

# KENTUCKY CREATIVE INDUSTRY REPORT



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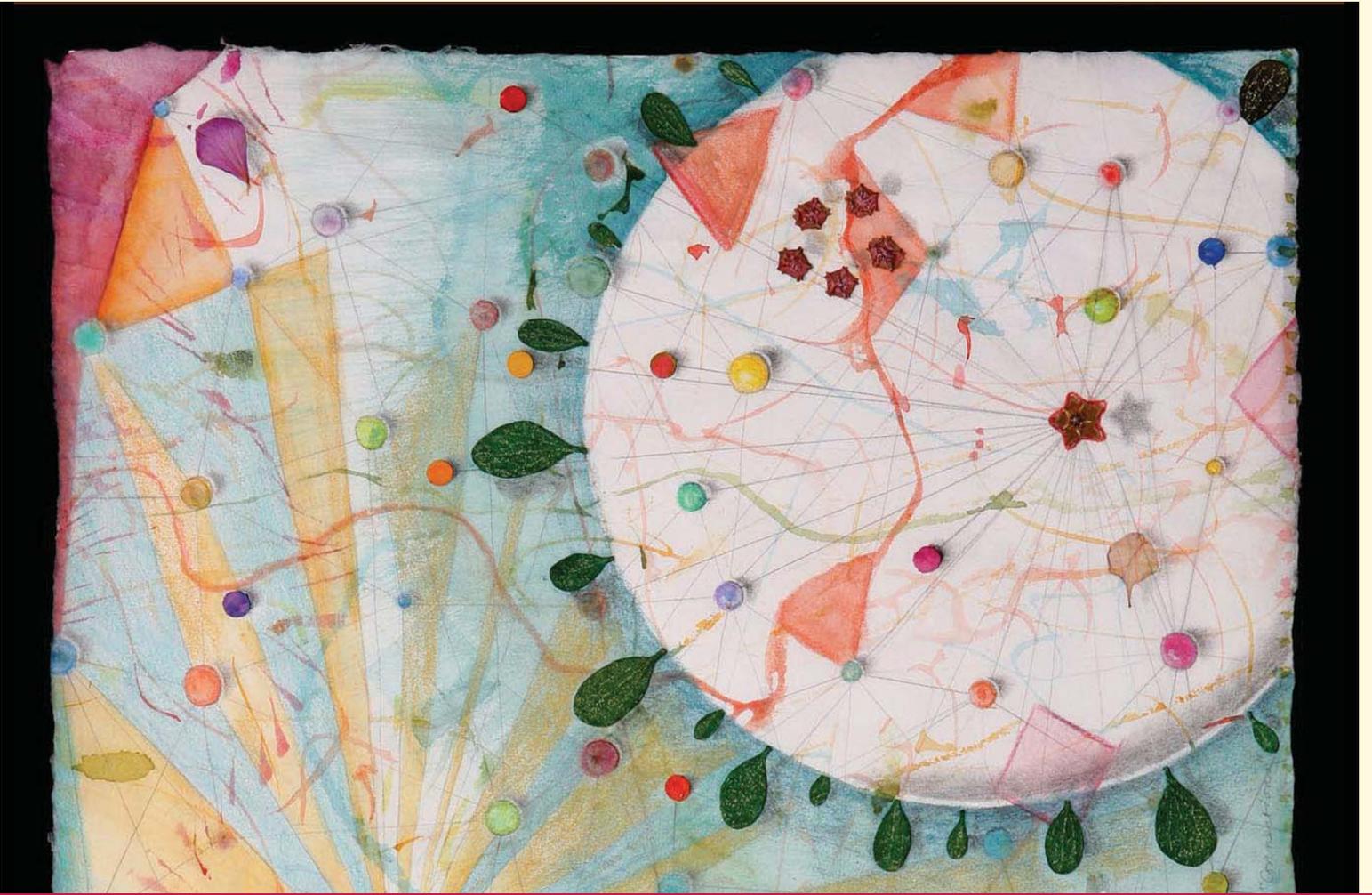
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# INTRODUCTION



Mixed media work by Kathleen O'Brien, Harrodsburg



Photography by Ed Newell, Winchester

## A CALL TO ACTION FOR KENTUCKY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Evidence that arts and cultural activity are significant contributors to the national and state economies has been largely anecdotal, until recently.

In December 2013, the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts released results of the first ever in-depth analysis of the arts and cultural sector's contributions to current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the final dollar value of all goods and services produced in the U.S.

According to prototype estimates, 3.2 percent — or \$504 billion — of current-dollar GDP in 2011 was attributable to arts and culture. While the national picture proved impressive, and came as no surprise to those working in the field, it further emphasized the need to investigate the arts and cultural economy in Kentucky.

With a successful background in cultivating and developing Kentucky's artistic and cultural assets, the Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, was inclined to undertake a quantifiable examination of the economic sectors that are rooted in creativity and innovation, arts and culture, and design and production work, and additionally examine their support structures and ancillary businesses. These entities together make up the state's creative industry.

Looking across the breadth of the Commonwealth, it is readily apparent what sorts of creative entrepreneurship inspired this effort to conduct research that would lead to a deeper understanding on the state's multifaceted creative industry and its contributions to Kentucky's economy and to its cities, towns, and urban and rural places.

The creative industry thrives in Kentucky, playing an important role in building and sustaining the economic vibrancy of the communities in which it can be found. The industry creates jobs for Kentuckians who spend money locally, pay taxes, and contribute to the quality of life where they live.

With a rapidly changing economic structure, fierce global competitiveness for business growth and development, and a future that will rely heavily on ever-changing technology, the importance of using all available assets to further attain and sustain success is critical.

The state's creative industry is vital to developing strong and meaningful partnerships that will lead to positive outcomes for the Commonwealth's future economic and community revitalization, development and growth.

Every place in Kentucky is a place where creativity lives. The research conducted for the purposes of this study also proves Kentucky is a place where creativity works when it's given a seat at the table.



Kentucky Crafted: The Market, the state's award-winning annual wholesale-retail market place of visual art and craft, continues to rank highly among the nation's best visual art and craft markets. Workshops that guide artists in becoming creative entrepreneurs are available throughout the state.



Innovative Kentucky businesses are exploring new ways to integrate artists and designers into their creative teams, helping to accelerate the development of new projects and services. Artists and entrepreneurs are working together to learn how to pitch their best ideas more effectively to prospective investors. An influential designer and gallery owner is even talking with Kentucky manufacturers to see how artists might take advantage of underutilized industrial capacity to fabricate limited editions of their best work.



A statewide network of Kentucky cities and towns is emerging and seeking ways to collaborate and innovate together. All of these creative places have been recognized for their innovative ideas and projects. Now they want to channel their energy and the lessons learned from their experiences toward making even more places across the Commonwealth economically vibrant and resilient. Also, six certified Kentucky Cultural Districts have been designated and are taking shape in Bardstown, Berea, Covington, Danville, Maysville and Paducah.

According to a recent New York Times article, Louisville ranks number one in the nation for its ability to attract and retain young college-educated people.<sup>1</sup> And another recent study ranked Lexington seventh nationally among cities that are the best places for freelancers.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the trends in Kentucky, findings of two United Nations reports, published in 2008 and 2010, affirm that the creative economy, globally speaking, is “not only one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy, but also a highly transformative one, in terms of income-generation, job creation and export earnings.” Additional data published in May 2013 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development showed that the global creative economy more than doubled between 2002 and 2011. Its average annual growth rate during that period was 8.8 percent.

Kentucky is doing many things to take advantage of its creative industry — and yet there is much more to be done to take full advantage of the Commonwealth's creative assets as well as a rising tide of investment and creative accomplishment that has been building over the past few years. To sustain and build upon this sense of momentum requires a baseline assessment of the Commonwealth's creative industry, as well as a profile of emerging opportunities and challenges. With this assessment, it will be possible to measure its growth. It also can serve as an essential tool for planning, investment and policy development.

1. “Will Portland Always be a Retirement Community for the Young?” by Claire Cain Miller, New York Times, September 16, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/magazine/will-portland-always-be-a-retirement-community-for-the-young.html?action=click&contentCollection=Health&module=MostEmailed&version=Full&region=Marginalia&src=me&pptype=article>

2. Clark, Maggie and Divya Raghavan. Best Cities for Freelancers: NerdWallet, posted on February 25, 2014. Retrieved on September 24, 2014 at <http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/cities/economics/best-cities-freelance-workers/>



Glass artist and Centre Collage professor Stephen Rolfe Powell

This report provides that initial baseline assessment of Kentucky’s creative industry.

As will be shown and explained more fully in the section on the economic importance of Kentucky’s creative industry, the direct employment in Kentucky’s creative industry, about 60,000 jobs, places it ahead of other important industries in the state, such as bioscience and auto and aircraft manufacturing, and ranks approximately on par with information technologies and communications, as well as with transportation, distribution and logistics. When one considers the full economic impact of the creative industry, including those in creative occupations who work in other industries, and the indirect jobs associated with suppliers to the creative industry and spending by those employed in the creative industry, the total state impact is 108,500 jobs.

The report also documents insights and reflections from many Kentucky artists, artisans, designers and entrepreneurs who work in creative enterprises as well as apply their skills and talents to strengthen other types of businesses across the state. This report profiles their insights and stories.

In light of its data analysis and shared observations, as well as drawing upon models for creative enterprises and creative places that are found elsewhere, this Kentucky report presents targeted recommendations that provide strategies to leverage current assets and deepen the impact of the creative industry on Kentucky’s economy.

The emerging story about Kentucky’s rising creative industry — derived both from the data and from the experiences of Kentucky’s people and places who are engaged with it — clearly points to the immediacy of the opportunity that it presents to the state and its citizens. That story is one of entrepreneurial energy, vividly apparent, for example, in nationally recognized creative places and among civic entrepreneurs who are redefining the role that artists and designers play in Kentucky businesses and local governments. It also emerges from the challenges present in rapidly evolving new technologies and the transition, in some parts of the state, from a regional economy dependent upon natural resources to one that will draw upon more diverse assets, talents and skills. Across this report’s analysis and recommendations, then, there is an underlying sense of urgency. The time for consideration, deliberation and action is now. And as the report’s recommendations will demonstrate, the key attributes of the creativity, design and small-scale prototyping, so characteristic of the creative industry itself, likely will be the tools that enable innovative cross-sector partnerships among artists, entrepreneurs, businesses, civic groups, and government to accomplish much that will encourage the sustained growth and development of Kentucky’s creative industry.

# Defining the Creative Industry

This study defines the creative industry as including the sectors of Kentucky's economy that produce goods or services that are highly dependent on artistic, cultural, creative and/or aesthetic content and that derive their principal value from the emotional or aesthetic appeal to customers.

This definition obviously includes individuals and groups working in fields traditionally defined as “the arts”—for example, painting, ceramics, sculpture, music, dance, photography, theater and literature. It also includes enterprises in creative fields that may be regarded as more applied and technical or even more commercial, such as broadcasting, publishing, recording, film and video production, advertising, product design, graphic arts, architecture and interior design.

To further capture the full effect of these creative enterprises, this study focuses upon the major industries in the value chains, the enterprises necessary for producing goods and services, as well as distribution channels for getting creative services and products to consumers. For instance, printers are important to the production of literary texts and other print media; radio stations to the dissemination of music; bookstores and libraries to the distribution of literary works; and galleries to the exhibition and sale of artwork.

To better understand the particular interests, strengths and needs of the creative industry, the Mt. Auburn research team grouped its constituent enterprises into four distinct creative segments:

**VISUAL ARTS**, which includes individual artist production, craft artisan studios, visual art galleries and retail venues.

**DESIGN**, which includes environmental design (architecture, interior design, landscape architecture), product design (industrial and product design) and communications design (graphic design, printing and advertising).

**PERFORMING ARTS**, which includes dance, theater, music, and musical instrument manufacture and sales.

**MEDIA**, which includes film and video production, television and radio, new media production (including video game and app developers), sound recording, literary arts and book publishing, and newspaper and periodical publishing.

As this analysis shows, however, not all creative jobs within Kentucky's creative industry are located in creative enterprises. A significant number of creative jobs are located within non-creative enterprises that nonetheless depend upon the skills of creative workers. For example, churches often employ musicians; an insurance firm may employ a graphic designer.

# The Economics of Creativity

Creative enterprises — including the people and institutions that support them — play an active role in growing and strengthening Kentucky’s economy. They have significant capacity to generate new wealth as measured by jobs, income and investments. They increase productivity and competitiveness among a broad range of companies, even among industries not necessarily thought of as “creative.” They help attract and retain talented workers and innovative businesses, stimulate innovation, and enhance the quality of life in both rural and urban places.

This report examines the role of Kentucky’s creative industry through three primary lenses:

**CREATIVE ENTERPRISES.** First and foremost, the creative industry includes enterprises that are direct and often undercounted sources of economic growth. Creative businesses, organizations and individuals are enterprises and, just like enterprises in other parts of the economy, they generate income, hire workers, and purchase goods and services. In terms of objective measures like jobs and earnings, the creative industries represent a large slice of the economy. But the important role creative enterprises play in economic life often goes unnoticed, partly because they cut across different sectors and because self-employment, which is extremely prevalent in creative fields, is not included in the data sources that most conventional industry studies use.

**CREATIVE CONVERGENCE.** Creative enterprises cross over traditional boundaries and have a substantial influence on innovation in other industries within the overall state economy. This convergence among the creative segments and other key industries in Kentucky produces a synergy that helps move those industries ahead. For example, creativity can improve the competitiveness of manufactured products and services. Talented firms and people create products, artifacts, experiences and even processes with attributes that imbue them with additional value for the consumer because they are more aesthetically pleasing or useful. The success of GE Appliances in Louisville, recently acquired by Electrolux, is the result of a collaborative effort among engineers, production workers and consumers. Big Ass Solutions in Lexington uses design to make air circulation an artistic experience. Some food products get their value from product design, appearance or brand, and certain eating establishments display art or host musicians. Tourism relies heavily on the arts and culture to attract and retain visitors to the state. Kris Kimel, president of the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation, likes to point out that virtually all businesses today depend upon creativity for their strategic advantage. It is also readily apparent that creativity stimulates innovation within the science and technology community.

**CREATIVE PLACES.** The creative industry contributes to creative places, and creative places attract skilled workers, businesses that depend on talent and innovation, and tourists. Despite rapid advances in digital technologies, which enable and facilitate collaboration at a distance, geography still matters to creative businesses and people.<sup>3</sup> Even though the production of art is often a solitary process, creativity and innovation also depend upon collective and collaborative processes. Places and spaces that provide proximity to other creative people help drive ideas and innovations. Social capital is a basic asset of every successful cluster, and creative sectors rely just as heavily on access to ideas, partners and competitors. Louisville’s Hackerspace enables creative people to meet, inspire one another and collaborate. Hazard’s River Arts Greenway is striving to inspire entrepreneurship and downtown revitalization through providing a civic space for making and displaying art as well as fostering and encouraging the development of creative small businesses. The Center for Appalachian Philanthropy is renovating the historic Carter House Hotel in Vanceburg as a community-conference center, a bed and breakfast, and a training space for entrepreneurial education for children and adults.

