen states were chosen to receive grants in amounts from

$500,000 to $1.1 million in order to train SAA staff and art organization staff to "build

participation, assessing whether grant-making requirements should place more emphasis on

building participation, assessing whether grant-making requirements should place more emphasis

on building participation, and supporting participation-building projects at art groups" (Wallace

Foundation, 2010, p 4). The START initiative prompted participation-building, as "82% of the

responding SAAs said START had prompted them to fund 'new grant programs aimed

specifically as boosting participation'" (Wallace Foundation, 2010, p 1).

Since 2009, the Washington State Art's Commission's Arts Participation Leadership

Initiative (APLI) has disseminated research conducted by Washington arts organizations in order

to share the successes local arts organizations have achieved to engage new audiences. As part of

the APLI, thirteen institutions in Washington received one time INNOVATIONS grants of

$30,000 in 2012 with support from the Wallace foundation "to stimulate innovative practices in

building arts participation" (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013, p. 2). The grants awarded in 2012,

continued the work from 2009 to propel arts participation in Washington and to disseminate the

work and research through forums and workshops. (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013).

The INNOVATIONS grants asked arts organizations to acknowledge "one or more of

four challenges to participation in the arts: engaging teens and young adults; diversifying

audiences from specific ethnic communities; integrating communications and marketing

techniques including the burgeoning digital universe, creating new opportunities for social

engagement or social connections" (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013, p 3). Of the four challenges,

my research project most closely pursues "creating new opportunities for social engagement or

social connections" (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013, p. 3). Each of the grantees in the AdvisArts

Consulting report were asked to fully document the process of their project and then disseminate the information.

The AdvisArts Consulting group collected information from all of the institutions awarded INNOVATIONS grants and created a list of innovative practices. These included: "embedding the work of the organization within a community, broadening curatorial methods, experimenting with setting, cabling opportunities together, integrating digital technology with strategy and programming, and combining arts content with socializing" (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013, p 4). The innovative practice of broadening curatorial methods fits most precisely within the case studies of PICA and On the Boards. The strategies for broadening curatorial methods include "shifting the curatorial voice of the organization to include programming driven by the knowledge, interest and expertise of individuals or groups beyond staff" and "blurring the line between being an audience member, participant and creator" (AdvisArts Consulting, 2013, p 8).

Progress in audience and community engagement in the arts has risen significantly since 2001 through the work and collaboration of State Arts Agencies, funding organizations, and arts organizations. This work and research has been widely disseminated to inspire other funding groups and arts organization to pioneer innovative programs to engage the public. This continued cycle of practice and articulation of practices is advancing the field in determining generalizable information to actively engage community members and create more meaningful relationships between arts organizations and the community. My research will further this this field of innovative community engagement and provide new insight into institutions that are working from this framework.

VI. Contemporary Performance and Performance Art

Performance art is difficult to define; the medium and mode for communication changes from performer to performer. Roselee Goldberg, a historian of performance art (2011) explains:

> The term performance art has become a catch-all for live performance of all kinds—from interactive installations in museums to imaginatively conceived fashion shows, DJ music events in clubs or political grand-standing—obliging viewers and reviewers alike to unravel the conceptual strategies of each, testing whether they fit into performance studies or more mainstream analysis of popular culture. Even as it is absorbed an acknowledged, the extraordinary range of material in this long, complex and fascinating history shows that performance art continues to be a highly reflexive, volatile form—one that artists use to articulate and respond to change. It continues to defy definition, and remains as unpredictable and provocative as it ever was. (p. 249)

Artists may utilize dance, theatre, visual art, or film as a way of critiquing social, political, or cultural phenomenon in contemporary society. Performance art emerged out of the post war era and became an established art form in the 1960s and 1970s. Performance artists' first performances ranged in locations from lofty elitist institutions, to abandoned churches, to parking garages. Today, there are numerous venues and festivals that have been established to house performance art. Yet, this genre is still seen as alternative and, at times, subversive.

Audiences of performance art can be jarred or relieved; come away enlightened or confused. Many times, the performances are created from such a narrow, deeply defined concept that the meaning is hard to trace. Additionally, the type of aesthetic used to convey the idea may confuse audiences who are used to traditional models of artistic expression. Similarly, the overarching topic being discussed by the art may be so personal that the audience may be unable to grasp the meaning at first glance. However, the audiences' presence derives additional meaning to the performance; they are more than just spectators. As Ward (2012) describes,

> Performance art disturbed relations between public and private in such a way as to disturb relations between artist and "the viewer," who becomes part of the audience. It follows upon performance art's interrogation of public and private that we ask how that first group that formed around a work, the audience, might be something else. We can

begin by calling that something else a public, if it is an image of the event-reliant body, the audience, turned outward, or back outward, toward the street, toward public space…This public is a residual locus of discourse and activity, which has a relation both to the protest culture of the sixties and seventies and to the temporality of performance art, with its awareness of a double audience. The idea of the audience becoming a public allows for a connection between those moments (between a moment when there was a protest culture, and now). This public nonetheless suggests bodies moving in space— which in turn suggests performance, in a general sense—and a moment in which "public" and "protest" could be connected. (p. 17)

In this way, attending a performance art presentation is a participatory experience in itself. However, it is up to the institution presenting the artist to provide a space for education, discussion, and the debriefing of a piece. By providing an opportunity to have a conversation about the performance, the medium, and the artist, audience members can learn to develop a deeper insight and connection to this art form.

Performance art shares many features with contemporary performance in both aesthetics and practice; the two are not easily separated. The Contemporary Performance Network cited Morgan V. P. Pecelli in his definition of contemporary performance as a:

hybrid work that integrates text, dance, objects, music, costumes, lighting, image, sound, sets, and vocal expression into complex interactive systems. Contemporary performance names a body of work that builds on an aesthetic history beginning in the 1880s with Alfred Jarry and early Dada experiments and unfolds through into the American avant-garde and Performance Art of the 1980s. Contemporary performance collages are often non-narrative, technically rigorous, and carefully orchestrated anarchic chaos. They unsettle perception, demand critical engagement from audiences, address conceptual debates within aesthetics, draw on a diverse range of cultural interests, and bring pleasure to populations across the globe. (Pecelli, 2014).

PICA and On the Boards present artists that could fall into either genre of Performance Art or Contemporary Performance. It is necessary to understand the work they present in order to understand the type of audience who may attend. These organizations are providing works that are unique to the Northwest United States, as they are able to provide access to internationally and nationally acclaimed artists working in this medium that local audience members may not

otherwise see live. The presenters want to be sure that they are providing ample access to these

performances that may be rare occurrences in their local areas. PICA and On the Boards created

innovative community engagement programs in order to open access to larger audiences.

VII. Participation and Convergence Culture

Participatory experiences are an innovative trend that is being widely discussed

throughout the institutional art field. Most notably, Nina Simon discusses the advantages of

participatory institutions and explains why they are necessary in engaging today's audiences.

