

Topic	CREATIVE SPACES		
Date	May 2, 2018	Location	401 Richmond, Toronto
Host(s)	Bruce Pitkin , Executive Director, Theatre Ontario		
Participants	Alex Glass , Program Manager, ArtsBuild Ontario Julian Sleath , CEO, The Bentway Maria Karam , Owner, The Redwood Oliver Pauk , Studio Director, AKIN Collective Michael Vickers , Studio Director, AKIN Collective Kristian Clarke , Working Group Member, Mass Culture		
Notetaker(s)	Mindy Doherty , Administrative Assistant, Mass Culture Fanny Martin , Engagement Coordinator, Mass Culture		
Facilitator(s)	Jane Farrow , Department of Words & Deeds		
Invitation	<p>“Please join us for this conversation to celebrate Creative Spaces in Toronto and our recent policy accomplishments, and also discuss your research capacities, needs and success stories. We will explore together how community-centred research on creative spaces could be strengthened through its creation, collection and use for planning and policymaking.”</p>		
Perspectives and thoughts	<p>The group first discussed the successful campaign for property tax relief led by tenants of 401 Richmond. Lessons learnt from this were summarized as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be bold about what we ask - Offer solutions - Find commonalities amongst community - Get success stories out there <p>While this example campaign was in many ways a ‘perfect storm’ (sense of urgency, wide range of stakeholder mobilisation...), and was only concerned with a specific element of evidence & policy, we can use it to build on. What mechanisms, stakeholders and research do we need to make change happen on a long-term basis?</p> <p>We also discussed international examples of creative space categories and modes of operation, such as meanwhile space (popular in the UK and defined as “temporary use of vacant buildings or land for social or economic gain until they can be brought back into commercial use.”). In Toronto, AKIN have been active for 10 years in turning temporary vacant buildings into artist studios.</p> <p>We mentioned other sectors that have coordinated research and advocacy efforts and have benefited from evidence-based policy, such as Film & Music and Parks and Recreation. The group felt that the</p>		

	<p>case for the arts (e.g. for public support) hasn't yet been made to the same extent.</p> <p>When looking for future topics to stimulate conversations at Mass Culture gatherings it was suggested that we consider all the feedback that was gathered as part of the Ontario Cultural Strategy consultations and look at topics of interest in regional feedback provided. This information is still available online.</p> <p>A potential vision for Mass Culture is that these gatherings take on a self-sustaining and initiated model much like "Jane's Walk". "Mass Talks" could become recurring gatherings that happen on an annual or biennial basis where recurring themes are distilled and then form the basis of research projects that are chosen from at the "Mass Culture Market" which academic institutions would attend in person or virtually.</p>
<p>What research would be useful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Lit review' of existing research ● Culture mapping (asset, needs, gaps etc.) including Visual Arts, Accessibility, Types of artists and their modes of operation ● Measuring Social Return on Investment of the Arts ● Mapping of publicly- and privately-owned vacant properties ● Models for acquiring property (rented and owned) ● Case studies of success stories ● International benchmarking
<p>Whose voices are missing around the table?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater diversity of artists & cultural operators. If we can't get a diverse audience at our table then we need to go to their table(s) ● Property developers ● Academics & students ● Policy makers ● Large cultural institutions ● More cultural spaces out of downtown core
<p>Resources & Links (mentioned during discussion or shared afterwards)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Property Tax Class to Bring Relief to Arts and Culture Hubs (May 9 article on 401 Richmond campaign) ● Ontario Culture Strategy (published 2016) ● Social Return on Investment (Wikipedia entry) ● SpaceFinder Toronto ● thisisopenspace (AirBnB of pop-up spaces for rental) ● Examples of research about parks ● Examples of research about music
<p>What else happened during and after the Gathering?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group decided to set up mutual site visits and to keep in touch ● Several participants wanted to host more Mass Culture Gatherings to include more voices and / or on questions that came out of the discussions