3. The Economist, “A Sense of Place: Special Report on Technology and Geography,” October 27, 2012.

## Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this report is to try to better understand the nature of the Kentucky creative industry, its economic importance and characteristics, the strengths and challenges facing the industry in Kentucky, and finally, what can be done to further leverage the creative industry in the state and create enhanced economic benefits for residents, businesses and communities. It is important to note, however, that this report steps into an ongoing conversation about the overall status of the creative economy of both the Commonwealth and individual places across the state. Lexington, for example, hosted an inspiring Creative Cities Summit in 2010. Individual counties have pursued a better understanding of their own regional creative economies. The ongoing Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative has focused, in part, on the entrepreneurial opportunities that exist across eastern Kentucky through creative enterprises.

This report acknowledges, and hopes to work in synergy with, the learning and innovations that have arisen from those existing inquiries and dialogues. In so doing, the findings and analysis presented in this report draw from the following contemporary research performed throughout the first nine months of 2014:



Glass work by Stacey Street, Richmond

**ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DATA.** The Mt. Auburn Associates research team conducted a standard industry analysis of federal employment data. It examined employment across each of the four creative segments, using labor market information supplied by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI). EMSI is the standard source for economic and workforce development data, widely relied upon among economic development professionals. It compiles data from more than 90 data sources and updates it quarterly.

**DATA FROM A SURVEY OF CREATIVE FREELANCERS IN KENTUCKY.** The Kentucky Arts Council and others sent out the creative freelancer survey to key organizations in each of the creative segments, which then distributed it to individual freelancers. A total of 735 freelancers statewide responded to the survey.<sup>4</sup>

4. Appendix 2 is a copy of the survey and summary of the findings. The information is available online.

**INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS.** The Mt. Auburn team conducted interviews and focus groups throughout Kentucky, reaching nearly 200 individuals. The consulting team met with individuals and creative enterprises in theater, music, media, design and advertising, manufacturing, fashion and visual arts. It conducted site visits to 14 rural and urban places across the state, including Benham, Berea, Covington, Danville, Frankfort, Hazard, Lexington, Louisville, Morehead, Owensboro, Paducah and Pikeville.

The notion of defining, strategically developing, measuring and assessing the economic impact of a state or region's creative industry remains a relatively new concept, one that is still being explored and iteratively refined. The economic development profession already has a sophisticated understanding, as well as generally accepted measures, for well-established industries, including manufacturing, transportation, healthcare and even tourism. The creative industry is less understood, even though much has been learned and applied in a variety of settings during the past 15 years. While Kentucky shares many attributes of its creative industry with other places, it nonetheless must approach and develop its creative assets within a context that is wholly appropriate to and designed specifically for its own unique circumstances and goals.

In that sense, the data and findings of this report represent a snapshot in time, providing a baseline and set of recommendations that point to the future. The Kentucky Arts Council, as well as its many public and private sector partners throughout the Commonwealth, should revisit these findings and update these recommendations on a regular basis. After all, fostering the emergence of the state's creative industry necessarily will be an emergent, dynamic and iterative process. Hopefully, this report provides a starting point from which to launch the journey and points to some of the most intriguing questions that can help guide the way.



Children's Stage at the Great American Brass Band Festival

## Key Definitions

Some key terms that are relevant to this report's discussion of the creative industry include:

**CREATIVE INDUSTRY.** Term used in this report to describe the broad intersection of creative enterprises and creative occupations within the larger Kentucky economy.

**CREATIVE SEGMENTS.** Term used in this report to describe groupings of related creative sectors, including their principal enterprises and supply chains. This report separates Kentucky's creative industry into four creative segments: visual arts, design, performing arts and media.

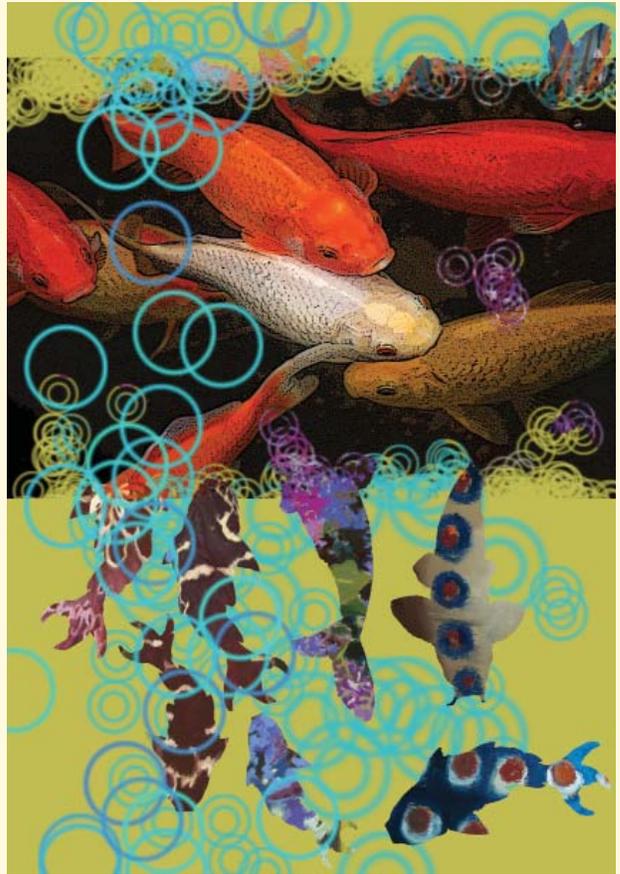
**CREATIVE SECTORS.** Industries, as defined by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), which are designated as creative as a result of their products or services.

**CREATIVE ENTERPRISES.** Commercial businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individual creative entrepreneurs whose primary value is based on creative content and relationship to the consumer, based on NAICS.

**CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS.** Individuals or groups of artists, artisans, designers, producers and other entrepreneurs who launch and manage creative enterprises.

**CREATIVE CLUSTERS.** A cluster is defined as a set of interdependent (complementary or similar) enterprises located within specific geographic boundaries.

**CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS.** Classification of creative workers based upon the characteristics of the work they do, using the standard U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Classification System.



Painting by Debbie Graviss, Versailles



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Louisville

# Kentucky's Creative Industry: The Economic Context

How large is Kentucky's creative industry and what does it mean to the state's economy? To assess the economic importance of this industry, it is essential to view it according to the same standards that are typically used to analyze other industries and industry clusters. Thus, the core unit of analysis is the enterprise. An enterprise is identified as part of the creative industry if its products or services originate in artistic, cultural, creative and/or aesthetic content or if it is an essential part of the value chain<sup>5</sup> of the creative enterprise. The full scope of the creative industry, however, also includes all individuals in occupations that require originality and creativity who are employed in other enterprises.

The creative enterprise is self-identified by the sector of the economy in which it is classified<sup>6</sup> and aggregated by the standard used across all government agencies in North America, NAICS, which includes about 1,000 different categories of businesses. The importance of creativity to an enterprise and the sector in which it is classified is to some degree a subjective decision, but more than a decade of such classifications and studies across the U.S. and around the world has led to consensus on the core sectors and occupations that are creative. Variations in definitions and inclusion or exclusion of certain sectors are generally the result of particular regional conditions or interests.

## THE KENTUCKY CREATIVE INDUSTRY IS DEFINED AS:

**All individuals and companies whose products and services originate in artistic, cultural, creative, authentic and/or aesthetic content.**

This report draws on a comprehensive review of global practices used to define the creative industry. The most accepted definitions include businesses and individuals in fields traditionally defined as "the arts," such as painting, ceramics, sculpture, music, dance, photography, theater and literature. But they also include enterprises in the many applications of art and design to technical and/or commercial activities, such as broadcasting, publishing, music recording, film and video production, advertising, games, graphic design, architecture and interior design.

Since creative enterprises span a wide range of types of businesses with very different applications of creativity, they are typically clustered into segments of more similar enterprises. This report uses four such segments: (1) visual arts, (2) design, (3) performing arts and (4) media. Ultimately, 72 of the approximately 1,000 six-digit NAICS codes were identified as creative or part of the creative industry value chain and grouped into those four segments.

5. A value chain includes those companies that help bring the creative product or services to market and thus add value, e.g., printing company, sound studio and talent agent.

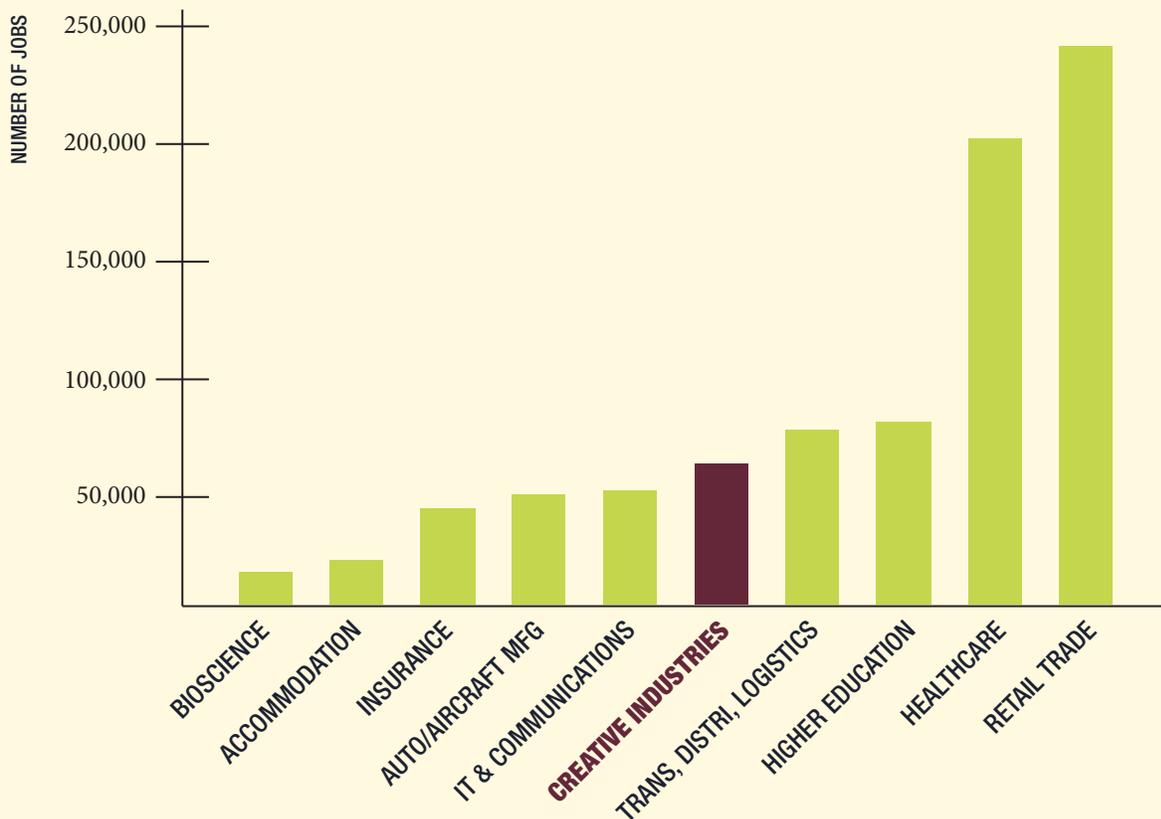
6. Many enterprises have multiple products, services or functions, but the system identifies them only by a single sector code.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KENTUCKY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRY

The creative industry plays an active role in enhancing and growing Kentucky's economy. As a viable sector of the state's economy, it generates new wealth as measured by jobs, income and investments. But the creative industry also has other important economic functions and impacts. Many CEOs agree it increases productivity and competitiveness among companies. Through its contributions to creative placemaking and identity, it attracts and retains talented people, businesses and tourists. Research shows that amenities are more important to locational decisions of young people than the job.<sup>7</sup> As a factor in developing a creative milieu, it can stimulate innovation across all sectors of the economy.<sup>8</sup> And, other research has shown that when introduced effectively into the educational system, arts and design improve learning outcomes and are highly valued by employers.<sup>9</sup>

Measuring the size of the creative industry requires two classes of data. The first is the total employment in the enterprises in sectors defined as creative, and the second is occupational data by sector of employment. Industry employment data is the number that can be compared to other industry sectors or clusters.

### Comparison of Creative Industry to Other Sectors



Definition: Bioscience from Battelle "State Bioscience Study"; Auto and Transport from "Kentucky Target Industry Sectors" May 2011, State of Ky.; IT, retail, healthcare, accommodations, insurance from EMSI. Data source: EMSI - Complete data

7. Florida, Richard. Who's Your City?, 2010

8. Bakhshi, Hasan, Eric McVittie, and James Simmie. Creating Innovation: Do the creative industries support innovation in the wider economy? London: NESTA, March 2008.

9. Based on surveys conducted by RTS of manufacturers that showed a large majority placed a high value on the creativity of their employees.

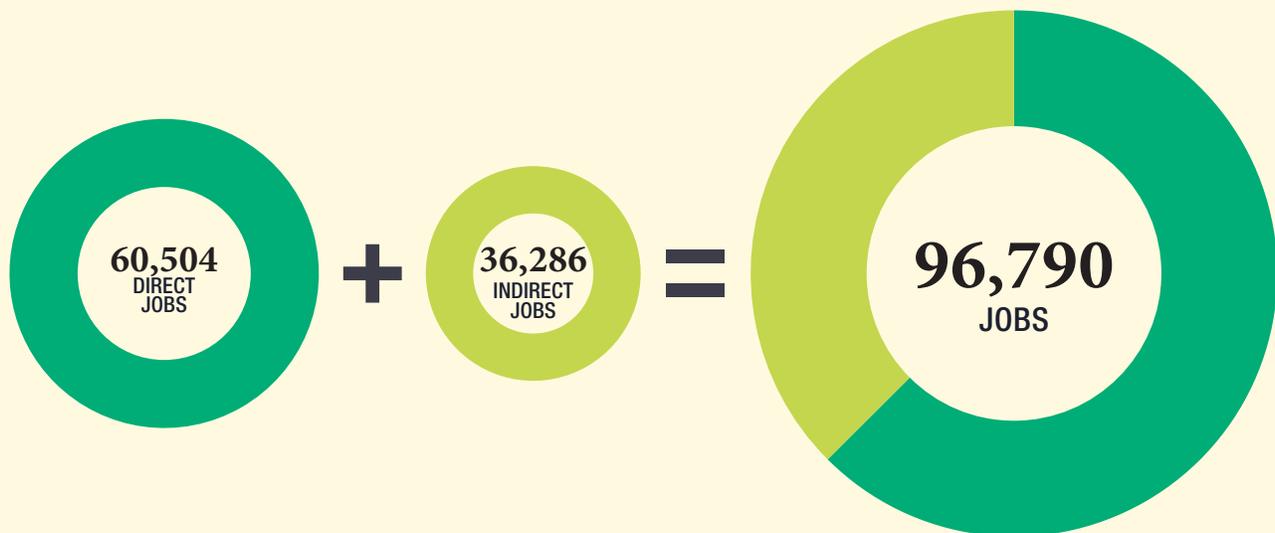
The data includes employees who are directly engaged in creative activity plus all those employed in sectors that directly support creative activity, including those doing routine work that is necessary for a firm to generate revenue and create wealth. The creative industry includes a disproportionately high number (compared to national data) of microenterprises and self-employed people who earn income from those businesses. In Kentucky, this accounts for about 38 percent of all jobs in creative enterprises. One of the limitations of national industry-generated employment data is, because it is based on wage and salary data gathered from unemployment insurance records, it excludes firms without employees that are not required to report to this system.