Simon (2010) defines the difference in traditional and participatory program designs as:

> the way that information flows between institutions and users. In traditional exhibits and
> programs, the institution provides content for visitors to consume….In contrast, in
> participatory projects, the institution supports multi-directional content experiences. The
> institution serves as a 'platform' that connects different users who act as content creators,
> distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators. This means the institution cannot
> guarantee the consistency of visitor experiences. Instead, the institution provides
> opportunities for diverse visitor co-produced experiences. (Chapter 1, paragraph 4).

Institutions nationwide are following this trend to make more robust relationships with

their community. It is a shift that reflects the changing cultural landscape of the new millennium.

Simon (2010) continues by explaining:

> We entered what MIT researcher Henry Jenkins calls a "convergence culture" in which
> regular people—not just artists or academics—appropriate cultural artifacts for their own
> derivative works and discussions. Some cultural institutions responded, as did some
> music and television studios, by locking down their content so it couldn't be used in this
> way. But as time has gone on, more and more content providers have opened up their
> material and have invited people to create, share, and connect around it. (Chapter 1,
> paragraph 8).

From the top-down, cultural policy makers, funders, and art organizations are pushing for

access to arts. But, in this convergence culture of the 21st century, access to the arts means much

more than an open invitation to be a passive observer. Arts organizations must provide an

opportunity for active participation in creation alongside the artist or artwork. Giving access to

the arts means the ability to remix it to one's own needs to fulfill their own personal engagement. This is innovative for many reasons, as it often pushes the boundaries between the expertise of the staff at the institution and the needs to the community. However, art institutions can create trust and social capital by reflecting the values of society in their own work by instilling these innovative programs.

VIII. Social Capital

Social capital can be defined as "a network-based resource inhering in the structure of social relations between persons and groups," (Whitman, 2012, p. 442) and like any other capital, it is able to leverage other commodities in a community (Whitman, 2012; Putman, 2000). It is an informal trade between connected individuals that rests on the idea of reciprocity, either specifically or generally defined (Putman, 2000). Social capital can be afforded by different methods, as Putnam (2000) describes,

> of all the dimensions along which forms of social capital vary, perhaps the most important is the distinction between bridging (or inclusive) and bonding (or exclusive). Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups…Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity…bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. (p. 22)

In many ways, innovative community engagement programs are designed to provide inclusive experiences for those outside of the contemporary performance network. By providing a space and a program for people to "bridge" networks, art organizations can reach new audience members through non-traditional pathways.

Social capital can enhance community success and provide benefits for those who possess it (Whitman, 2012). Monica Whitman (2012) describes three benefits of those who possess social capital. They include: "social relations help establish and enforce community

norms," "social capital reinforces trust within the community," and "social capital provides

information channels, which helps citizens and community groups to identify goals and problems

and determine plans for action" (p. 443). Those who posses social capital, also possess trust.

Through this trust, they can inspire others to try new things (such as attending a performance).

Social capital disseminates information between groups, and as Whitman explains, can therefore

create paths of action.

Both PICA and On the Boards utilize their *Enthusiasts'* and *Ambassadors'* as social

capital to engage their wider communities. PICA and On the Boards targeted community

members who already had stake in their respective geographic community. By bringing these

community members into the fold, both PICA and On the Boards could help establish trust in

others to undergo a new experience and disseminate information about contemporary

performance to a larger audience.

IX. Space Making

Creating a space for community members to feel comfortable within an institution is

crucial for the development of sustainable meaningful relationships with audience members. A

safe space for individuals to interact within has been coined as a "third place." Ray Oldenburg

(1999) claims that third places "exist on neutral ground and serves to level their guests to a

condition of social equality. Within these places, conversation is the primary activity and the

major vehicle for the display and appreciation of human personality and individuality (p. 22).

Regulars to this space help create an atmosphere of comfort and stability, and therefore can help

transition new comers into this claimed and defined space. A third space is primarily public,

which are easily accessible both physically and metaphysically. The role of public spaces is

significant, as they have the ability to "attract and represent diverse audiences; create

opportunities for community engagement and interaction between groups; provide a venue for underrepresented groups to enhance their visibility; and seek to become a nucleus for more individualized communities" (Grodach, 2009, p. 476). For innovative community engagement programs, creating a space for *Enthusiasts* or *Ambassadors* to exist within the institution is crucial.

Contemporary performance institutions can set the tone of the space before audience members are even invited in. Grodach (2009) explains, "the mission statement, which communicates the ideals, goals, and ambitions of an art space, sets the stage for understanding its public space characteristics (p. 478). Due to the somewhat risky nature perceived of contemporary performance, the space may already be defined as such. However, Grodach (2009) continues by claiming, "communities rich in social capital are expected to be better able to motivate the cooperation and coordination necessary for residents to work together to achieve successful community outcomes" (p.454). Therefore, contemporary performance institutions that develop innovative community engagement programs, are much more likely to help audience members navigate this space.

Chapter Three: Case Study

I. Introduction

In order to better understand the emerging trend of innovative community engagement programs, I chose to research Portland Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA) in Portland, Oregon and On the Boards, in Seattle, Washington. Both contemporary performance art institutions implemented new innovative community engagement programs in the summer of 2013. Interviews were conducted at each site with staff members directly working on the new engagement programs. My interview questions (Appendix C) enabled me to understand the process, reasoning, and effects of each program respectively. This chapter is divided into two case studies: PICA's *Enthusiast* Project and On the Boards' *Ambassador* Program. Each case study will explore the history of the institution, the mission, the positioning within their respective cities, the reasoning for establishing community engagement programs, the process, and the lasting effects. By limiting this study to contemporary performance art institutions in the Pacific Northwest, I hope to find a focused reasoning of how these institutions can engage their communities with the artistic programming they provide.

II. Case Study: Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) *Enthusiast* Project

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) was founded in 1995 by artist and curator Kristy Edmunds. At that time, there was a need for a presenting institution that met needs of those in between "established traditional institutions and emerging alternative spaces" (PICA, 2014) in Portland. Edmunds invited nationally renowned artists to meet and work with local contemporary artists at itinerant locations to inspire conversation across disciplines. In 2003, PICA began its annual two-week Time-Based Art (TBA) Festival that merged the presentation of visual and contemporary performance art. This transition allowed for greater audience access to

national, international, and local artists. By 2011, PICA gained a permanent space to hold year round programming while still organizing the TBA festival at numerous locations throughout the city. PICA now serves an audience of 23,000 people, and has recently developed programming to strengthen the relationship with the constituents they serve.

In June 2013, PICA was chosen as a Performing Arts institute recipient of a $10,000 grant from EMC Arts. This grant is designed "to help arts organizations challenge core operating assumptions, engage in intense planning on a practical innovation project, create a sense of organization-wide investment in change, and test innovative strategies with grants that help organizations prototype new practices." (EMC Arts, 2014). PICA staff, and a consultant from EMC Arts, focused on two components of the organization: its use of space and its audience engagement. After a staff retreat in Virginia, provided by EMC Arts, the staff recognized that they were in need of a diversification of the audience members they were currently engaging as they wanted to increase new audience participation. With help from the consultation of EMC Arts and their own research into innovative community engagement models, they developed the *Enthusiast* Project.

