Center for Performance + Civic Practice
We think of our work —

as a practice of
arts-based partnership work in community

with a purpose of
bringing artist assets into dialogue and action

around issues of
public good, equity, coalition building, problem-solving, access and opportunity.
CORE QUESTIONS

- How do artists and arts organizations develop cross-sector partnerships and for what reasons?
- How do artists translate our role, our work and our assets in non-arts contexts?
- What process tools do artists possess that can allow us to broaden the way we and our non arts partners conceptualize arts-based activity, interventions and collaborations?
If you would, raise your hand when you feel like the statement I read strongly represents the impulse that leads you and/or your organization to engagement work.

It doesn’t have to be the only reason, but raise your hand for ones that feel like driving impulses, not just that seem agreeable to you.
We engage as a way of saying —
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s get more people in here.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s get different people in here.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s get people more deeply connected to the work we produce here.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s go beyond here, and make work for people in other spaces.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s go beyond here, and make work *with* people in other spaces.
Let’s make our community a healthier, more equitable place, not just through the plays we produce but through other tactics as well.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s be a music organization that makes great art and impacts our community.
We engage as a way of saying —

Let’s be a community resource that uses music to impact our community.
Let’s make change.
Common Institutional Engagement Goals
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- Building new audiences
- Making certain our organizations survive
- Deepening audience experience of our programming
Other Goals —

- Engage our communities by partnering
- Connect to our communities by listening
- Define our art as object and event and process and tool
- Imagine our work as exchange, not just presentation
- Become a community resource, not just a static site of culture dissemination
Articulating a spectrum of art-making in relation to an engaged practice —

**Studio Practice:** artists make their own work, and engage with publics as audience

**Social Practice:** artists work with publics on an artist-led vision, in ways that may include research, process, and/or content, with an intention of social impact outside traditional audience experience

**Civic Practice:** artists co-design project with publics; the spoken intention is to serve a partner’s self-defined needs
Center for Performance and Civic Practice
... is a field building resource that aims to make visible the power of the arts to demonstrably increase civic capacity.

CPCP collaborates with artists and community/municipal organizations to develop best practice frameworks for innovative engagement and cross-sector partnerships.

CPCP defines Civic Practice as arts-engaged partnership work that is developed in service to the needs of the non-arts partner.
Capacity-building goals include —

- expand the expected, understood and accepted conceptual palette of arts based interventions and activities
- build tools for cross field translation and co-design
- mentor partnership practice
- advocate for the value of this work to community and municipal entities/leaders and funders via convenings, clinics, workshops, case studies, online resources & a bold cross-sector, multi-platform communication strategy.
The Three Streams of CPCP Activity —

CIVIC PRACTICE LAB  
housed at Chicago’s Lookingglass Theater Company,  
supported by Doris Duke Foundation

THE CATALYST INITIATIVE  
a national learning cohort that we fund and mentor,  
supported by Andrew Mellon Foundation

LOCAL LANDSCAPE  
convenings and capacity building we offer through  
arts councils and other hosts around the nation
CIVIC PRACTICE LAB at Lookingglass Theater, Chicago

supported by a Doris Duke Building Demand Grant
June 2013 — June 2016

GOALS:
The creation of five local models with Lookingglass artists, institutional integration, all leading to an increased pool of community stakeholders not based on attendance but on value of art as a community resource.
CIVIC PRACTICE LAB Models and Partners

• Chicago Parks District
• Roosevelt University
• Communities in Schools of Chicago
• Northwestern University Center on Cognitive Disabilities and Neuroscience
• Working Women’s History Project
Through civic practice, we’ve listened to partners, and learned that community partner needs often land in these areas:

**Advocacy** — help increase visibility and propel mission/message;

**Dialogue** — bring diverse groups into meaningful exchange with each other;

**Story-Sharing** — gather and share narratives from a particular population or around a particular topic;

**Civic Application** — engage the public and decision-makers together in acts of problem-solving and crafting vision;

**Cross-Sector Innovation** — leverage skills and experience from different fields or disciplines to create and manifest new knowledge.

**Capacity Building** — develop needed skills within the existing human resources of an organization to accomplish goals through current or new strategies.
In Civic Practice, artist assets tend to translate usefully in cross sector partnerships as —

**Collaboration:** turning constituents with varied self interests into coalitions of stakeholders.

**Design:** problem-solving through highly imaginative and collaborative action.

**Expression:** synthesizing complex data and articulating it in ways that can be comprehended and interrogated.
Partners may fulfill the roles of —

**Gatekeepers** — Those who give us access to a site, a context, a constituency.

**Allies** — Those who do the work to help us sustain the relationships that the Gatekeepers made possible and, help lead the work in the rooms where we do the work.

**Collaborators** — Participants in the work as research partners or co-makers or an engaged public in active practice somewhere in the process.
CONTACT US

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