Many individuals in creative occupations and industries earn their living — or at least some of their living — as freelancers, independent artists, or entrepreneurs running unincorporated businesses. Because most labor market studies are based on data sources that only include wage and salary employment, the importance of the self-employed is often overlooked. This study corrects that oversight by including both types of employment — wage and salary employment and self-employment.

To ensure the best possible estimate, this analysis uses a proprietary database developed by EMSI. This source, which includes wage and salary employment, self-employment, and extended proprietorships (secondary jobs), draws on more than 90 sources of data and updates them quarterly, and is widely used by public and private state, local and regional agencies for economic and workforce analyses.

Other creative enterprises that meet the definition exist in other industries, but with no way to distinguish how data is currently collected, they are excluded from data presented. For example, some video game developers and publishers could be included under “custom computer programming services” or “software publishers,” fashion clothing companies in “apparel manufacturing” or “manufacturing,” customized cabinetmakers in “furniture,” and art venues operated by public educational institutions under “government.”<sup>10</sup>

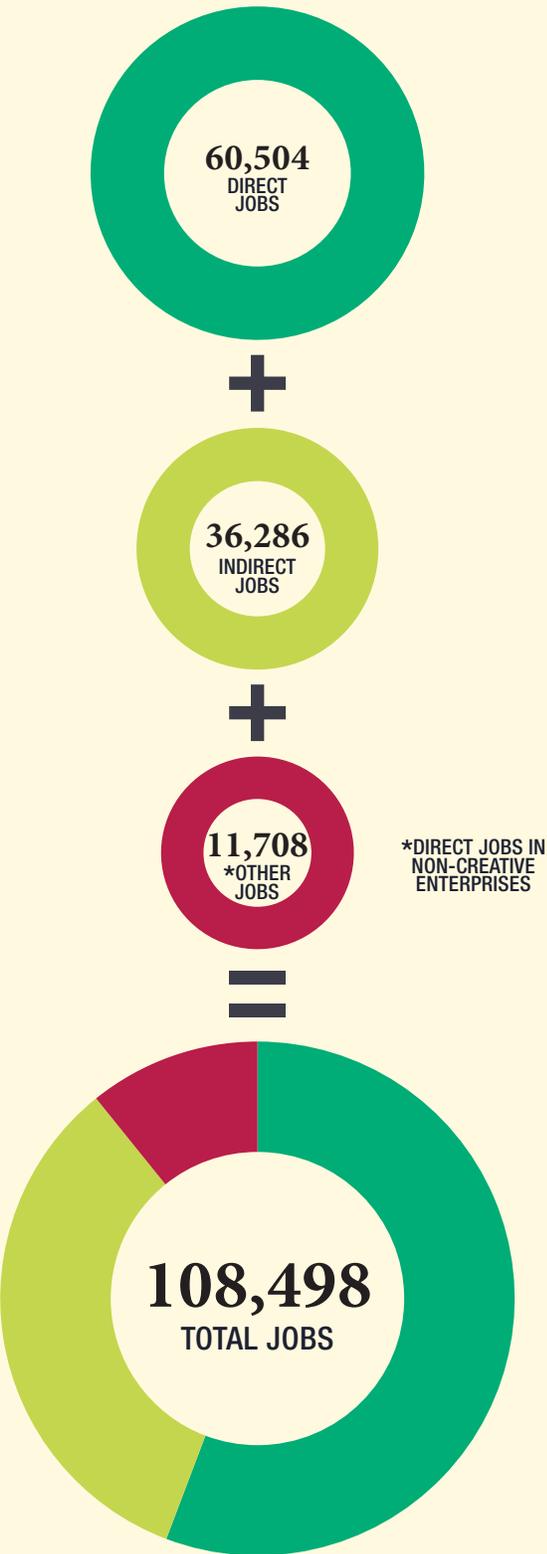
## Total Job Impact Associated with Creative Enterprises



Source: Calculation completed by EMSI using Input-Output Model

10. Public and academic libraries are also included in non-creative industry codes, but alternative secondary data sources were used to estimate jobs and earnings at these employers. (See Appendix 1.) The information is available online.

# Total Job Impact Associated with Creative Enterprises and Creative Talent Working in Other Industries



Source: EMSI and Indirect Job calculation completed by EMSI using Input-Output Model

Given these limitations, there is evidence that while the secondary data can provide a picture of the economic importance of creative industries, it is likely the analysis is a conservative estimate. While conservative, the analysis provides solid evidence that commercial enterprises, individuals, and nonprofit organizations that comprise the creative industries are significant contributors to Kentucky's economy.

The businesses in Kentucky's creative industry provide more than 60,000 jobs to creative and non-creative workers, which accounted for almost \$2 billion in total earnings in 2013.

Kentucky's creative enterprises are a major contributor to employment and economic activity in the state. There are approximately 60,504 jobs within Kentucky's creative enterprises, which represents about 2.5 percent of total employment in the state. To put the number in perspective, it compares favorably with other key state industries. For example, employment in bioscience was 14,275, auto/aircraft manufacturing 47,209, IT and communication 48,792, and transportation, distribution and logistics 75,223. Earnings in the creative industries totaled more than \$1.9 billion in 2013, with average earnings per job of \$34,299.

Additional wealth is generated in the economy as the incomes of creative enterprises and their employees are recirculated in the state. For example, a business may buy fuel locally, employees may purchase homes and buy groceries, each of which contributes to employment in the local economy. The job multiplier applied to Kentucky's creative industries based on EMSI analyses is 1.65. This means that each job in Kentucky's creative industry produces an additional 0.65 jobs outside the creative industries, a relatively conservative number in conventional economic development analyses.

The effects of the economic activities of Kentucky's creative industry reverberate throughout the economy, resulting in an additional 36,000 indirect jobs.

The second part of Kentucky's creative industry comes from those employed in creative occupations in sectors not classified within the creative

segments. This number was 11,708 in 2013. For example, the enterprises that employ the largest number of individuals in creative occupations are religious entities, with about 1,900 individuals in creative occupations — primarily as musicians. Local, state and federal governments employ about 1,100 in creative occupations.

Looked at comprehensively, the creative industry is responsible for about 108,500 jobs in the Commonwealth. If you include all of the economic elements associated with creative enterprises and creative talent, the total economic impact is very large.

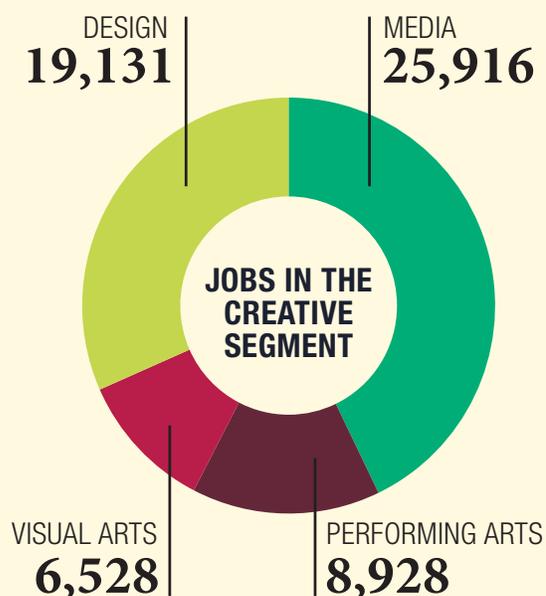
## RELATIVE CONCENTRATIONS OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY SEGMENTS

A common measure for tracking performance of industry sectors is relative concentration in a place, the concentration of employment compared to the U.S. or other average.<sup>11</sup> This measure shows where sectors may have current or potential strengths. Many sectors, however, are regionally concentrated in a small number of places as a result of the availability of valuable natural, technological or financial resources or advantages.<sup>12</sup> The relative concentration of Kentucky's creative industry defined by sector employment is about 71 percent of the U.S. average, which is favorable given the concentration of very large employers in the industry in cities such as New York and Los Angeles. The widely sought medical devices and drugs/pharmaceutical sectors, for example, have concentrations in Kentucky of about 31 percent of the U.S. average, largely due to very high concentrations in a small number of large cities.<sup>13</sup>

Within Kentucky's creative industry, each segment has a unique concentration; and within each segment, each industry sector has its own relative concentration. Visual arts in the Commonwealth, for example, was 77 percent of the U.S. average in 2013, design was 86 percent, the performing arts 58 percent, and media was 70 percent. Digging deeper to look at individual sectors that comprise the segments, book printing was 169 percent of the national average; lithographic printing, 217 percent; radio stations, 144 percent; and pressed and blown glass, 237 percent.

## DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE SEGMENTS

Although the fine arts are central to the identity of the creative industries, a larger proportion of jobs fall under the design segment (with about 19,000) and media segment (with almost 26,000). A major reason for this large difference is in the composition of the segments. Design and media include sectors that have very large employers. Design includes printing, while media includes newspaper publishers as well as TV and radio stations.

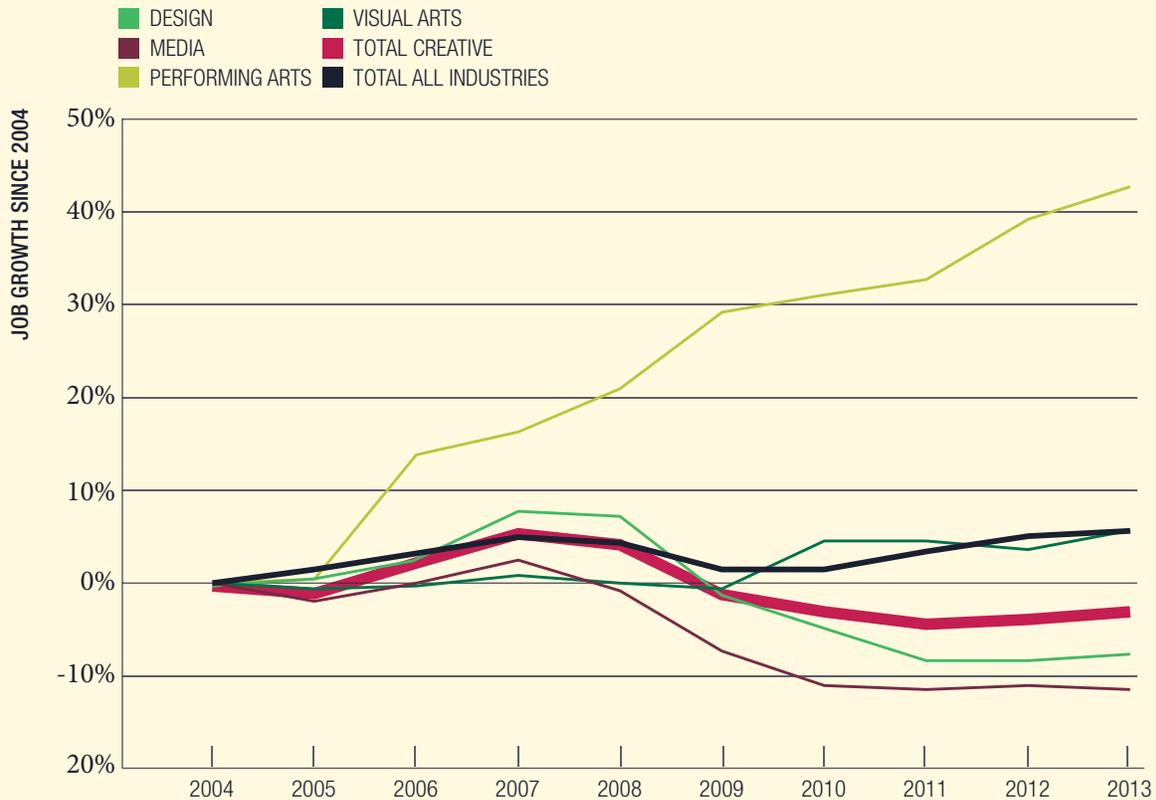


11. Commonly referred to in public policy as a Location Quotient, a place's relative concentration compared to a benchmark such as U.S. average.

12. In Kentucky, for example, coal, tobacco, wood and auto manufacturing have among the state's highest relative concentration.

13. Battelle/Bio, State Bioscience Industry Development 2012, Columbus, Ohio: Battelle Institute, 2012.

## Job Growth in the Creative Industry Segments



The arts segments — visual arts and performing arts — are both smaller than media and design in terms of employment, with just 8,928 jobs (about 15 percent) and 6,526 jobs (about 11 percent), respectively, but they are equal or greater in terms of the number of establishments.

### CHANGING EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The growth patterns between 2004 and 2013 must be taken in the context of a national recession, which has turned around but not yet fully recovered, as well as structural changes in some key creative sectors as the Internet replaces conventional modes of distribution of printed materials, music and video. Still, employment in the performing arts grew by about 43.2 percent between 2004 and 2013, higher than the same rate nationally (33.2 percent). Visual arts in Kentucky also grew slightly, about 5.7 percent, also higher than the national job growth rate for that segment (1.4 percent).

The primary sources of employment decline were in the media and design segments, where Kentucky employment fell by 11.2 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. Losses in each came from downstream businesses, the production and distribution sectors where Kentucky had been strong. In the design segment, the largest decline was printing, previously that segment's largest sector. In the media segment, the decline stemmed from businesses dependent on physical media, e.g., video rental stores, bookstores and newspaper publishers.

## RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY OF SELF-EMPLOYED ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

In Kentucky, as elsewhere, a relatively large percentage of jobs in the creative industries are not traditional wage and salaried employment. For many of the self-employed, a creative job may be the primary source of income, and for others, an important secondary source. To understand fully the economic importance of creative industries in Kentucky, it is imperative to understand this component of the economy.

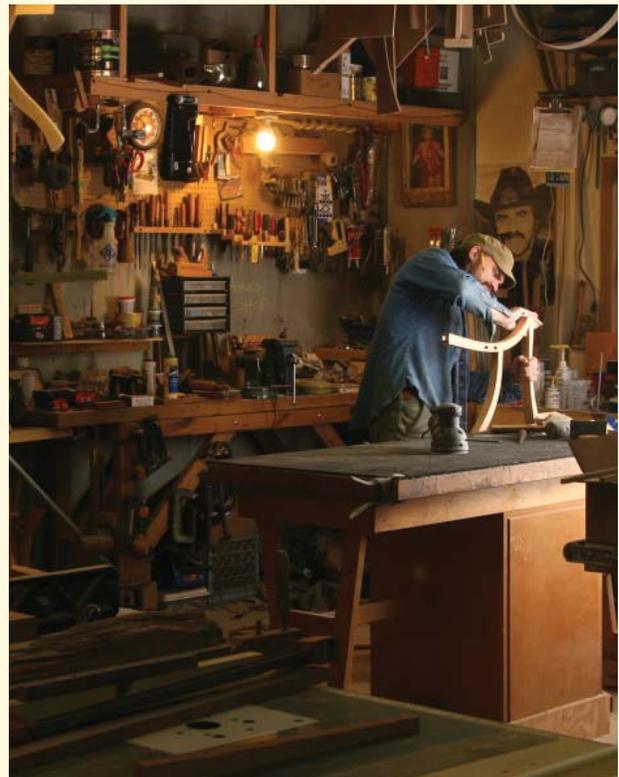
Given the scarcity of secondary data on the self-employed, those in creative fields were surveyed through an online link that was distributed widely to organizations and individuals involved in the four creative segments. A total of 790 individuals responded to the survey—about 55 percent in visual arts, 17 percent in performing arts, 16 percent in media, and 8 percent in design. While the results of the survey cannot be used to generalize the entire population of self-employed artists and designers in Kentucky, they do provide important insights into the economic lives of individuals who make all or some of their living in creative enterprises. A few key results from the survey follow.