The *Enthusiast* Project was created to deepen the connections with members from varying Portland communities through experimental practice, especially during the Time-Based Art Festival, September 12-22, 2014. Roya Amirsoleymani, Community Engagement Manager, described the focus of the grant to encourage "small experiments with radical intent" (personal communication, February 14, 2014). Because of the itinerant nature of their programming venues, the staff felt it was necessary to court a new geographically diverse audience within Portland. The framework of the *Enthusiast* Project was meant to involve a set number of community members that already had a strong relationship with PICA through continued

programming participation. Staff collaborated to decide which community members they would

choose to act as *Enthusiasts* and created a criterion for their selection. The *Enthusiasts* would be

individuals that already had a relationship with PICA through attendance of their programs, were

community mobilizers within their own network, and were not affiliated with any other art

organization. The reasoning behind these three limitations can be explained as follows. PICA

staff wanted *Enthusiasts* to have an avid interest in their programming that they could share with

members in their own community; they would already have a drive to share their appreciation of

the art. As an identified community mobilizer, they would have experience gathering people

around a specific cause. Additionally, staff did not want to create a conflict of interest by

reaching out to individuals who were already affiliated with another arts organization.

Staff reached out to individuals that they felt melt those criteria and were able to enlist

seven E*nthusiasts.* Amirsoleymani described that the *Enthusiasts* "acted as lay people who we

were empowering to do that kind of community mobilization" (personal communication,

February 14, 2014) for PICA. After *Enthusiasts* were enlisted for the project, a coordinator, Alex

Novie, was hired under seasonal contract to act as a facilitator between the *Enthusiasts* and PICA

staff. He began at the end of July (two months before TBA Festival) and worked with the

Community Engagement Manager, Artistic Director, and the Institutional Giving Manager to

discuss the possibilities of *Enthusiast* programming. All parties were present for the orientation

meeting at the end of July. At this meeting, *Enthusiasts* signed contracts for their work, in which

they would be given a stipend of $500 and a budget of $200-$300 to use for their community

engagement programming. Expectations were articulated at this meeting, that *Enthusiasts* were

responsible for engaging their networks with PICA programming. Amirsoleymani explained,

"We viewed them as experts on their own communities, asking them to consider both new and

traditional methods of audience engagement that would feel right for the communities in which

they are embedded" (personal communication, February 14, 2014). A lot of brainstorming

happened during the orientation and continued at smaller meetings afterwards. Once the initial

information exchange had passed, Novie acted as the main contact for the *Enthusiasts.*

Novie acted "a conduit between the *Enthusiasts* and the PICA People Committee (who

initially outlined the *Enthusiast* program idea), communicating the audience engagement ideas of

Enthusiasts with the staff and coordinate any necessary resources and internal requests (e.g. box

office reservations for large groups)" (personal communication, May 22, 2014). Over several

pre-festival meetings, Novie would discuss with the *Enthusiasts* the barriers of access they

believed stood in the way of their networks and communities from attending PICA

programming. Staff had assumed that some barriers might include economic costs, lack of

transportation, a need for child care, a lack of language to communicate about art, or a feeling of

exclusion from the contemporary art world or art world in general. These were general

sentiments that the *Enthusiasts* also shared. Many of them used the funds to purchase tickets for

the particular group that they were trying to engage, bought food or beverages as a hospitality

gesture, or used them for Field Guide—an educational program during the TBA Festival.

Amirsoleymani described how these plans were meant to "keep the group involved" around the

festival programming (personal communication, February 14, 2014).

Originally, staff thought that the *Enthusiasts* would take on a more creative role in

developing outreach strategies for their networks. Amirsoleymani describes the staff's

assumptions and learnings throughout the process:

> One of our biggest learnings came out of the fact that we initially structured [the
> Enthusiasts project] in such a way as to encourage creativity, to re-imagine what an
> engagement experience might look like--on the verge of curating their group's
> experiences through the festival. It might be one big activity or many small ones; it could

be artistic. It could be risky. It could be an intervention in the beer garden or throwing a party on the deck. We gave them some loose ideas but really hoped they would come up with a lot of their own. The initial goal was for them to serve as a brain trust of sorts. (R. Amirsoleymani, personal communication, May 22, 2014).

She continued by explaining that initially they were somewhat disappointed that the *Enthusiasts* did not initiate original methods of engaging their communities. But they did learn that the *Enthusiasts* might not be comfortable working outside the box—that it might have been too open ended for them to focus their energies. She described how it also might be that "as experts on their own communities" the *Enthusiasts* might know that the best way to connect a group to PICA is to "simply attend a show with someone they trust" (personal communication, February 14, 2014). In a way, the *Enthusiasts* would be using their own social capital by having other's trust them to attend PICA programming.

Both Amirsoleymani and Novie explained that PICA's programming was experimental, edgy, alternative, and well executed. In some ways, there was risk involved in attending a performance, especially if a community member was unfamiliar with contemporary performance or performance art. Amirsoleymani asserted that perhaps the *Enthusiasts* recognized that "personal introductions and relationships are what really matter. The community members whom the Enthusiasts worked to engaged simply needed someone they trusted to invite them in" (personal communication, February 14, 2014). In a general sense, the *Enthusiasts* helped PICA hold out a hand to community members that had not yet found value in its programming.

In addition to acting as a facilitator and guide for the Enthusiasts in developing and executing their individual audience engagement strategies, Novie spoke about the importance of "having a third space for the Enthusiasts and their groups. Project feedback (group debrief, personal communications between Novie and the Enthusiasts) indicated that these factors helped

the Enthusiasts and their group members gain access to physical art spaces, but also the language

of the art world" (personal communication, May 22, 2014). At a focus group following the wrap

up of the festival, *Enthusiasts* provided anecdotes about the individuals they were engaging. The

community members felt a sense of safety that there was someone they knew who acted as a

conduit to the organization. In a sense, "[the *Enthusiast* project] helped to demystify the

institution of PICA and the sometimes inaccessible notions associated with the idea of

'contemporary art.' Acting as liaisons to their particular community members, each *Enthusiast*

created a safe space for experiencing contemporary art at the TBA festival. These were 'micro-

sites of creation' for *Enthusiasts* and their group members, many of which previously felt as

though they lacked access to the space, did not understand a certain lexicon, or did not meet

other specific certain requirements to understand and/or enjoy contemporary art" (personal

communication, February 22, 2014). PICA had already created space for people to congregate

during the festival in their beer garden outside of late night show The WORKS and at Field

Guide where participants were able to learn from experts in the field and then debrief with a

group post performance. Novie described how

> at the initial orientation and brainstorm session, the *Enthusiasts* were told to be creative.
> As the TBA festival drew closer and engagement strategies were materializing, we
> offered feedback and assistance to the *Enthusiasts*. We reminded them that, while they
> had free reign to be creative with their plans, they didn't need to feel pressured to come
> up with any revolutionary engagement strategies. The idea of not needing to 'reinvent the
> wheel' was also mentioned when discussing contingency plans for engagement strategies
> that didn't materialize during the first weekend of TBA. When evaluating the process
> post-festival, we (the project team) noted how this free reign of ideas seemed daunting to
> some *Enthusiasts.* (personal communication, May 22, 2014)

Many of them could use these already established programs and spaces to the same advantage.