Creative work is a primary source of income for about one-third of self-employed creatives. Many others are either employed full-time and doing creative freelancing as a secondary source of income or are homemakers, students or retired individuals. For many individuals working in these segments, their self-employment is a form of creative expression — more an avocation than vocation. This includes singers in church choirs, musicians who play at local clubs (often for minimal remuneration), and visual artists and artisans who might sell work at local fairs and festivals.

While most self-employed creatives earn a relatively small amount of income through their creative activities, for many this income is essential to meeting their household's financial needs. The survey found that almost one-half of the respondents earned \$5,000 or less from their creative work and only 13 percent earned over \$30,000 for their creative work. While these earnings appear low, the 37 percent of those responding considered income derived from their creative work essential to their household's income, extremely important in areas of Kentucky where job opportunities are limited. The ability to earn even an extra \$5,000 a year through independent work was critical to helping some households meet minimal household financial needs.

Most of the self-employed are committed to this form of earning a living. The survey found that only 7 percent of the survey respondents were seeking a traditional wage and salaried job. Almost half of those responding wanted to grow a creative business that would employ others or increase their earnings from their creative work so that it could become their primary source of income.

Making a living remains a serious challenge for many self-employed artists and designers in Kentucky, as elsewhere. Even successful visual artists often have supplemental sources of income, whether part- or full-time employment such as teaching, or from a domestic partner or other family member. Musicians face the same challenges

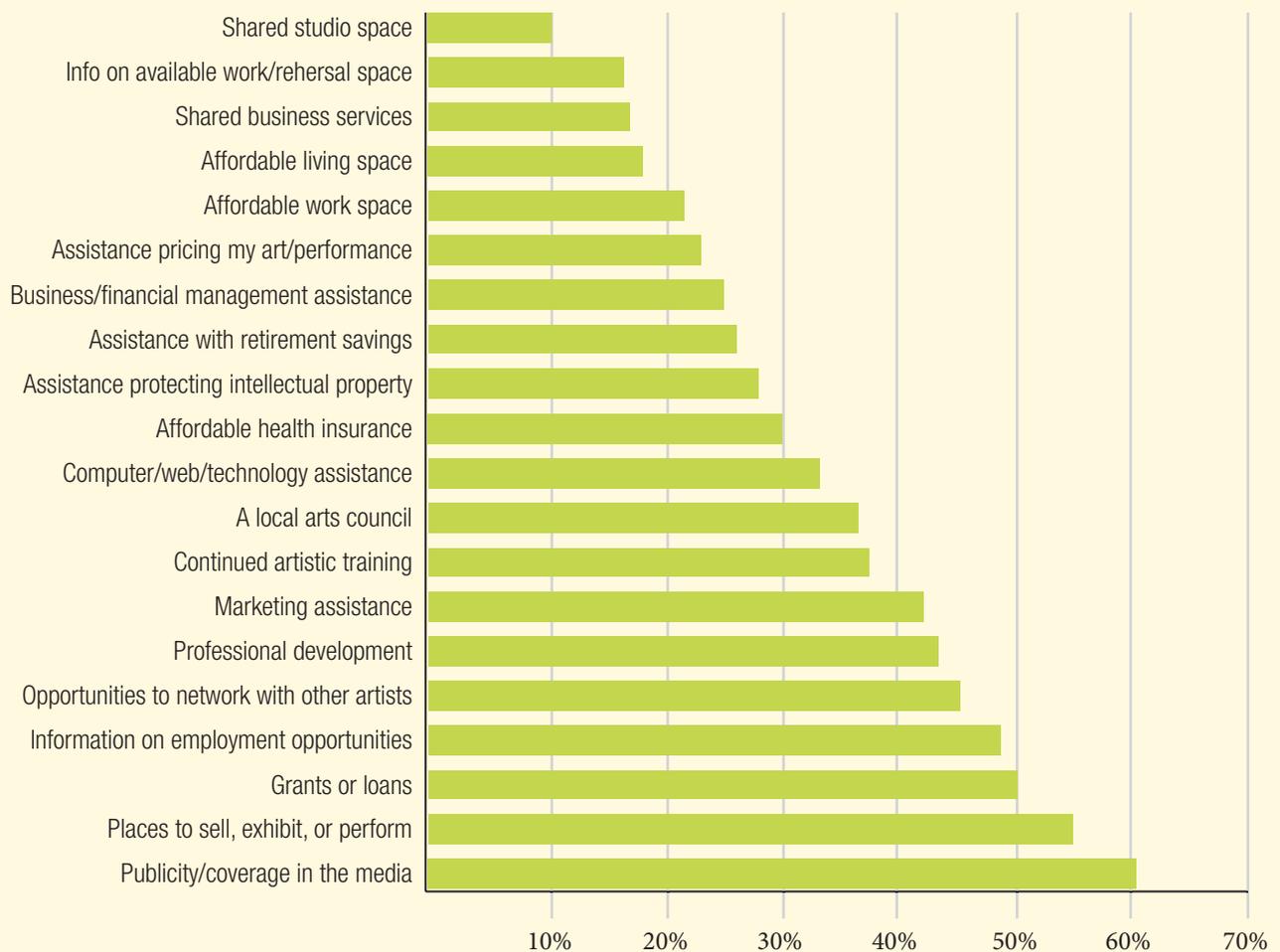


Artist Mark Whitley, of Smith's Grove, in his workshop

of musicians everywhere. With the structural changes in the music industry, most musicians today make little from their recorded music. All types of creative self-employed workers report having to be very creative about their livelihoods, including crowd-sourcing financial capital for their creative projects, selling through new channels and effectively using social media.

More than 60 percent of survey respondents indicated a high need for increased exposure and media publicity. (See table.) They also reported a need for more venues for products and marketing. They find it difficult to both produce art and run a business, doing their own marketing and managing websites and finances. In an increasingly digital economy where market viability depends on selling products on the Internet, a large majority of the creative freelancers in Kentucky still have very limited web presence. The survey found that 39 percent of those responding had no web presence and another 36 percent sold less than 10 percent of their products on the Internet.

**Level of Need for Various Resources**  
Percent of Creative Freelancers Reporting High/Very High Need

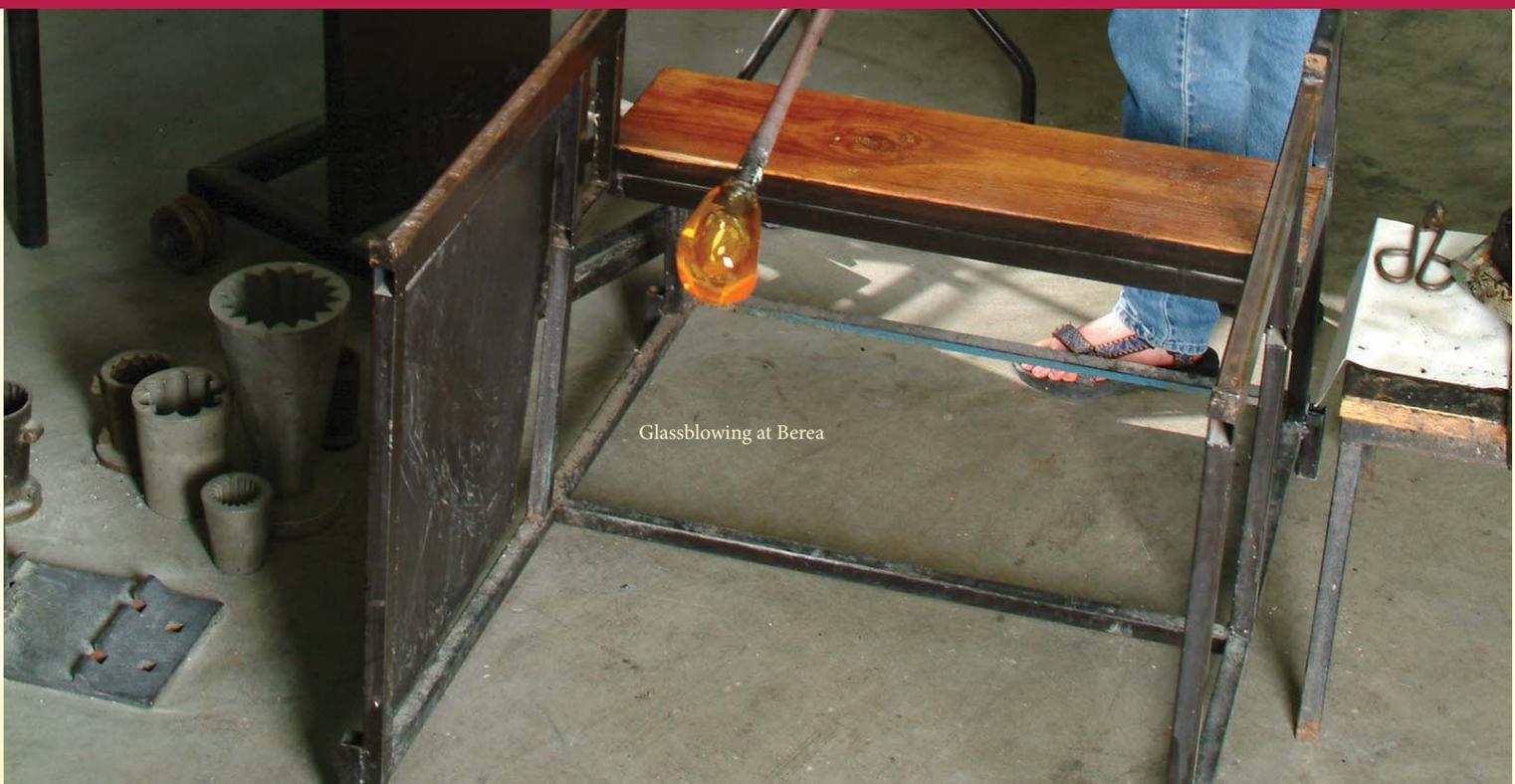


# Summary of Findings

- ❁ The total employed in all creative segments represented about 2.5 percent of all employment in the state in 2013. This is roughly comparable to the transportation, distribution and logistics sector or the IT and communications sector.
- ❁ The total employment in the creative industry in 2013 was 108,498. This includes 60,504 employed in the creative sector and 11,708 in creative occupations in other sectors. The industry also can claim 36,286 in indirect jobs.
- ❁ About 38 percent of the establishments in Kentucky's creative segments were self-employed artists and designers. This number is many times larger than the proportion of self-employed establishments across all other industries in Kentucky.
- ❁ The full impact of creative enterprises on the state's economy was 108,498. This includes the estimated multiplier effect of earnings and business expenditures on other businesses within the state as well as the creative talent working in other industries.
- ❁ Among sectors, design and media have the largest share of employment. This larger share is because these segments include the greatest numbers of large employers.
- ❁ Design and visual arts have the highest concentrations of employment relative to national concentrations. These numbers are particularly significant in light of the size of Kentucky's rural population, generally associated with lower concentrations of employment.



# THE CREATIVE SEGMENTS



Glassblowing at Berea

# From Traditional Craft to Contemporary Innovation — Kentucky's Visual Arts

## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in 2013

6,528



## JOB GROWTH SINCE 2004

Percent change from 2004-2013

4.7%



US: 1.4%



## AVERAGE EARNINGS

Per job in 2013

\$17,944



## INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

Location quotient relative to US in 2013

0.77

## TOTAL PAYROLL

\$117,139,573

## OVERVIEW

The broad sweep of the visual arts segment includes individual artists and artisans as well as enterprises that create, market and sell creative work. It also features arts dealers and galleries, as well as online virtual galleries that help bring Kentucky's visual arts products to market. It further includes other types of enterprises that are not the direct producers or distributors of visual arts but are part of the visual arts supply chain. Such enterprises range from providers of arts supplies and technical equipment to various types of commercial services, such as the manufacturers of giclée reproductions of original work.

Kentucky has successfully cultivated an enduring reputation for its high-quality craft due in no small measure to the national prominence of the Kentucky Arts Council's annual wholesale-retail art and craft marketplace, Kentucky Crafted: The Market. The Market started more than three decades ago as the signature event of the Kentucky Craft Marketing program. It was one of the very first state-supported craft marketing events in the nation. The event has been produced by the arts council since the two entities merged in the mid-1990's. Today, The Market continues to win accolades for its well-designed, accessible presentation of diverse, quality work as well as for its significant economic impact.

The Commonwealth is less well known for its many other exemplary forms of visual art, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed-media and experimental forms. Even so, both traditional and contemporary approaches to visual art are found alongside one another in many locations, both rural and urban, throughout the state.

In fact, the visual arts segment encompasses both what is often called "fine art" as well as what traditionally has been called "craft." That distinction, however, is not always easy to make. Many artists and artisans in this segment simply regard themselves as visual artists. Others enthusiastically claim their "craft" heritage with pride, especially when their creative work draws deeply upon



Basket artist Leona Waddell, Cecilia

## HART COUNTY BASKET MAKERS

Basket making from indigenous plant materials is an integral part of the culture of the greater Hart County area. Arising in the mid-19th century, generations of family networks have perpetuated this craft.

The reality is that the number of skilled basket makers in south-central Kentucky is dwindling, even though arts organizations have celebrated and supported them. Two important factors are helping to sustain this traditional way of making baskets:

- The Mammoth Cave Basket Makers Guild organized in 2001 to conserve and promote basket making in south-central Kentucky, as well as to help basket makers develop markets and find raw materials for their artistic creations.
- The other positive influence is Dr. James Middleton, a Munfordville physician and local craft enthusiast who created the Hart County Fair Basket Making Contest. Each year, Middleton purchases the winning contest baskets and adds them to the display that adorns the walls and ceilings of his office. He also purchases additional baskets from local makers throughout the year, with the goal of having a basket on display from every basket maker in the area. He provides space for the Guild to meet monthly at his office.

enduring cultural traditions that are rooted in a particular place. This report uses the broader term “visual arts” to describe the entire segment.

Among urban locations, Lexington and Louisville have well-established innovative visual art and craft communities. Covington, too, has an emergent and exciting visual arts scene. Much of the visual art in these settings has a decidedly contemporary cast.

Visual arts also play an important role in cultural life throughout rural Kentucky. Generally speaking, however, in small communities, visual arts do not have a strong commercial or economic presence. More often, their economic value results more from the support that visual arts bring to other economic sectors, such as tourism and hospitality. Of course, there are notable exceptions, including Berea, which hosts both the state-supported Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea and the highly regarded Berea College Crafts program.

Employment data reveals the visual arts segment as the smallest among the four core segments that comprise Kentucky’s creative industry with just over 6,500 full-time jobs. Overall employment in this segment grew modestly during the past decade, adding slightly more than 350 full-time jobs. Average earnings tend to be modest, especially compared with the design and media segments. Even so, it is challenging to sort out exactly what an individual artist can expect to earn. Such an estimate would depend upon factors that are readily quantifiable, such as whether or not the artist works full-time or part-time, as well as upon other factors which likely have more to do with the quality of the artist’s work, the existing demand for a particular kind of creative product or service, and the marketing skill and expertise of the artist.