Within these spaces, *Enthusiasts* and their community members were able to pick up the

language of contemporary art in order to feel more confident in expressing how the performance

affected them. Novie had relayed that the *Enthusiasts* were guided through the TBA festival

program early in their contract by staff members. He noted that this was key in helping

Enthusiasts talk about the events to their communities, but to also keep them intrigued during the

programs. Being able to use the language of those involved in the arts field helps one feel a part

of the place, and gives someone a sense of kinship with those there.

Amirsoleymani spoke on the outcome of the first year of the Enthusiasts experiment. She

estimates that after TBA Festival, "about 10-15 people were converted to avid PICA audiences"

(personal communication, May 22, 2014). At first, she felt this to be a somewhat low number,

but then came to realize that "depth over breadth" is most important when engaging new

audiences and community members in contemporary art (R. Amirsoleymani, personal

communication, February 14, 2014). She added, "these new fans are more likely to name drop

PICA or invite their friends to PICA programming. They may become *Enthusiasts* in a possible

cohort next year. It is just one step closer to falling into the kinship of PICA staff and the

contemporary performance and art world" (personal communication, May 22, 2014).

III. Case Study: On the Boards *Ambassador* Program

On the Boards was founded in 1978 by artists to "introduce audiences to international

innovators in contemporary dance, theater and music while developing and presenting new work

by Northwest performing artists" (On the Boards, 2010). Located in downtown Seattle, On the

Boards presents year round programming of contemporary performance by nationally,

internationally, and locally acclaimed artists. Their programming includes the Inter/National

Series, a presentation of international artists; Northwest Series, a presentation of regional artists;

On the Boards TV, an online platform for access to performances they present; NW New Works

Festival, an annual 2 week festival of international and regional work in progress performances;

and 12 Minutes Max, a showcase of new works by local performers.

In the summer of 2012, Lane Czaplinski, Artistic Director of On the Boards, wrote an

article in the Seattle publication *City Arts.* He spoke about the unique atmosphere of Seattle,

hosting such an array of philanthropy, arts organizations, artists, and partnerships; while

discussing the general Seattle sentiment that "the arts are a good thing" (Czaplinski, 2012).

However, he voiced that the city as a whole lacked cohesion in capitalizing on the creative assets

in order to provide new growth in the field. He claimed, "A culture of artistic experimentation

and production is part of what gives a city its soul" (Czaplinski, 2012). Czaplinski spoke about

igniting a creative community in Seattle, and he asserted that many Seattleites self-identified as

artists. He suggested, "let's create a platform based on artistic innovation and creative industry

and apply it broadly—to culinary arts, booze-making, architecture, design and video games

along with visual art, theater, dance, music, literature and film. Let's become a city that

cultivates bold artistic production and champions creative industry" (Czaplinski, 2012).

Collaboration between creative individuals can open up the possibility for an exciting new

territory of works. The establishment of a community that embraces creativity will allow a safe

space for artists to take risks and face failure. Instead of researching models of engagement, On

the Bards decided to work with what they had—a plethora of creatives willing to collaborate

with the organization to produce a creative community.

About a year later, On the Boards' innovative community engagement program, the

Ambassadors Project, began to form. In the spring of 2013, On the Boards' staff sent out a

request for proposals for individuals in Seattle to see what kind of programming could be

beneficial for the organization in terms of connecting to its community. When the RFP's came

back, On the Boards' staff worked with their Board and members of their Diversity Committee

to implement and develop a program that would serve them and their community. They

established the *Ambassador* project and sent out applications online for individuals to apply.

Most of the funding for the *Ambassadors* came from Boeing, but additional funds were needed

from On the Boards. Ninety individuals applied to be a part of the project, with the hope to help

curate and program events at On the Boards. Staff, Board members, and the Diversity Committee

met and decided on 15 candidates to be selected as On the Boards' *Ambassadors.*

The *Ambassador* Project was structured into 5 cohorts of 3 individuals. Each cohort

would have two months of tenure, in which they would work with staff on certain deliverables to

curate artistic programming and hospitality on site. Each *Ambassador* was paid $500 during their

contract. There was no hired coordinator specifically for the *Ambassadors*; rather, they worked

with multiple staff in order for their efforts to come into fruition. Some staff members had more

interaction with the *Ambassadors* than others, but many times communication was passed

through the whole office for logistic and production purposes. Staff members such as Sean Ryan,

Regional Programs and Facilities Manager; Monique Courcy, OntheBoards.tv & Digital Media

Manager; and Betsey Brock, Director of Patron Relations worked closely with the *Ambassadors.*

Ryan helped with operations of programs, Courcy helped with technical aspects for a program

and contributing information online, and Brock helped communicated *Ambassador* activity to the

Board and to the community.

The *Ambassadors* "were selected to represent the depth and breadth of Seattle's cultural

community to further animate conversations across complementary sectors and to highlight what

makes our community so distinct." (On the Boards, 2013). Additionally, Ryan recounted on how

Ambassadors were chosen for how much they are a "convener, connector, and catalyzer" (S. Ryan, personal communication, March 21, 2014). Many of them were artists or creatives ranging from tea enthusiasts, curators, architects, and LGBTI community organizers. The *Ambassador* project asked "people who were not presenters to present" (B. Brock, personal communication, March 21, 2014) recounts Brock. Many of the *Ambassadors* had little to no experience with event planning, so the staff spent a lot of time working with teams to provide professional development. At times, this took a lot of time and effort from staff away from their normal duties. However, it was important to them to involve community members with different perspectives to engage and collaborate on the programming. Of the fifteen *Ambassadors*, only half had previously been in contact with On the Boards before their tenure. Ryan discussed how that made the program unique, "it's been broadening their mind in how they are engaging new audiences" (S. Ryan, personal communication, March 22, 2014). However, at times the staff recounted that the *Ambassadors* felt somewhat overwhelmed with the tasks they were asked to carry out through their tenure. A list of "deliverables" was created after a brainstorming session with the staff that included projects such as curating 12 Minutes Max, creating a playlist for the lobby, curating a lobby installation, writing performance reviews, and mixing a specialty cocktail for the cash bar.

Brock, Courcy, and Ryan all remarked on how this was a substantial learning culminating from the project. They wanted to provide an atmosphere of creativity among the *Ambassadors*, while balancing the logistical aspects of the organization. Much of the work of the staff was educating the *Ambassadors* on how to program, and even what is programming. Ryan explained, "We don't want them doing our job, we want them to feel engaged within the organization, but not feel that they have to do something that they might be so unfamiliar with" (S. Ryan, personal

communication, March 21, 2014). All of them agreed that the *Ambassadors*, in the future, could

provide more hospitality for the audience members. It could be "hospitality for artists who are

working here, hospitality artists in the community who have worked here or dream to work here,

hospitality for audiences who might be new to On the Boards. Not that it would be there job to

just buy everyone drinks, but to really be ears to the ground about where we stand in the

community and how we can do better" (B. Brock, personal communication, March 22, 2014)

Brock stated.