In the past, Kentucky visual arts often have been associated with a more traditional brand identity, closely related to cultural heritage. Today, however, largely in response to evolving technologies and emerging cultural trends, the visual arts segment is undergoing changes.

These changes are apparent on many fronts, including raw materials, modes of production, and strategies for connecting with markets. Prime examples include the impact of digital technologies and/or the influence of trends such as sustainable materials and low-tech, do-it-yourself, and locally sourced approaches. For some visual arts media, such as fine arts photography and even glass, the changes are disruptive, driving innovation in the fundamental ways that artists conceptualize, produce and market their work. Across many visual arts disciplines, in fact, technological and cultural forces are sparking resourceful adaptation to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

## Infrastructure

### TAKING ART TO MARKET

Successfully taking their art to market remains a significant challenge for most Kentucky visual artists, even though the Internet and social media are dramatically transforming the ways these artists can approach finding buyers for their work.

More than half of the Kentucky visual artists who responded to our survey indicated a high or very high need for places to exhibit and sell their work. Nearly half said they would emphatically welcome marketing assistance, and almost two-thirds said they have a strong need for greater publicity.



Bourbon barrel table by Jason Cohen, Louisville



2012 Kentucky Crafted: The Market

For most visual artists, traditional marketing strategies — shows, exhibitions and festivals — remain the mainstays of their outreach efforts. Independent galleries are more densely concentrated in larger cities, where they more easily connect with art buyers and cultural tourists through special events such as monthly artwalks. Restaurants, small coffee shops and even yoga studios also feature regular showings of visual art, expanding exposure for Kentucky visual artists.

Rural places, too, have outstanding venues for displaying and selling visual art. The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, for example, has recently exhibited new work created from repurposed and recycled materials, while another show displayed work inspired by Kentucky bourbon. In Whitesburg, The Cozy Corner, a small venue that also sells regionally themed books, offers a wide variety of craft from both southeastern Kentucky and across the state. In Midway, the Historic Midway Museum Store sells jewelry, old-fashioned toys, art prints and rare books. Its owners, who also are musicians, say their storefront is more a labor of love than anything else, but they appreciate the contribution it makes to local culture and tourist trade. In fact, there are many small shops throughout the state offering Kentucky-made craft for sale.

Kentucky Crafted: The Market continues to be an important marketing opportunity for visual artists, who attend The Market for networking and mutual support as well as to make sales and commissions. The 2013 Market surpassed \$1 million in total exhibitor sales. In addition, its estimated economic impact due to tourism, travel and local visitor spending was slightly more than \$1 million. The Market's total economic impact, then, was more than \$2 million. The 2013 event also drew in a record-setting attendance over three days of more than 10,000 visitors.

The only Kentucky artists eligible to exhibit at The Market are adjudicated participants in the Kentucky Arts Council's Kentucky Crafted Program. The arts marketing assistance program helps Kentucky visual artists through marketing and promotional opportunities as well as arts business training.

The program includes access to a peer advisory network, online representation on the arts council's Visual and Craft Arts Directory, and eligibility to exhibit at Kentucky Crafted: The Market.

Internet marketing, while increasingly accessible and important, does not yet provide bread-and-butter sales opportunities for the majority of Kentucky's visual artists. Among this study's nearly 400 visual arts survey respondents, almost 80 percent said they sell 10 percent or less of their creative work online. Another 12 percent sell 50 percent or less of their creative work on the Internet, either through their own websites, the websites of individual galleries, larger sites that focus on Kentucky craft or on national visual arts marketing websites such as Etsy.

For those visual artists who do display and sell their art or creative services online, almost 70 percent sell on their own website. Sixty percent use social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace, and about 20 percent use Etsy. Only about 10 percent display their creative work at online galleries that prominently feature Kentucky artists. And only about 10 percent display their work on national websites that also exhibit creative work by artists from beyond Kentucky.

Among the important visual arts websites that feature creative work by a wide array of Kentucky artists are several that originate in Kentucky: 1) Artique, which also has two brick-and-mortar galleries in Lexington; 2) Completely Kentucky, which also has a storefront in Frankfort; and 3) Berea College Crafts, which displays the artisanal works of its student craft program, including wood, furniture, ceramics, weaving and broom making.



*Anima*, by 2012 Al Smith Individual Artist Fellowship recipient Hunter Stamps, Lexington

## TRAINING AND NETWORKING

Across the Commonwealth, many different kinds of institutions and organizations support professional visual artists and other individuals who seek training or studio space in which to explore and develop their artistic gifts.

The Kentucky Arts Council provides a significant share of the technical training, professional development, marketing assistance, and grant support available to Kentucky visual artists. For example, the arts council frequently organizes one-day events and seminars. Through its annual Al Smith Individual Artist Fellowships, the arts council also makes \$7,500 awards to visual and other artists throughout the state.

Another statewide group is the Kentucky Guild of Artists & Craftsmen, a membership organization founded in 1961. The Guild serves and promotes the rich heritage and promising future of Kentucky's visual arts; provides workshops and consultation with other visual arts organizations; organizes exhibits, retail fairs, referral services, jury sessions and mentor programs; and offers an online publication focused on art and craft learning opportunities and exhibits.

Local arts councils, such as the Pennyroyal Arts Council in Hopkinsville, also provide financial, administrative and marketing assistance to local artists. Among the other guilds, associations and networks that provide essential support for visual artists are:

- EpiCentre Arts, a new regional membership organization of visual artists in rural southeastern Kentucky.
- Mayfield/Graves County Art Guild, which provides educational programs to all age levels, exhibition space for local and regional artists, and a workspace and resource library for artists.
- Murray Art Guild, which provides community studio space for visual artists to work, display and sell their art.



Custom-made metal railing by Maynard Studios, Lawrenceburg

## VISUAL ARTISTS: 2014 SURVEY RESULTS

More than half (55 percent) of the overall survey respondents work in visual art and craft.

Twelve percent of visual artists report making over \$30,000 per year. Income derived from visual art and craft is supplemental for 37 percent of the survey respondents.

Twenty-one percent of respondents in visual art and craft are retired, the highest percentage among all four creative segments within Kentucky's creative industry.

Seventy-nine percent of the survey respondents have no web presence or sell 10 percent or less of their art through the Internet.

About 20 percent of visual artists sell 40 percent or more of their work out of state.

The majority of respondents (63 percent) described their need for publicity or coverage in the media as "high" or "very high," followed by grants or loans (47 percent), and marketing assistance (46 percent).

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents belong to a membership-based local network related to their visual arts discipline, and 54 percent attend local associations related to the arts on a somewhat regular basis. In fact, these visual artists use social media most frequently compared to other methods of interaction.

Relatively few of Kentucky's visual artists interact with national or statewide associations.

- The Appalachian Artisan Center in Hindman, which is dedicated to building and strengthening an artisan-based economic sector through education, business development and support services for artists.

Support organizations like these exist throughout the state and contribute to the networking of creative artists and entrepreneurs in the visual arts as well as provide educational opportunities and venues for exhibition.

Finally, essential networking infrastructure for visual artists also is found among traditional media, like newspapers and local radio, as well as on blogs and social media. Journalists promote and report on public arts events, offer constructive critiques of new work and help creative workers in this segment sustain a networked conversation. Some Kentucky regions have superlative arts journalism covering their local visual art and craft communities, notably Lexington and Louisville. Many rural news outlets also play a significant role in promoting the arts in the community, such as Ashland, Bardstown, Berea, Danville, Maysville, Murray, Paducah and Prestonsburg, among others. While it can be difficult for smaller newspapers with limited resources to provide skilled criticism of the arts, it is important to note they play a vital role in sustaining an ongoing dialogue with the local art and craft community.



Melisa Beth Ceramics, Lexington

# Summary of Findings

- ❁ The impact of new and emerging technologies on visual art and craft continues to be profound, transforming raw materials, modes of production and strategies for connecting with markets.
- ❁ Most visual artists in Kentucky have supplemental means of making a living and work out of their homes. In the state's larger cities, however, there is demand for subsidized urban housing and studio space for artists, suggesting redevelopment of former industrial space.
- ❁ Many self-employed visual artists and craft artists would like to grow their creative enterprises, but they worry about the impact of growth upon their capacity to manage their creative businesses effectively.
- ❁ Visual artists say their sales benefit when they can interact directly with the prospective buyer, whether at a gallery show, an arts festival or at their studios.
- ❁ Visual artists also feel empowered to handle their own marketing, but say doing so limits the time available to produce new work. Even so, they often are reluctant to entrust marketing to retailers and wholesalers. Retailers and wholesalers, on the other hand, say visual artists do not fully understand what they can do for them.
- ❁ Prospective buyers of creative work often have little knowledge of the specific art form or its value in the marketplace, according to Kentucky's visual artists. Professional designers, too, may know relatively little about specific art forms — even those architects or interior designers who already strive to integrate visual art into their work.
- ❁ Visual arts and craft artists in both urban and rural places would like to have more opportunities to network and collaborate with one another. Meeting in person and cultivating face-to-face relationships and collaborative projects is important, even in an era dominated by digital communications.

# Designing Kentucky's Future

## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in 2013

19,131



## JOB GROWTH SINCE 2004

Percent change from 2004-2013

-7.3%



US: -5.7%



## AVERAGE EARNINGS

Per job in 2013

\$38,669



## INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

Location quotient relative to US in 2013

0.87

## TOTAL PAYROLL

\$739,776,639

## OVERVIEW

Design enterprises are those that conceive and fashion interior and exterior environments, products and graphic and interactive modes of communications.

These firms employ more than 19,000 in Kentucky, a small but emerging and rapidly developing creative industry segment that implies more about the Commonwealth's creative future than about its past. Design firms are concentrated in larger cities, attracted by the customer base that appreciates and uses its talents, by youth-oriented urban amenities and by opportunities for networking.

Printing, the most volume-driven industry in the segment, has the lion's share of employment due to a small number of very large employers, such as RR Donnelley and Sons Company, a multinational corporation with operations in Danville and Glasgow where it employs 2,000 workers. However, most of the design segment is composed of relatively new and very small companies and self-employed designers.

Even though design employment in Kentucky has contracted slightly over the past decade, national growth rates suggest that this segment, if intentionally and intensely developed, and if it discovers its own niche, has the potential to become a major source of wealth, income and investment.



Yew Dell Botanical Gardens, Crestwood

## DESIGNERS: 2014 SURVEY RESULTS

Designers represent the lowest percentage (8 percent) of survey respondents and the youngest.

They make the most income among the four creative industry segments, with 21 percent reporting earning more than \$50,000. Designers report income derived from their work is either their primary source of income (38 percent) or a secondary source of income for those employed (48 percent). Designers also have the highest percentage (32 percent) reporting that income from their art is essential to their household.

A high percentage (76 percent) of designers had either no web presence or sold 10 percent or less of their art through the Internet. The majority do not sell their art outside of Kentucky.

Thirty-eight percent of design respondents want to grow a creative business, adding employees. When asked what would affect their ability to grow a business, the factors that received the highest percentage of "significantly" and "modestly" responses were access to markets (100 percent), growth of markets (100 percent), and cost of capital equipment (96 percent).

In terms of their needs, the highest was for publicity (51 percent), followed by information on employment opportunities (50 percent), and professional development (46 percent).

Forty-four percent of respondents belong to a membership-based local network and/or a membership-based national professional association related to their discipline. A high percentage of design respondents (55 percent) use social media at least once a week or more and only about 25 percent interact with national or statewide associations.

# The Many Facets of Design

The design segment in Kentucky comprises three categories of businesses:

**ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN** — architecture, landscape design and interior design.

**PRODUCT DESIGN** — drafting and industrial design.

**COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN** — advertising, graphic and interactive design, commercial photography and printing.

These categories, however, are intricately interrelated and design projects in Kentucky are, for the most part, collaborative, involving multiple design talents.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

It is not uncommon in Kentucky to find midsize firms that combine all three aspects of environmental design — structures, interiors and exteriors — or, if not combined, then they likely partner to integrate all three. As David Biagi, director of the University of Kentucky School of Architecture asserts, “Architecture is no longer simply about designing and building the glorified object.” Each enterprise in this segment, however, is classified as an individual, specific type of discipline.

Design of structures and their environments — Architecture in Kentucky ranges from relatively traditional designed structures to creative and artistic buildings and spaces. The state is home to six architectural firms with more than 50 employees and 84 firms with more than 10 employees.

Design outdoors — Landscape architecture plays a major role in the design of spaces and communities. As an academic discipline, it is housed within the University of Kentucky’s College of Agriculture, not the College of Design. Students in this project-based program are actively engaged in the design of spaces and communities. Among the state’s large firms, Dwyer DesignScapes in Louisville uses “the canvas of land to create functional, intimate spaces that transform homes and enhance living.”

Design inside — Interior design represents the third important leg of this part of the environmental design segment. The vast majority of interior design firms are small — most with fewer than five employees. Many have a particular niche, tailored to the tastes of their customers. Some examples are Palazzina, started by a mother and daughter to offer the design of an Italian villa to Kentucky homeowners; Country Squire in Shelbyville, suggesting a historical and country look; Kimbrel Birkman Interiors in Lexington, a boutique firm designing everything from chic urban lofts to rural vacation homes; and Thomas Birkman, which integrates environmental interests and Eastern philosophy with architecture.

## MAKING BETTER THINGS — PRODUCT DESIGN

Product and industrial design is still in its early development in Kentucky. Leading the way has been the innovative design division at GE’s Appliance Park (recently acquired by Electrolux). The newly formed Kentucky chapter of Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) — one of many professional design associations — is helping to connect the dots so that the value of industrial design is better understood and more highly valued. The IDSA chapter was formed two years ago to gauge interest in design in Kentucky and give designers a chance to meet, share experiences and network.



Dinnerware by Turning Wheel Pottery, Berea



Kentucky Derby hat by Polly Singer, Couture Hats and Veils, Georgetown

Other notable design-oriented manufacturers in the state include Kenmark, an optical design company that outsources production but does all its design work in Kentucky; Brown & Jordan, an outdoor furniture company in Shelbyville that also outsources its mass production but does its design and high-end customized work in state; and Big Ass Solutions in Lexington, which employs a number of designers.

Kentucky also is home to a small but growing group of fashion designers, furniture builders, manufacturers of creative architectural elements, and large-scale potteries producing artistic dinnerware.

In the fashion industry:

- Derby City Fashion Week has brought leading designers from across the nation to Kentucky for the past four years. Kentucky native Alicia Hardaway showcased her Original Tomboy collection in 2013, a designer line that “has a handcrafted feel and carries a homegrown spirit.”
- The Lexington Fashion Collaborative is a group of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic designers, stylists, photographers and students that formed to increase awareness and design original wearable art in Kentucky. The collaborative organized its first Future of Fashion show in Lexington in 2009.
- Polly Singer, Couture Hats and Veils, is a renowned designer of women’s hats for the Kentucky Derby, bridal veils and other specialty hats. She has designed hats used in feature films and exhibited all over the world.

### **INFLUENCING CHOICE — COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN**

Communications design includes all forms of design that seek to influence others through the creative forms of communications — graphic design, web design, interaction design, advertising and branding, printing, and commercial photography. Communications design tends to be the least definitive type of business, with many companies claiming graphic design, web design, social media, communications and video production among their skills and competencies.