Staff did recognize certain individuals and projects as successes. Some *Ambassadors*

made intimate connections with artists performing during their tenure. One *Ambassador* helped

facilitate a relationship between the artistic director and an outside artist. As the teams continued,

the staff gained more understanding of the *Ambassador's* role within the organization. They

learned to recognize the balance between the loss of control of the staff and the ownership of

artistic programming by the *Ambassadors.* They gave them more of a voice, by actively branding

the work the *Ambassadors* did and allowing the *Ambassadors* to talk about their work for On the

Boards in their own words. This did also cover a balance between quality control and voice of

the *Ambassador.* By allowing them ownership of their work within the space, both could exist

simultaneously without distracting from On the Boards' celebrated programming.

Ryan recounted how many of the deliverables presented to the *Ambassadors* were

structured similarly to how the staff interacts with artists. 12 Minutes Max was a program that all

of the *Ambassadors* worked on during their tenure. Previously, staff had invited local artists in to

help curate the show. However, the framework of the *Ambassador's* tenure lent itself the perfect

model to allow those individuals to work on that project. Similarly, when *Ambassadors*

brainstormed extracurricular programs, the staff gaged the possibility of their proposal as they

would an artist's request. Ryan claimed, "It's all about implementation. That's how I worked

with some of the artists at the NW New Works Festival or 12 Minutes Max, it's providing them

with your limitations and how you are going to work within that. Especially with festival

artists—so there are similar ways as a program manager of how I can apply those same aspects

to the *Ambassadors*" (personal communication, March 22, 2014). Some of the *Ambassadors*

even proposed programming that was influenced by artists working at On the Boards. Ryan

explained how one *Ambassador* proposed a collaboration between On the Boards and a local

theatre organization to provide a workshop in which artists from all different mediums could

come participate, inspire, and possibly collaborate with others. This *Ambassador* was inspired by

Miguel Gutierrez, an artist On the Boards presented, whose piece brought together artists from

all different backgrounds. Additionally, *Ambassadors* were offered artist subscriptions to On the

Boards' programming after their tenure. This subscription is usually only offered to artists that

present at their venue, and is at much cheaper cost.

Staff believed that *Enthusiasts* engaged other community members by inviting their

friends and family to the events that they helped curate. The invitation to On the Boards was

therefore a much more personal gesture because they were much more personally invested in the

workings. Additionally, staff invited *Ambassadors* to meet others that they knew professionally

and personally both during their tenure and afterwards. They used On the Boards almost as a

"clubhouse" to "catalyze a community to talk about issues" (B. Brock, personal communication,

March 22, 2014). The issues ranged from their own personal artistic collaborations and

networking, to discussing On the Boards' programming. The way the staff discussed the

audience in this space acknowledged that many of the attendees were part of the creative

makings of Seattle. On the Boards was not a vacuum in which these individuals did not exist. It

was a place to make connections with people and ideas. For the newly engaged patrons who

were unfamiliar with contemporary performance, the space and community developed at On the

Boards allowed for them to feel safe discussing their uncertainties with such a new medium.

They could share ideas and build their use of language surrounding the art.

A big learning from the initial *Ambassador* project was setting up communication lines

between staff and the five *Ambassador* teams. The teams could have learned a lot from one

another, in terms of the trial and error they had during their tenure. In the next season to come,

staff hopes to consolidate information and provide a way for the *Ambassadors* to interact with

each other in order to improve programming, but to also make personal creative connections.

Chapter Four: Findings and Recommendations

I. Introduction

As the decline of art participation continues nationally, it is important for non-profit arts organizations to take a leadership role in reversing the trend. When art organizations embark on the engagement of new audiences, it is essential for staff to consider the art organization's geographic location, community members, and organizational mission. Each factor will help shape and determine the development of the program and the outcome of their efforts. Arts leaders and community organizers should work with the resources in their community to help shape a more inviting and collaborative environment surrounding the works they present.

Contemporary performance is often thought of as "subversive," "provocative," or "alternative" and therefore may still be seen by many as exclusive and unwelcoming. Contemporary performance advocates, artists, and presenters are working together to disperse information about the art form and to develop collaborations. For example, the organization Big Art Group has created an online platform entitled Contemporary Performance to map artists and venues for future potential collaboration. The genre is growing in recognition; however, it is still up to contemporary performance venues to encourage audience engagement in order to support this artwork in their region. PICA and On the Boards have created innovative community engagement programs to support that mission.

It was a pleasure to be able to interview staff members from PICA and On the Boards to discuss their new programs of innovative community development. They were able to share with me key information about the process of development, implementation, and key findings. Since both of these programs are new, they are still learning what works best for their organization and the constituents involved. In the future, the programs may change to better reflect their goals and

the goals of their community members. However, I was able to analyze key findings from my interviews which will be broken up into the following sections: process of developing community engagement program, implementation of community engagement program, social capital, and contemporary performance organizations as the site of community development.

II. Process of Developing Community Engagement Program

   Creating an innovative community engagement program is only achievable when it is directly related to the organization's mission and the direction of senior staff. Both PICA and On the Boards' mission emphasizes access to the works they present. Their foundations lay in showcasing local performances, and bringing internationally and nationally acclaimed performances to each city respectively. PICA applied for the EMC Arts Innovation Lab for Performing Arts grant in order to receive funds and training for creating an innovative program that could support better alignment with Portland's community members. Once the grant was obtained, and the retreat was finished, senior staff made it a priority to push community engagement through the *Enthusiast* project. On the Boards' artistic director, Lane Czaplinski, had been considering how to utilize Seattle's creative community and work to make it stronger by using On the Boards as a platform for this endeavor. With funding help from Boeing, the *Ambassador* project was able to begin its course in working with Seattle creatives to deepen the connection between audience members and On the Boards.

   The process of creating the structure for these community engagement projects took on different forms as resources and needs differed. However, innovation and experimentation were key findings. The *Enthusiast* and *Ambassador* projects both allowed for failure. This was instrumental, as it allowed risk in working with community members and utilizing their expertise. The merging of staff experience and expertise with that of the community members

needed to lend itself flexibility. Both organizations had accountability built in. PICA met with

and reported to an EMC Arts consultant who guided them through their own granting process,

and helped brainstorm new ideas (TABLE 1). On the Boards worked with their Board and

Diversity Committee as a way to spread accountability for what they deemed as successful to the

program (TABLE 1). Although the structure varied for each community engagement project,

they both aimed to create similar depth of engagement of their community members.

Table 1. Funding and accountability

PICA	On the Boards
EMCarts Grant	Boeing/ Additional Funds
Consultant and Staff	Staff, Board of Directors, Diversity Committee

The *Enthusiast* project and the *Ambassador* project both took out for the same goal of

increasing their audience within their cities. However, they took much different approaches in

their strategy. The *Enthusiast* program was aimed to empower *Enthusiasts* as community

mobilizers within the organization, as they were "experts on their own community" (TABLE 2).

They worked with staff to create unique ways of lowering barriers of access to their friends and

co-workers. In many ways, they acted as a social conduit between PICA and Portland. Due to the

itinerant model of PICA's festival programming, it was necessary for PICA to work with

different sectors of Portland's community in terms of geography and demographics. The

Enthusiasts already had an established tie to PICA, and were considered community mobilizers

that could help bring their friends and networks closer into PICA's artistic programming.