The distinctions between graphic design and advertising are often blurred. For example, some graphic design firms produce advertising content and advertising firms rely on graphic design. Many are active members of both the American Advertising Federation (AAF) and American Institute of Graphic Artists. Doe-Anderson, one of the state's oldest and most distinguished advertising firms, includes Maker's Mark, Jim Beam, Carrier and Kentucky state government among its clients.

Printing is the largest business in this sector but has been shrinking significantly during the past 10 years. Small companies that combine old techniques in new ways and serve new markets, however, are emerging as sources of innovation and creativity. These firms treat printing as a handcraft, using letterpress printing to produce small runs of very high quality, artistic books that are nonetheless affordable.

- Larkspur Press, operating out of a farm in Monterey, has been designing, letterpress printing and publishing books for 40 years. Larkspur produces two versions of most books, one a special collector's edition.
- Hound Dog Press, a small 10-year-old niche printing firm in downtown Louisville, is at the intersection of fine and commercial art. The firm specializes in hip and trendy invitations, announcements, greeting cards, and posters all designed, set and pressed by hand. Nothing is transferred to screen printing or other forms of reproduction.
- Cricket Press has been in operation in Lexington for more than 10 years and specializes in designing and hand-printing silk-screened posters for all types of events, as well as creating illustrations and graphic design work including logos, t-shirt designs, invitations and more.

## IXDA

The newest design discipline to develop and organize in Kentucky is the new chapter of IxDA, the Interaction Design Association. This relatively new field targets the user's experience and is about "creating meaningful relationships between people and the products and services that they use."

One of the first activities the chapter undertook was to lead a collaborative effort with the City Collaborative, Louisville Downtown Partnership, Urban Design Studio, artists, hackers, and other creatives to change the environment of a large vacant lot across from the 21c Museum Hotel. The group met for a social hour one afternoon, then walked the site, sketched out possible designs on their iPads and notebooks, and brainstormed ideas.

As a first step, the space became an experimental "pop-up lounge" for "innovation, culture and fun" for four weeks in September 2014, modeled after a successful historic space activation in Memphis called Tennessee Brewery Untapped.



Print by Hound Dog Press, Louisville

# Infrastructure

The state's higher education institutions are an important part of the support system in the design segment.

## ARCHITECTURE

The state's only fully accredited school of architecture is located in the College of Design at the University of Kentucky. It offers both bachelor and master of science degrees. In 2013, the school had 291 students studying architecture, and awarded 55 bachelor's and 15 master's degrees. It has a digital fabrication and prototyping lab where students can conduct research and try out 3-D prototyping to experiment and test their solutions to design problems. Faculty and students often engage community partners and conduct design charrettes in rural communities in cooperation with other programs in the College of Design on topics such as affordable housing and renewable energy. Its most recent cohorts of students are particularly interested in community-based design and needs of underserved populations.

## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The only accredited educational program for landscape architecture in Kentucky operates within the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky. The five-year, studio-based, creativity-focused, experiential program had 65 students in 2013, about two-thirds from Kentucky. Students are required to complete a capstone service-learning course working hand-in-hand with a Kentucky locality. As the program's reputation has grown, communities from across Kentucky come for assistance with community land-use planning.

## COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN

The main pipelines for talent in communications design are located within Kentucky's higher education system. Most of the skills are taught as majors or minors within broader schools of art and design, media studies or communications. A few community colleges also offer associate degrees or certificates in design. For example, four visual communications students at Gateway Community and Technical College won a total of



Rendering, Kosair Children's Hospital's Healing Garden by de Leon and Primmer

## ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOPS

Two architects, Roberto de Leon and Ross Primmer, promulgate some of Kentucky's most creative and community-rooted architecture. Their Louisville-based company, Architecture Workshops, is a collaborative design studio that concentrates on public projects.

These two architects, both graduates of the Harvard School of Design, looked for a post-industrial city where they believed they could make an impact. Inspired by Kentucky's rural and agricultural communities and history, they chose Louisville. The state's pastoral settings provide context for much of their work. In addition, "There was something about Louisville in terms of its originality and its eccentricities that we draw from constantly."

Projects include the Yew Dell Botanical Gardens visitor center, greenhouse, and pavilion, the Living Arts & Science Center, Guthrie Transportation Museum, Wild Turkey Bourbon, and Kosair Children's Hospital's Healing Garden. They attribute their success in part to collaboration, working closely with communities and agencies to build consensus.

four gold and four silver ADDY awards from the American Advertising Association in 2014. Lindsey Wilson College opened the satellite Louisville College for Design, which began offering an online master's degree in interaction design in fall 2014.

## INTERIOR DESIGN

Interior design is taught primarily at the University of Kentucky's College of Design and in the University of Louisville's Department of Fine Arts. About three in five graduates go to work in design firms, one in 10 in government, one in seven in sales or marketing, and a few become freelance entrepreneurs.

## THE NEED FOR NETWORKING

Networks and associations increasingly are an important part of Kentucky's design infrastructure. In the survey, designers expressed a very high level of interest in personal networking — a characteristic not unusual among emerging and entrepreneurial sectors of the economy. Despite the pervasive use of social media by these digitally oriented professionals, members continually look for and create opportunities for formal and informal meet-ups. The result is a very dense and still developing associational infrastructure that cuts across local chapters of professionals and independent associations, support networks and shared workspaces.

Not only are these organizations sources of inspiration and innovation, they also enable connections between design businesses and freelancers to potential clients, customers, investors and employers. In this creative segment, an individual's portfolio of work and list of contacts may be much more important than his or her educational credentials. As one Lexington designer said, "We live on who we know, our personal contacts." Architects, landscape architects, and advertisers have well-established chapters in Kentucky. Moreover, during the past two years alone, new statewide chapters of the American Institute of Graphic Artists, Industrial Design Society of America, and the Louisville chapter of Interaction Design Association have formed under their national associations. Also in Louisville, the dominant hub for this creative segment, there are the relatively new Graphic Arts Association, the Digital Association, Women in Design, and a membership-based hackerspace called LVL1.

In Lexington, which has the state's second largest concentration of designers, one graphic designer has established, as a side project, the 150- to 200-member Shift Group "for networking, education and to bring together local creatives." The group has a monthly meet-up and offers events that include casual social happy hours where people mingle, share ideas and plan future events.



Photo courtesy of Paducah School of Art and Design

# Summary of Findings

- ❁ The vast majority of designers work within the region bounded by Covington, Lexington and Louisville.
- ❁ The U.S. Department of Labor projects growth in all design occupations (except for fashion and floral design) over the 10-year period of 2012-22.
- ❁ Even though Kentucky has many successful design companies and a large number of young creative designers, design is too often viewed as a contributor but not a particularly important or even emerging sector of the state's economy.
- ❁ Kentucky has a sizable manufacturing base, but the Commonwealth has relatively few companies taking full advantage of design and employing product or industrial designers.
- ❁ Many manufacturing sectors that could benefit most from design, such as producers of consumer products and architectural elements, have long overlooked design in favor of mass production and shifted production offshore. A return to craftsmanship and design might restore some of these jobs.
- ❁ There are no degree or certificate programs in industrial design in Kentucky, although the nearby University of Cincinnati and Purdue University have highly respected industrial design programs.
- ❁ Women are under-represented in design in Kentucky, with the exception of interior design. That's one reason why a landscape designer in Louisville organized "Women in Design" two years ago.
- ❁ Responding to an expressed need for greater networking, new chapters of national design organizations are forming across Kentucky.
- ❁ Designers see the need for improved cross-fertilization across design sectors and the need for more cross-discipline networking and activities.
- ❁ The growing demand among young people for 3-D printers and desktop CNC equipment for design and production is evidence of increased interest in industrial design, with strong local support for LVL1, the new hackerspace in Louisville, as well as for the Mini Maker Faire held in September.

# Performing Arts

## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in 2013

8,928



## JOB GROWTH SINCE 2004

Percent change from 2004-2013

43.2%



US: 33.2%



## AVERAGE EARNINGS

Per job in 2013

\$13,177



## INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

Location quotient relative to US in 2013

0.59

## TOTAL PAYROLL

\$177,643,741

## OVERVIEW

Kentucky's performing arts segment primarily comprises individual performers, businesses and nonprofit organizations involved in the production and presentation of live performances of dance, music and theater. It includes a large share of what we traditionally think of as Kentucky's arts and cultural assets.

Musicians and community theater exist in virtually every community in the state. In fact, Kentucky's rich and deep musical heritage and cutting-edge theater community help shape the very identity of Kentucky's creative industry.

Consider just a few examples.

- The world renowned Humana Festival of New American Plays at the Actors Theatre of Louisville.
- The Stephen Foster Story in Bardstown, celebrating the timeless music of America's first great popular music composer who wrote My Old Kentucky Home.
- The technically innovative and artistically thrilling 2011 University of Kentucky Opera Theatre's production of Porgy and Bess, which included the world debut of new scenic projection technology developed by the University of Kentucky Center for Visualization and Virtual Environments in collaboration with the theater.
- The 2014 premiere of Blood Song, a new musical about the infamous feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys staged at an outdoor amphitheater in McCarr, near the border with West Virginia.

Then there are the vibrant local music scenes in Bowling Green, Lexington, Covington and even rural places like Whitesburg — each an essential element in defining the creative identity of its particular place.

Out of a total of about 9,000 jobs in the performing arts, only one-third are counted as wage and salary employment. The others in this category are primarily self-employed musicians, dancers, actors, producers and promoters.

## PERFORMING ARTISTS: SURVEY RESULTS

Performing artists made up 17 percent of respondents. They describe themselves as working primarily in two disciplines: music (50 percent) and theater (31 percent). The highest percentage of respondents (45 percent) grew up in Kentucky and have lived there most of their lives.

Seventy-eight percent of performing artists report making less than \$30,000 in annual gross income for their creative-related work, though 9 percent report earning more than \$50,000. A high percentage of performing artists (37 percent) categorize income derived from the performing arts as supplemental.

Performing arts entrepreneurs are the least likely to have a web presence (48 percent have no Internet sales) and generally do not sell their art outside of Kentucky (68 percent sell 10 percent or less of their work outside the state).

Performing arts respondents are divided between wanting to make art their primary source of income (42 percent) and wanting to continue having it as a supplemental source of income (40 percent).

The majority of performing arts respondents (58 percent) describe their need for information on employment opportunities as "high" or "very high," followed by grants or loans (53 percent), and publicity or coverage in the media (53 percent).

A slightly higher percentage of performing artists (52 percent) belong to an informal local network, club or association. Performing arts respondents use social media most frequently; 52 percent use it once a week or more. Unlike the other segments, 70 percent of respondents go to exhibit or performance venues with some frequency and 16 percent go once a week or more.



Performing artists Heath Eric and Molly G, Rumsey

This segment has relatively modest average earnings. Yet, this segment has experienced very high growth, with jobs growing 43 percent over the last decade, which is well above the national average.<sup>14</sup>

Measuring the full economic importance of performing arts to Kentucky is difficult. Many performing arts jobs are not captured in the creative industry data. Bars and clubs often benefit economically from hosting musical performances, yet the data does not capture this economic benefit. The data also does not capture performing arts venues that the public sector or educational institutions operate. Finally, many major festivals that involve the performing arts generate wealth through tourism, but again, those jobs are not counted within the segment.

## The Many Facets of Performing Arts

### MUSIC

The music industry in Kentucky, diverse and deep in its creative offerings, falls into three major camps: 1) bluegrass and other traditional Kentucky music styles; 2) classical music; and 3) popular music. While there are geographic pockets of sound strongly identified with some genres, such as indie rock in Bowling Green and fiddle music in Appalachia, much of the Commonwealth is awash in music. These vibrant musical cultures today build upon foundations that have resonated for generations.

Jug band, bluegrass, country, fiddle, thumbpicking and Appalachian folk, for example, are all musical forms with deep roots across the state. Bluegrass, which traces its origins to Kentucky native Bill Monroe, has enjoyed a national revival in recent years. Hugely popular bands like Mumford & Sons, Old Crow Medicine Show, and the Steep Canyon Rangers all incorporate aspects of the music's sound. Veteran Kentucky bluegrass performers such as Ricky Skaggs and Sam Bush continue to tour widely and attract sellout crowds. The Festival of the Bluegrass in Lexington has been held since 1974 and anchors the weeklong Best of the Bluegrass celebration. Throughout the year, many other bluegrass festivals dot the Kentucky landscape.

Traditional fiddle and Appalachian folk music are indigenous to eastern Kentucky. They continue to draw tourists and music lovers to that region as well as to other parts of the state. Whitesburg, in Letcher County, is a recognized center of Appalachian music. The Summit City Lounge and Cowan Creek Mountain Music School provide places where both locals and out-of-towners can experience and learn to play these singular styles. Another style thought to have originated in the state is thumbpicking. The sound is kept alive in Kentucky by the National Thumbpickers Hall of Fame in Muhlenberg County.

Luthiers, the skilled craftsmen who make and repair the full spectrum of string instruments, also have a strong tradition in Kentucky. Lewis and Donna Lamb, Grover Mollineaux, and the late Homer Ledford are exemplary of the very best. Ledford became so well respected for his art that he was awarded the Milner Award, Kentucky's highest arts award, by Governor Paul E. Patton in 1996.

Eastern Kentucky is also a historic wellspring of country music. U.S. Route 23 is known as the "Country Music Highway," as it runs through the eastern part of the state. Loretta Lynn, Patty Loveless, and Naomi and Wynonna Judd are among the country performers who grew up near the road's path. Renfro Valley — where the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame is located — continues today to be a locale that cultivates new artists, not only in country music but also in other forms of Americana and roots music. The radio show Renfro Valley Gatherin' has been broadcast just about every Sunday since 1943, playing music associated with Kentucky and Appalachia.

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14. The high growth of this industry may be somewhat related to a non-economic code change since one part of the segment, "promoters with facilities," saw a very dramatic increase in jobs over a short time period.



Photo courtesy of the Louisville Orchestra



Photo courtesy of My Morning Jacket

Classical music, too, has found a nurturing culture in Kentucky. Even so, many of its nonprofit organizations, like their peers throughout the U.S., today struggle to sustain their musicians and maintain their audiences. The Louisville Orchestra, started in 1937, and with strong city support, grew to such prominence by mid-century that Louisville was one of the seven U.S. cities visited by composer Dmitri Shostakovich in 1959. Through the years, the orchestra thrived and received national acclaim and accolades for its innovative performances and service to the local community. However, in recent years, the Louisville Orchestra struggled to stay afloat. Seeking a bold change of direction, in 2014 the orchestra hired a young, new creative music director.

Well beyond Louisville and Lexington, there are many superb venues to hear a symphony or concerto. The Bowling Green Western Symphony Orchestra brings together students from Western Kentucky University with professional musicians from the surrounding region. The Kentucky Symphony Orchestra in Newport, started in 1992, serves northern Kentucky and Cincinnati. In western Kentucky, both Owensboro and Paducah are home to their own symphony orchestras.

Popular music, particularly around Louisville, Lexington and Bowling Green, also is an integral part of Kentucky's musical identity. Notable artists from Kentucky include Cage the Elephant, Will Oldham "Bonnie 'Prince' Billy," Slint, Rodan, My Morning Jacket, Ben Sollee, Nappy Roots, Squirrel Bait and Richard "Kush" Griffith. Jazz also has a presence in Louisville; both the University of Louisville and Bellarmine University have strong jazz programs. Morehead State University is known for its jazz program and, more specifically, for offering its students the opportunity to work with award-winning and noted jazz musicians.