Half of the *Ambassadors* had not been On the Boards' audience members before their

tenure, but all were considered creatives or artists in the area. The *Ambassadors* were given the

ability to create artistic programming at On the Boards alongside staff (TABLE 2). These

individuals used their unique talents and creativity to curate events that suited their backgrounds. They invited their friends and families to programs they created, and were able to involve their networks in a diverse range of performances. Their personal involvement in artistic programming made them more apt to invite friends and family members to support their personal efforts at the organization. The personal connections the *Enthusiasts* and the *Ambassadors* made to their friends and communities, helped secure trust in taking a risk of attending a contemporary performance.

Table 2. Community members

PICA	On the Boards
Non-Art Related Community Members	Creatives in Seattle Community
Specific Demographics in Portland	Not Specific Demographic in Seattle
Previous Relationship with PICA	Half Had No Previous Relationship with On the Boards
Community Mobilizers	Involved in Various Creative Communities

III. Implementation of Community Engagement Program

When creating a community engagement program that involves "outsiders," both organizations brainstormed ideas about what kinds of programming their groups could develop. Each organization had some idea of how they would like to see the programs unfold. PICA held several brainstorming sessions with the *Enthusiasts* and discussed how their community members would like to be involved; On the Boards made a list of "deliverables," or projects, that the *Ambassadors* would work on during their tenure (Table 3). On both accounts, the *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* required professional development for event planning and production (Table 3). PICA hired a specific staff member to be a coordinator, while On the Boards utilized all staff as they would with any other program (Table 3). Through this process they became more familiar with the staff and artistic programming on site. They were brought closer into the

organization, and had direct communication about operations and artistic practice. They were

joining the ranks of cultural producers, while possessing an asset that staff members could not

harbor on their own—and that was social capital.

Table 3. Staff implementation

PICA	On the Boards
Enthusiast Coordinator Hired	*Ambassadors* worked with All Staff
Brainstormed with *Enthusiasts*	List of "Deliverables" Created
Provided Professional Development	Provided Professional Development

Each community engagement project worked with other small groups to implement

increased audience growth. This may have been due to staff limitations, time, and resources.

Each cohort worked for a short period of time, approximately two months each (Table 4). Every

Enthusiast and *Ambassador* was given a stipend of $500 for their work (Table 4). However, staff

interviewed claimed that *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* both struggled receiving this amount of

compensation. They felt it was a high amount for the work they were doing and Staff commented

on how they would have liked to provide other sources of compensation to make them feel more

aligned to their role of "*Enthusiast*" or "*Ambassador.*"

However, compensation of some kind was necessary, as the *Enthusiasts* and

Ambassadors were providing a service for each respective organization that staff alone would

not be able to provide. *Enthusiasts* provided to PICA their expertise on barriers of access to their

specific communities. They then worked with PICA and their communities to create points of

access. However, the biggest factor, was lending out a welcoming hand to their communities.

This offered trust and support in taking a risk to see a performance which their networks might

have been unfamiliar with.

Ambassadors brought new creative outlooks to On the Boards' artistic programming. They had all come from differing artistic backgrounds that could influence the curation of programs and the collaborations that happened on site. Their personal and professional backgrounds were assets that On the Boards could not get through staff alone. Their unique perspective and direction helped make larger connections for audience members, and their personal involvement drove them to invite their own friends and family for support on site.

Table 4. *Enthusiasts* **and** *Ambassadors*

PICA	On the Boards
Enthusiasts	*Ambassadors*
1 cohort of 7 individuals	5 cohorts of 3 individuals
Worked for 2 Months	Tenure for 2 months
$500 stipend	$500 stipend
Free Festival Pass	Free shows during tenure, Pick 6 after Tenure
Budget to create events	Curated artistic programming
Experts on their own community	Creative Collaboration

The monetary compensation, paired with the ability to create programming for each organization, empowered the *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors*. *Enthusiasts* were asked to actively engage their communities who did not have ties to PICA already. Many *Ambassadors* were working with On the Boards for the first time, and as a by-product of their work, inspired friends and others to become interested in On the Boards. Their position in the "cool kids club" gained interest from other creatives in the community to want to get involved as well. The empowerment each *Enthusiast* and *Ambassador* felt from their position invited them to use their social capital to bring in others.

IV. Social Capital

As discussed in the literature review, social capital is "a network-based resource inhering in the structure of social relations between persons and groups" (Whitman, 2012, p. 442). This resource is only available within the networks of community between individuals and groups. For contemporary performance organizations who serve audiences of dozens of thousands of people, it would be quite impossible to hold that much social capital within the staff. They must work with other individuals to leverage their own social capital to bring others to their programming. The *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* used their own social capital to invite their friends and community members to their respective organization's programming. They had some obligation to PICA and On the Boards to perform these actions as they received a stipend, and additionally had an obligation to their friends to provide an enjoyable experience.

By wielding the social capital of *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors*, PICA and On the Boards were able to enliven the engagement of audience members in their respective regional communities. Monica Whitman describes three benefits of those who possess social capital. The first benefit is: "social relations help establish and enforce community norms" (Whitman, 2012, p.443). *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* can help set the tone in their community of attending contemporary performances a norm. As a "cool kids club," described by On the Boards' staff, the project will serve to encourage others to attend and participate in programming. *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* are in a sense leading a trend, both culturally and socially, in their city to attend performances. *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors,* as part of their job, were knowledgeable about the art and artists presented at each venue. They learned the language of contemporary performance with the staff to talk about it to a wider community. This would encourage their

friends and respective communities to learn the lexicon and find interest in educating themselves in this genre.

The second benefit is "social capital reinforces trust within the community." (Whitman, 2012, p.443). As *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* brought their networks to the venues, their communities trusted to gain something favorable from the experience. The transaction could be seeing a show that they enjoyed, having social time, or making a creative connection. These were the goals of both programs—and they developed along the way as to best serve the constituents. Likewise, the last benefit is "social capital provides information channels, which helps citizens and community groups to identify goals and problems and determine plans for action"(Whitman, 2012, p. 443). This information channel was integral for both the organization and the community engagement program for PICA and On the Boards. The *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* had privy information of what communities felt about the organization, the performance, and the barriers to access. PICA and On the Boards staff had insider information about the artists, performances, production, and language of contemporary performance. The *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* dispersed this information between staff and the wider community to build a larger network of contemporary performance audience members.

V. Contemporary Performance Organizations as the Site of Community Development

Both venues were platforms for community development—not just for the development of future audience members, but for the development of contemporary performance supporters in each city respectively. The organizations acted as sites of inclusion, as they took new audience goers by the hand, welcomed them, and taught them the language to participate. These interactions opened up direct lines of communication with contemporary performance artists, along with the presenters of contemporary performance. The *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors*

literally dug out a space for community members in each city to feel comfortable walking into a new experience and discussing it openly.