Bowling Green has carved out a niche as a vibrant music hub, particularly around rock music. In fact, the alternative rock band Cage the Elephant got its start there. The city's proximity to Nashville likely has played a role in its growing success as a music hub. Oversaturation of the music scene in Nashville in recent years has led some aspiring

bands to Bowling Green, which is less competitive, more affordable and has venues where they can hone their repertoire.

While Kentucky has a strong and diverse music industry, performers and presenters alike today face an increasingly challenging economic environment. Global changes in the music industry, evolving technologies and increasing competition for consumers' time and attention are relentless, rewriting older business models that once served to underwrite musicians' livelihoods. More than ever, musicians must be entrepreneurial and find new ways to create and present their art. Some perform at house concerts, teach workshops about their music, build audiences through social media, and master the art of recording on a shoestring. Many young musicians are digital natives who are blazing a trail that will bring to light for the whole creative industry entirely new ways of adapting to the emerging markets of the 21st century.

## THEATER

Kentucky is home to both nationally renowned professional theater companies and locally important community-based theater companies that depend almost entirely on volunteers.

Statewide employment in this sector is relatively modest, but few would dispute how vital both professional and community-based theaters are to the cultural environment and community life throughout Kentucky. Even small theaters make an impact on tourism and serve as an anchor in many places to downtown revitalization efforts.

Most of the Commonwealth's larger professional theater companies are located in urban centers like Louisville and Lexington. Many small towns and rural communities in Kentucky also have community theater companies and feature performing arts venues that host locally developed productions and also bring in national touring groups.

The Louisville theater scene, internationally known for its diverse range of programming, is a significant creative strength not only for the state but also for the entire region. Actors Theatre of Louisville serves

## THE HUMANA FESTIVAL

Spring 2015 will mark Actors Theatre's 39th annual Humana Festival of New American Plays, an internationally recognized event that has produced numerous award-winning plays including three Pulitzer Prize-winning pieces. The Humana Festival highlights the theatrical strengths of Louisville and provides networking opportunities for local artists. The 2013 festival drew audiences from 44 states and eight countries, totaling about 33,000 visitors throughout the five-week festival.

Since its inception, the Humana Festival has showcased the work of over 200 playwrights and produced over 400 plays, varying from full-length to monologue.

The majority of these plays subsequently have been published in Actors Theatre's anthologies of plays, preserving these works in the American theater repertoire. Ninety million Americans have seen later performances of Humana Festival plays.

The partnership between Actors Theatre and the Humana Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Humana Inc., a Louisville-based health benefits company, is the longest partnership between a corporation and a theater in the United States. Though the foundation typically focuses on community health, it has given more than \$20.5 million since 1979 in support of the festival, which was named in honor of the corporation in 1982.



Actors Theatre of Louisville



Lexington Children's Theatre

over 200,000 audience members annually in its historic venue on Main Street. Looking for Lilith is a women's ensemble that develops thought-provoking productions that re-examine history and revisit current issues from women's perspectives. Small theater companies tend to fill more specialized or experimental niches and yet enjoy a loyal core audience base. Many do not have permanent venues and must move around the city to find performance space.

Lexington's vibrant theater scene features contemporary, alternative theater, as well as the Lexington Children's Theatre and Kentucky Conservatory Theatre. The Jenny Wiley Theatre in eastern Kentucky features both an outdoor amphitheater at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park in Prestonsburg, as well as the Mainstage Indoor Theatre in downtown Pikeville. The Pioneer Playhouse in Danville offers high quality summer theater providing summer employment opportunities for theater professionals and local actors.

Given the number of high quality professional companies and venues across the Commonwealth, there are also a number of theater-related jobs in companies involved in providing services to theater. Firms such as ZFX Inc., a Louisville-based performance special effects company particularly well-known for its flying effects, and Theater Effects in Erlanger, the world's largest manufacturer of hand held pyrotechnics, are commercial firms that supply professional and nonprofit community-based theaters.

Even given its diverse assets, the theater sector in Kentucky faces ongoing challenges as it seeks to engage younger, more diverse and more open-minded audiences, especially when competing with streaming online entertainment providers like Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube. Rural areas in particular are challenged to find audiences for more alternative or edgy programming. Like the entrepreneurial challenges that Kentucky musicians face in developing loyal audiences, the Commonwealth's diverse theater troupes and performance venues are searching for creative new ways to connect with audiences.

## DANCE

While Kentucky offers a wide range of options for dance instruction in a variety of different genres, the professional dance scene is relatively small and its economic impact relatively modest.

Kentucky is home to three professional ballet companies as well as smaller contemporary or modern companies. The Louisville Ballet is the official state ballet of Kentucky and the largest of the three professional companies. Both the Lexington Ballet and Kentucky Ballet Theatre regularly perform at the Lexington Opera House. These two companies operate separately, although they have previously joined together in the summer to present “Ballet Under the Stars,” an outdoor ballet in Lexington’s Woodland Park.

The modern and contemporary dance scene has experienced significant turnover in recent years with several dance troupes emerging and later dissolving. Vandivier Ford Dance Company is the modern professional company of the Louisville Dance Alliance; the Moving Collective showcases the work of contemporary freelance choreographers and dancers; and Shauna Dever Dance, based in Owensboro, has traveled across the country to present its modern pieces.

Most of the jobs and income in the dance sector are related to commercial and nonprofit dance studios throughout Kentucky, which offer instruction in a wide variety of styles for people of all ages and abilities. Many dancers in Kentucky’s professional companies earn a significant portion of their livelihoods through teaching in studios.

## Infrastructure

Rehearsal space and performance venues are probably the most important physical infrastructure required across-the-board for the performing arts.

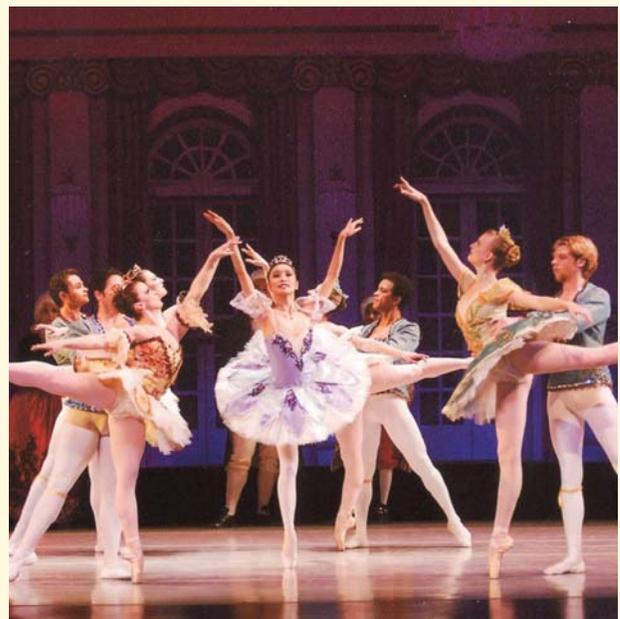
In fact, many jobs in the performing arts segment are part of the robust presenting infrastructure in the state. This includes many public and nonprofit performing arts centers and the staff, promoters and presenters at these venues. In fact, Kentucky is somewhat unusual in the support it has provided to build this infrastructure throughout the state.

The state’s premier performing arts center, the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts (KCPA) in Louisville, was the first of these facilities. It opened

### THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE KENTUCKY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

In June 2014, the Urban Studies Institute at the University of Louisville released a report on the Economic Impact Analysis of the Kentucky Center of the Performing Arts.

The study found that KCPA events generate an annual average of \$12.2 million of economic output in the metropolitan region and support 160 jobs. Tourists account for \$8.3 million, school groups bring in \$194,000, and touring Broadway and other shows contribute \$3.7 million annually. Events are estimated to also generate \$770,000 annually in local and state tax revenues.



Kentucky Ballet Theatre, Lexington



University of Kentucky Opera singer at Kentucky Crafted: The Market

## THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY OPERA THEATRE PROGRAM

Since taking over the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre Program in 1997, Everett McCorvey has transformed the program into one of the leading classical programs, performing not only in Lexington but also in Washington, D.C., New York City, and multiple cities abroad.

OperaLex, a private nonprofit entity set up to promote opera in Kentucky, supports his program. Many performances take place at the 1,000-seat Lexington Opera House, which also serves as one of the home bases for the professional Lexington Philharmonic, playing since 1961.

Alltech, a global animal health corporation headquartered in Kentucky, has provided strong support for the program. In addition to general support, Alltech sponsors the Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition and has helped students in the vocal program travel to events throughout the world.

in 1983. With multiple theaters, KCPA presents local productions as well as national touring companies.

Throughout the Commonwealth, however, one finds surprising venues such as a 775-seat theater in Hardin County, which was developed as part of its school system and books over 200 days a year; the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center in Bowling Green, built by Warren County with significant support from the Commonwealth; and the Pioneer Playhouse, the state's first professional theater, which was founded in Danville on the grounds of a state mental hospital. In 1950, the Pioneer Playhouse offered Broadway-style entertainment to rural Kentucky. It is now considered a state treasure.

Colleges and universities in the state also constitute an important part of this physical infrastructure. Almost every college and university is home to a venue that is used by both student and faculty productions and, in many places, also showcases touring performance companies.

There also are a growing number of nontraditional venues that the performing arts are using throughout Kentucky. Many of the state's wineries, distilleries and breweries present musical performances. Elk Creek Vineyards, for example, presents local musicians every Friday and Saturday evening, and Equus Run Vineyards supports local musicians through its summer concert series and its Sunday afternoon "Tunes in the Vines" series.

## EDUCATION

Kentucky colleges and universities play a key role in fostering the performing arts by offering quality degree programs, housing performance venues and hosting performing arts series. Many colleges provide abundant performing opportunities for students, helping them develop their skills while providing entertainment to the community.

Kentucky is also home to several performing arts schools at the elementary and secondary levels. The Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville is a semi-autonomous magnet school of the prestigious

duPont Manual High School. Louisville hosts the Lincoln Elementary Performing Arts Magnet School as well as Western and Noe Middle Schools, magnets offering visual and performing arts programs. The School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCAPA) in Lexington serves grades four through eight and continues SCAPA arts programming at Lafayette High School. The Governor's School for the Arts, now located at Centre College in Danville, offers three weeks of summer courses to selected high school students in dance, drama, instrumental music, musical theater and vocal music.



Photo courtesy of Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra, LaBoheme

School-based education in the performing arts is often supplemented and further honed through a wide range of private programs and teachers. Programs that supplement the art provided by public schools include LexArts, which is committed to developing the arts community in Lexington. It provides support, for example, to the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra, the Lexington Children's Theatre and the Bluegrass Youth Ballet.

The first year (2014) of the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra's pioneering MusicWorks after-school program culminated with an exuberant public performance of Beethoven's Ode to Joy. Funded solely by donations, the Lexington program is based on the well-known El Sistema musical pedagogy system in Venezuela. The orchestral and ensemble-based instruction offers disadvantaged youth access to high quality musical education while emphasizing social justice and a sense of community that derives from being part of a performing group.

Another inspiring program is the River City Drum Corp in Louisville, which provides children and youth ages 2 through 18 with intensive training in African drumming techniques, a deep exposure to African culture, and the skills needed for personal, academic and social success. It strives to create a synergy between traditional military corps style percussion, African rhythms, and the uniquely soulful rhythms and sounds of the group's own repertoire. The young people also are responsible for maintaining the Corp's business accounting and scheduling. Additionally, after every performance, each member writes a journal entry describing his or her experience preparing for and playing during the event.

The Kentucky Arts Council, too, is an important source of support for new, innovative and unconventional ways to develop creative talent in the performing arts. In recent years, for example, the arts council has provided assistance for performing arts centers to attend the Performing Arts Exchange, presented by South Arts, a regional arts organization. The arts council also offered consultations on the construction of a new performing arts center at Eastern Kentucky University. It provides unrestricted operating support to approximately 100 Kentucky Arts Partners located in 34 different counties. This statewide network of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations offers year-round arts programming to the people of Kentucky, including instruction in the performing arts. Nearly all of the Kentucky Arts Partners focus on arts education opportunities for children and adults in their communities. In addition to those Kentucky Arts Partners already described in this section, representative examples of organizations with a particular emphasis on the performing arts include the Music and Arts Center of Cultural Learning in Elizabethtown; the Walden Theater in Louisville; the Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center, which serves the Covington area; and the Artists Collaborative Theatre in Elkhorn City. The state arts agency also supports individual performing artists and groups through its adjudicated online program, the Performing Arts Directory. The directory contains pertinent information for presenters and booking agents who are interested in hiring Kentucky talent.

# Summary of Findings

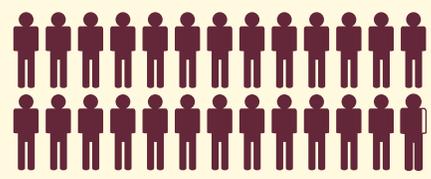
- ❁ Music is an area of strength in the Kentucky creative industry with national and international recognition in key genres, most notably bluegrass, as well as thriving music scenes in several of its urban centers.
- ❁ Musicians face particular challenges in earning a living and have to be increasingly entrepreneurial and technologically savvy in order to develop audiences and income.
- ❁ Producing theaters exist throughout Kentucky, but the concentration of nationally significant and small experimental theaters, as well as the annual Humana Festival of New American Plays, makes Louisville particularly noteworthy.
- ❁ There are limited economic opportunities in professional dance, with relatively few companies and a small audience. However, jobs in dance instruction do generate income for the state's dance talent.
- ❁ Partially through the support of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the state has a number of performing arts centers across its regions. Some of these are associated with higher education institutions.
- ❁ The focus group with individuals from performance venues revealed that, in general, they are struggling with finding the right balance of programming to meet the interests of both existing older audiences and younger more media-savvy prospective audiences. Theater companies noted similar challenges reaching inter-generational, diverse, socioeconomic and multi-ethnic audiences.
- ❁ There is limited media coverage of dance, with the result that the public is not well-informed about performances and opportunities to see them. Dance companies do not get much publicity beyond their own active marketing.

# Distributing Creative Content – Kentucky Media

## TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in 2013

25,916



## JOB GROWTH SINCE 2004

Percent change from 2004-2013

-11.2%



US: -5.7%



## AVERAGE EARNINGS

Per job in 2013

\$28,393



## INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

Location quotient relative to US in 2013

0.71

## TOTAL PAYROLL

\$735,834,034

## OVERVIEW

Kentucky's media segment comprises 34 different sectors, ranging from development of content (writers, filmmakers, video game and app developers), to production (audio, film and digital production as well as book, periodical and newspaper publishing), to the proliferation of distribution channels that reach consumers (bookstores, libraries, movie theaters, radio and TV broadcasting, and websites).

During the past decade, the media segment worldwide has experienced a profound reorganization in how creative content is produced and distributed through multiple channels. These ongoing shifts are clearly evident in Kentucky where the media segment, the largest of the state's creative segments with close to 26,000 jobs, is experiencing the greatest volatility within the state's creative industry.