A parallel found in the interviews with staff at PICA and On the Boards was their discussion of space. It seemed that many community members desired a third space at the venues. On the Boards described the lobby of their venue as a club house—one where artists, creatives, and community members could come to make connections and collaborations. It was a space where they could discuss the works and learn how others viewed the performance. Additionally, it was a space where they could discuss their own works and make potential connections for future artistic collaborations. At PICA, The WORKS, a late night space filled with artistic programming and a beer garden, was a space for community members to feel comfortable around their friends and discuss the performances they saw. Field Guide, an educational program by PICA, also allowed for community members to learn the language surrounding the art.

The models of engagement really relied on personal interactions between individuals. A 4th place was created, as people interacted in a public, comfortable space, with the direct intent of consuming and contributing to the discourse of contemporary performance art. Although models differed slightly (Figure 1 & Figure 2), they both allowed for growth of community members to develop ties to the network of contemporary performance in their town.
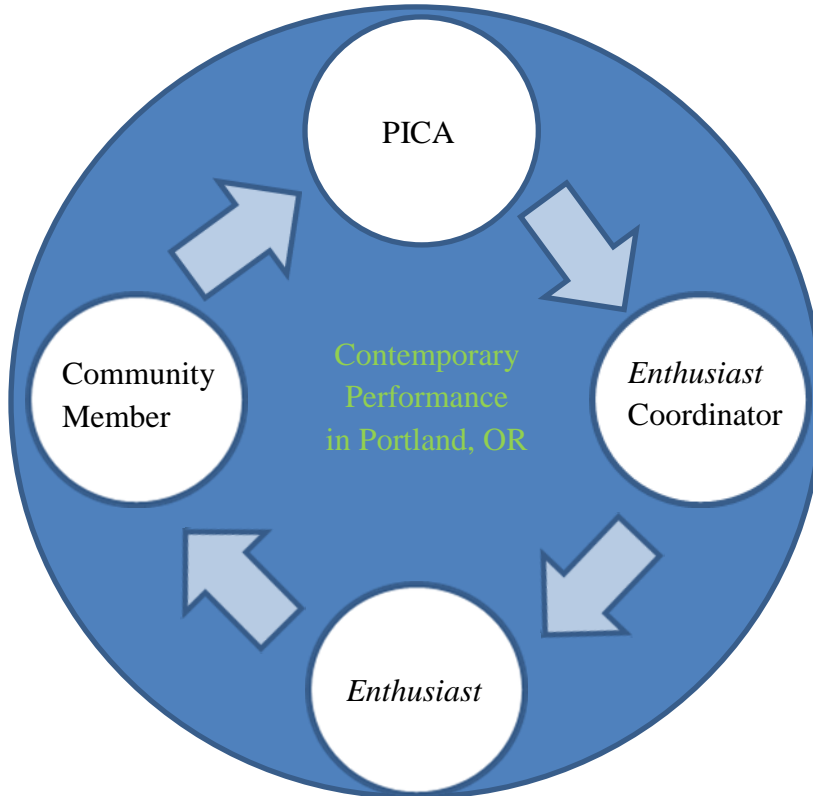
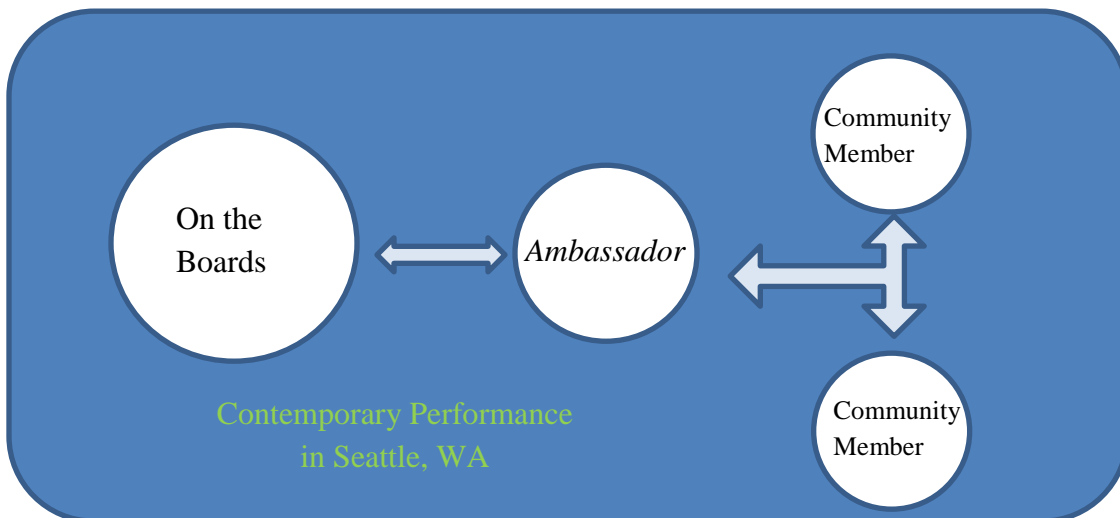Figure 2. PICA *Enthusiast* model of engagement

Figure 3. On the Boards' *Ambassador* model of engagement

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This project explored innovative community engagement programming at contemporary performance art institutions and provided in-depth case studies of Portland Institute of Contemporary Art's (PICA) *Enthusiast* project and On the Boards' *Ambassador* project. This project is meant to explore the trend of innovative community engagement, in the national decline of arts participation, especially at contemporary performance art venues in the Pacific Northwest. It is intended as a resource for arts administrators and community developers for deepening engagement with constituents through contemporary performance.

This research project began with a literature review that explored an in-depth look at innovative community engagement programming and its theoretical underpinnings. In order to improve audience development, the NEA and several private research organizations have suggested implementing innovative methods of engagement. This project explores the question: What is the process of actively engaging community members in broadening creative/curatorial methods at PICA as compared to On the Boards? In the process of answering this question, I have also addressed the following qualitative queries: How are these organizations able to implement these programs with the participation of funders, art organization staff, and community members? In what ways are these programs in Portland and Seattle model innovative community engagement programs for other arts organizations to consider?

The literature review has revealed how the field of innovation in community engagement programming is growing, as private research organizations, such as RAND, The Wallace Foudation, The James Irvine Foundation, and EMC Arts, have been providing opportunities for this type of programming and disseminating research to the field for further study. Data from the programs they supported was compiled into general models of engagement that explain

traditional and innovative modes of engagement. They conclude that innovative models of engagement allow audience and visitors to be creators of their own experiences. Innovation is achievable through participatory programming that allows interaction and creation of cultural content by visitors and staff.

The literature review also expands on the theoretical underpinnings that helped shape these innovation models of engagement. Convergence culture is driving a new paradigm of participation and interaction that people are bringing into their daily lives. Audience members now expect to participate and share their expertise with those around them. By enabling community members to create inside the institution, they can become empowered and solidified as stake holders.

Constituents within an organization are much more likely to use their own social capital to bring others to programming and into the space. Community members who participate in engagement programs are able to create a space that facilitates the divide between audience and experts at institutions. Creating a third space facilitates a more welcoming environment and supplies trust for audience members in their investment of time spent at the organization and the program. The literature also explained the unique attributes of the contemporary performance and performance art worlds.

Chapter three was a comprehensive case study of model innovative community engagement programs at contemporary performance art institutions. It explored PICA's *Enthusiast* project and On the Boards' *Ambassador* project. Each organization had its own reasoning, process, and implementation strategies for community engagement. But they both utilized innovative, experimental modes of engagement to deepen the connection with new and existing audience members. Most uniquely, both organizations gave the *Enthusiasts* or

Ambassadors space to utilize their expertise. There was professional development provided by staff to help implement the projects, but it was an act of co-creation.

The main findings from these case studies illuminated trends between the field of theory and praxis. As described in Chapter three and four, every institution is has its own mission and values. Staff leadership combined with community resources will contribute to a unique program that serves both the institutions and the community members respectively. Allowing community members into the institutions and empowering them to create a program using their own expertise is key in developing trust and meaningful relationships with staff. A major finding was that depth over breadth will draw new audience members into the fold and encourage them to act as true "enthusiasts" or "ambassadors" of the work an institution is creating.

Allowing sites of micro-community within the organization and its programming can allow audience members to feel comfortable taking risks by experiencing contemporary performance. They can make connections, learn the language of contemporary performance, and develop bonds with the organization and each other. The community of contemporary performance can thrive both inside the space it is presented and can reach throughout the city with these types of implementations.

This project was an initial step in understanding innovative community engagement programs at contemporary performance art institutions, specifically in the Pacific Northwest. There is still work to be conducted on this topic, as more programs develop and celebrate innovation and experimentation. Of course, the case study sites will also progress as PICA and On the Boards continue to develop their community engagement programs. I would recommend further study of each site's relationships with their *Enthusiasts* and *Ambassadors* to continue learning from the community that supports their programming and mission.

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Appendix A. Recruitment Letter

Date

Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear <Potential Interviewee>:
I met you last month at the STP&A Conference in Seattle. As you may recall, I am a Master's Candidate at the University of Oregon in Arts and Administration, and am in the process of completing my research project relating to innovative community engagement programs at performance art institutions. I am writing to you to invite you to participate in my research project.

You are invited to participate in this research study because of your leadership position with the Ambassador program at On the Boards in Seattle and your expertise in community engagement relevant to my research project.

If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during February 2014. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at On the Boards or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. With your consent to participate, you will be asked to disclose your identity as a requisite of the study. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 434-851-5709 or sturner4@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Lori Hager at 541-346-2469 or lhager@uoregon.edu. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.
Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Sarah Turner
435 W. 12th Ave
Eugene, OR 97401
Sturner4@uoregon.edu
434-851-5709

Date

Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear <Potential Interviewee>:
I met this past summer while I was serving as a graduate intern at PICA. As you may recall, I am a Master's Candidate at the University of Oregon in Arts and Administration, and am in the process of completing my research project relating to innovative community engagement programs at performance art institutions. I am writing to you to invite you to participate in my research project.

You are invited to participate in this research study because of your leadership position with the Enthusiast program at PICA in Portland and your expertise in community engagement relevant to my research project.

If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during February 2014. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at PICA or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. With your consent to participate, you will be asked to disclose your identity as a requisite of the study. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 434-851-5709 or sturner4@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Lori Hager at 541-346-2469 or lhager@uoregon.edu. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.
Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Sarah Turner
435 W. 12th Ave
Eugene, OR 97401
Sturner4@uoregon.edu
434-851-5709

Appendix B. Consent Form

University of Oregon—Arts & Administration
Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in: Innovative Community Engagement at Contemporary Performance Art Institutions: A Comparative Study

Investigator: Sarah Turner

Type of Consent: Adult Consent Form.

Introduction:
You are being asked to participate in a research study of innovative community engagement programs. You were selected as a possible participant because of the program you have developed at your organization. Please read this form and ask any questions before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore the process of actively engaging community members in broadening curatorial methods within a performance art organization. Participants in this study are community outreach directors at performance art organizations in the Pacific Northwest.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with <NAME OF RELEVANT CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION> and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to cultural development in <CASE STUDY CITY>. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during February 2014. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at <NAME OF ORGANIZATION>, or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study, particularly since this phase of research is exploratory in nature. However, risks may include breach of confidentiality and loss of privacy.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will be carefully and securely maintained. Your consent to participate in this interview, as indicated below, demonstrates your willingness to have your name used in any resulting documents and publications and to relinquish confidentiality. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your institution. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to the cultural sector as a whole, especially in the Pacific Northwest region. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 434-851-5709 or sturner4@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Lori Hager at 541-346-2469. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Research Compliance Services, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510, researchcompliance@uoregon.edu.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate your consent:

_____ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

_____ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

_____ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

_____ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

_____ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Sarah Turner
435 W. 12th Ave
Eugene, OR 97401
Sturner4@uoregon.edu
434-851-5709

Appendix C. . Data Collection Sheet for Interview of Community Outreach Director

Case Study: Data ID:

Key Descriptor:

Date: Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent: ____ Written (form)   ____ Audio Recording   ____ OK to Quote

Notes on Interview Context:

Coding:
D: Development of program
F: Funding of program
P: Process of implementing program
R: Relationship between staff and community member
SC: Social capital
C: Curatorial methods

Key Points:

CODING	INFORMATION	NOTES

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Community Outreach Director

Funding

1. How were you funded for this project?
2. What requirements were set by your funders?

Process

3. How did you develop this idea for an innovative community engagement program?
4. How did the program develop before and after your involvement with community members?

Relationship

5. How/Why did you choose the community members to participate?
6. What was their role?
7. How integral was their role to the success of the project?
8. What were the challenges/successes of working with community members?

Social Capital:

9. Why did you create this engagement program?
10. How sustainable were the relationships after the program ended?
11. What were the outcomes of audience and organization relationships?

Curatorial Methods

12. What kinds of projects/programs did the community members develop?
13. Did you experience a loss of control in the process?
14. Can you describe the level of expertise and active participation of the community members?

Appendix D. Detailed Research Timeline

Arts and Administration Program
Master's Research Timeline, 2013-2014

Fall 2013 (AAD 631)

- Complete full research proposal, meeting regularly with research adviser
- Draft detailed research instruments
- Draft human subjects documents and complete CITI training
- Create general outline of final document
- Submit human subjects application

Winter 2014 (AAD 503, 601, or capstone courses)

January
- Submit human subjects application documentation (if not completed in fall)
- Refine research instruments
- Convert proposal into chapter drafts
- Plan with your advisor the dates that chapter drafts will be due; submission of chapter drafts will be worked out in agreement with your advisor over the next several months

February/March
- Begin data collection and analysis
- Prepare detailed outline of full document
- Begin to submit chapter drafts

Spring 2014 (AAD 503, 601, or capstone courses)

April
- Complete data collection
- Continue with ongoing data analysis
- Write full first draft of final document, submitting chapters to advisor for review and feedback according to plan

May
- Friday, May 9: Deadline for draft of full document to be submitted to adviser
- Week of May 9: Feedback from advisor prior to student presentations
- Friday, May 16: Student presentations of master's research
- Monday, May 19: Deadline to submit text and images for inclusion in student research journal
- May 19-30: Continue revisions to full document
- Friday, May 30: Deadline for full final draft to be submitted to adviser

June
- June 3-11: Submit final document and PDF