With the transformation to digital content, the advent of social media and streaming online distribution, the development of entirely new platforms such as smart phones, and a fundamental shift in how consumers interact with all media, each sector within the media segment — printed content, radio and TV broadcasting, audio and film production, interactive media and online content — is grappling today with how to reinvent its business model, connect with audiences and sustain profitability.

There are, however, encouraging indicators. Motion picture and video production, audio recording and video gaming accounted for 640 jobs<sup>15</sup> in 2013, up 22 percent during the past decade. These industries have the potential of further blossoming in Kentucky, even if they are not yet major employers.

While Kentucky has served as the location of several major films, the state's greatest growth potential in these sectors may be in smaller independent film and videos, independent game development companies, and sound recording studios. Examples of such efforts include the independent feature, *Runoff*, directed by Kimberly Levin and shot in rural Kentucky. Or *Frogdice*, a video game developer

## MEDIA ARTISTS: FREELANCERS SURVEY RESULTS

Sixteen percent of respondents work in media arts. The highest percentage of respondents (37 percent) grew up in Kentucky and have lived here most of their lives. Another 30 percent grew up in the state, left and then returned.

Forty percent of media artists report making less than \$2,000 in annual gross income for their creative work, the highest percentage at that low income level of all four segments.

Forty-five percent of media respondents describe their art as supplemental and not essential to maintaining their standard of living. However, when asked what goals they have for their creative work, 47 percent want to increase sales so they can make their creative work their primary source of income.

Media respondents report the highest percentage (21 percent) of the four segments that sell more than 50 percent of their art through the Internet. Media artists also responded as the highest percentage (13 percent) who sell 80 percent or more of their art outside of the state.

Sixty percent of media respondents described their need as "high" or "very high" for publicity or coverage in the media, followed by grants or loans (59 percent), and information on employment opportunities (57 percent).

Media respondents report infrequent interaction with networks related to their discipline or with their creative peers and colleagues. Although more than half belong to local associations, media artists generally describe less peer contact than other segments. Similar to the other segments, media respondents use social media most frequently compared to other the methods of interaction; 45 percent use it once a week or more.



CoffeeTree Books, Morehead

15. While there are a number of small video gaming and app development companies in Kentucky, employment in these companies is difficult to capture in the secondary data, and probably not captured.

in Lexington, which has been designing online role-playing games and virtual worlds for 18 years.

Given the structural changes in the global media segment during the past decade, however, it is no surprise that overall media employment declined during the past decade in the U.S. as well as in Kentucky, where the media segment lost about 3,200 jobs or 11.2 percent of its total. Kentucky's loss was concentrated in a few areas — bookstores, video tape rental (which alone accounted for almost 44 percent of job losses in the segment), newspaper publishers, and cable and other subscription programming services. These sectors have been especially vulnerable to the effects of changing technologies, especially in delivery platforms.

Much of the media segment's existing strength in Kentucky resides in two key assets. The first is traditional media, which includes newspaper publishing, television and radio. Newspaper publishers accounted for 4,153 jobs in 2013, or nearly 7 percent of Kentucky's total creative industry jobs. This total makes newspaper publishing the largest sector within the state's creative industry. Even with a 15 percent decline in jobs over the past decade, newspaper publishers in Kentucky outperformed their peers in the national newspaper market, maintaining a relatively stable number of jobs since 2008. Al Cross, at the University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Telecommunications, attributes this resilience to the fact that many rural papers in Kentucky continue to fill an important community niche for local news and information, especially given the lack of widespread access to broadband Internet connection. Radio stations and television broadcasting also provide large numbers of jobs in Kentucky.

The challenge that lies ahead is for Kentucky's media segment creatively to adapt to rapidly changing technologies, markets and distribution channels. As an example, Internet publishing and broadcasting is today the fastest-growing industry in the media segment, increasing 234 percent from 2004 to 2013. Clearly, the wave of the future will be for Kentucky to capitalize upon new and emerging entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for its talented content producers and resourceful distributors.



2013-14 Kentucky Poet Laureate Frank X Walker, Lexington

## AFFRILACHIAN POETS

Danville native Frank X Walker is a multidisciplinary artist acclaimed for challenging the notion of a homogeneous all-white literary landscape in the Appalachia region.

The 2013-14 Kentucky Poet Laureate and founder of the Affrilachian Poets coined the word "Affrilachia" as a way to increase the saliency of African-American presence — culturally and historically — in Appalachia. The nomination and win in 2011 of another Affrilachian poet, Nikky Finney, for a National Book Award, further enhanced the international reputation of this group.

One attempt to share the history of Affrilachia was made through the documentary *Coal Black Voices*. It is a montage of images, poetry and storytelling by the Affrilachian Poets, and it shows glimpses of life in the American Black South, celebrating African heritage, but also addressing themes of racism and black identity.

# The Many Facets of Media

## THE LITERARY ARTS

Kentucky has a rich literary history as well as a contemporary wealth of writing talent that continues to contribute to the state self-identifying as the literary capital of mid-America. Notable authors with Kentucky ties include the first United States Poet Laureate Robert Penn Warren; bell hooks, a faculty member at Berea College; Tony Crunk, Maurice Manning and Davis McCombs, all winners of the Yale Younger Poets Award; Wendell Berry, recipient of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize; Bobbie Ann Mason, recipient of a PEN/Hemingway Award; and Nikky Finney, 2011 National Book Award winner. Kentucky writers of recent notoriety include Louisville native Danica Novgorodoff who returned to Kentucky in March 2014 to exhibit original art from her acclaimed graphic novel, “The Undertaking of Lily Chen.”

Sarabande Books, founded in Louisville in 1994, is one of the great successes in Kentucky’s literary arts industry with over 180 titles in print or under contract. Sarabande hosts a regular reading series at Carmichael’s Bookstore and the 21c Museum Hotel in Louisville and founded the Kentucky Literary Prize. Typecast Publishing, also in Louisville, grew out of Sarabande. Typecast has carved out its own niche, putting out *The Lumberyard*, a well-received literary magazine that has garnered national attention.

In Lexington, Accents Publishing concentrates on poetry and other fiction. Its owner hosts a weekly public radio show promoting the arts in general and literature specifically. Other journals supporting the literary arts include *The Louisville Review*, part of Spalding University’s Master of Fine Arts in Writing program, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Still: The Journal*, and *pluck! The Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*.

## NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL PUBLISHING

Newspaper publishing and periodical publishing are the largest employers in the media segment, together representing more than 5,000 jobs in Kentucky in 2013.

The Louisville Courier-Journal is the largest newspaper in the state. In early 2013, it had a daily circulation of 113,000 and a Sunday circulation of 224,000. Although weekday circulation has declined 22 percent since 2010, largely attributable to the wider decline of print media, the Courier-Journal remains a leading media source in the state. It has collected 10 Pulitzer Prizes. The Lexington Herald-Leader, the state’s second-largest paper, had a daily circulation in 2013 of almost 76,000 as well as slightly more than 97,000 on Sunday. The newspaper has been awarded three Pulitzer Prizes.

## KENTUCKY WOMEN WRITERS CONFERENCE

Established in 1979, the Kentucky Women Writers Conference is made possible through the University of Kentucky and many other supporters. Deemed the longest running literary festival of women in the nation, the weekend-long conference annually attracts to Lexington roughly 1,000 individuals and artists like Alice Walker, Joyce Carol Oates, Ruth Reichl and Leslie Jamison.

During the day, registrants — typically about 150 writers at all levels — participate in popular workshops or panel discussions. In the evening, the festival offers free events to a lively community of readers. Its catchy slogan, “Women mentoring women since 1979,” truly captures the principal reasons why festival-goers attend the conference — to seek literary sisterhood. Since many students and aspiring writers attend, they are able to network, offer help with a manuscript, or receive advice about publishing from experts in the industry.

The conference also offers five postgraduate scholarships, a \$500 playwriting prize that encourages women to write more scripts, and a slam poetry competition. The Wild Women of Poetry Slam competition, sponsored by Frank X Walker, Poet Laureate of Kentucky, originated to honor Walker’s late mother and has continued in various venues across the U.S., with many well-known poets headlining the event. Eight to 10 spoken word poets battle for the \$500 Faith A. Smith Poetry Prize.

Kentucky is also home to networks of smaller newspapers, many of them specialized niche papers or local weeklies. Twenty-three local newspapers across the state have circulation figures above 10,000, from the Bowling Green Daily News to the Paducah Sun. These small newspapers play a central role in their local communities. Landmark Community Newspapers Inc., with its headquarters in Shelbyville, oversees more than 20 local newspapers in Kentucky and more than 50 across the U.S., all dedicated to community journalism.

Periodical and book publishing provides Kentucky a sizable number of creative economy jobs concentrated primarily in Louisville and Lexington. Notably, periodical publishing has found its stride by catering to niche markets. The National Underwriter Company in Erlanger publishes technical materials for the insurance, financial services and legal industries, and employs about 135 people. Its publications — some more than 100 years old — include National Underwriter Property & Casualty and Claims and Tech Decisions. Fastline Publications, in the Louisville suburb of Buckner, publishes 22 equipment catalogues for farmers and ranchers. JV Rockwell Publishing, part of the larger Corning Publishing company, specializes in automotive and real estate listing magazines, and has a branch in Louisville.

Some periodical publishers have grown out of Kentucky traditions. Blood-Horse Publications, in Lexington, has published The Blood-Horse weekly since 1916, now a major trade publication of the thoroughbred industry. The Bourbon Review, based in Lexington, has ridden the wave of bourbon popularity to over 10,000 subscriptions to its quarterly magazine and a massively popular website.

A handful of monthly magazines tell Kentucky's stories to the world and have been doing so for decades. Established in 1998, Kentucky Monthly celebrates the people, places, events and culture of the Commonwealth. Kentucky Living, published by the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, also focuses on the lives and people of Kentucky. It is delivered free to more than 500,000 homes each month, each a co-op member. The magazine boasts the largest circulation of any publication in the Commonwealth.

While newspapers and publishing still employ significant numbers in Kentucky, in large part due to the fact that local publications can be found in almost every city or town across the state, print media continues to shed jobs. Book publishing may be an exception; its employees grew 43 percent during the past decade to a total of about 600 workers. Even so, the future of newspapers and publishing in Kentucky will be increasingly digital.

## TV AND RADIO BROADCASTING

In 2013, radio stations and television broadcasting together accounted for over 3,200 jobs in Kentucky. In fact, radio station employment is 44 percent higher here than the U.S. average, and the state has 26 full-power television stations. Yet, over the past decade, radio station employment declined 16 percent and television broadcasting 3 percent. Nonetheless, both sectors are important to Kentucky's creative industry.



Poor Richard's Bookstore in Frankfort

Louisville and Lexington are the country's 55th and 101st largest radio markets, respectively, as well as the 50th and 63rd biggest television markets.

Public radio has a strong presence in Kentucky. The Kentucky Public Radio Network has nine stations averaging a total of 150,000 listeners per week. Up Front with Jonathan Bastian, a news-talk show on Louisville's public radio station WFPL, is heard by 2.8 million listeners across seven states. Budget cuts in recent years have led to increased collaboration among the members of the Kentucky Public Radio Network, including some stations sharing a statehouse reporter and collaborating on financial matters.

Appalachian music radio programs also remain successful. Kentucky Homefront, which airs on WFPK in Louisville, seeks to "preserve, promote, and celebrate live grassroots music and storytelling traditions." The popular WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour in Lexington, airing on over 500 stations worldwide, is a "multimedia celebration of grassroots, Americana music." WMMT in Whitesburg, which serves eastern Kentucky, southwest Virginia, western West Virginia, as well as being available on the Internet, provides a mix of mountain music, public affairs programming, news and in-depth cultural reporting.

Kentucky Education Television (KET) is the largest state PBS network in the U.S. Based in Lexington, KET's three channels reach 5.5 million people in Kentucky and seven surrounding states. Even with recent funding cutbacks, KET continues to produce highly acclaimed programming. Great Conversations, an interview series taped at the University of Louisville, is nationally syndicated and airs on 150 stations in 66 markets.

## **FILM, VIDEO, VIDEO GAMES, APPS AND SOUND PRODUCTION**

Although not a major employer in Kentucky's creative economy, motion picture and video production, recording and video gaming offer significant potential.

Kentucky has been focusing some attention on promoting the state as a location of films. Since 2009, Kentucky has offered a tax incentive to film in the Commonwealth. Filmmakers spending at least \$500,000 in Kentucky are eligible to receive a 20 percent refundable tax credit to use on production and post-production, while commercials shooting in Kentucky are eligible for the same tax breaks if they spend \$200,000. Documentary filmmakers and Broadway productions are entitled to the incentive as well, provided they spend \$50,000 in state.

Also within the film segment in Kentucky are both urban and rural nonprofits and commercial companies that are developing independent films and videos for the commercial market. Perhaps one of the best known, Appalshop, a media, arts and education center located in rural Whitesburg in eastern Kentucky, has established itself during the past 40 years as the primary hub for filmmaking in and about Appalachia. It has produced more than 100 documentary films and other video works. Others include Kertis Creative, based in Louisville's Smoketown neighborhood, which is building a national reputation for its short format video productions that range from engaging profiles of social innovation projects to a recent music video starring Will Oldham (Bonnie "Prince" Billy) and Dawn Landes. Many videographers and filmmakers earn their livings in the commercial market, from filming weddings to making commercials or corporate films for local companies.

Beyond film, there is entrepreneurial energy in both the sound recording area and video game development. Given its strong and diverse music industry, it is not surprising to find small niche recording studios throughout Kentucky.

Kentucky also has a number of innovative start-ups in video game development. While not employing many individuals at this time, Lexington is home to a handful of companies in the industry such as Super Soul and

Gun Media, (which developed the popular game “Breach & Clear”). Louisville hosts several game development companies including Two Scoop Games, Merged Reality and Visual Villain.

## Infrastructure

Bookstores help constellate the nucleus of Kentucky’s literary network. In Louisville, Carmichael’s Bookstore has been an anchor of its writing scene since 1978 and was named Publishers Weekly Bookseller of the Year in 2009. The store promotes Kentucky authors and works with local presses, such as Sarabande Books, to present Kentucky-themed readings and events. Other bookstores leaving an imprint on Kentucky’s literary identity include Black Swan Books, the Wild Fig and the Morris Book Shop in Lexington, Poor Richard’s Bookstore in Frankfort and Coffee Tree Books in Morehead.

The Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning in Lexington is another well-known nonprofit literary arts organization in the state, with classes, tutoring, readings, youth and family programs, and exhibits. More importantly, the Carnegie Center is the recognized center of Lexington’s literary scene, a place where writers can go to be with other writers.

Literary arts are also represented in readings, workshops and festivals in many communities across Kentucky. The Appalachian Writers’ Workshop in Hindman is a multi-day workshop for writers that draws participants from all over the state. The event was held for the 37th time in 2014. The 2013 Kentucky Book Fair, an annual event in Frankfort, features about 150 authors and has had attendance between 4,000 and 5,000 in recent years.

Appalshop’s Appalachian Media Institute in Whitesburg draws young people from throughout Appalachia to learn digital storytelling technologies and strategies so they can better tell their own stories about their personal experiences and communities. The 2014 Summer Media Institute, for example, enrolled 12 young people who made films about downtown revitalization in Whitesburg,

## MEDIA ASSETS: CREATIVE TALENT

The second major asset of Kentucky’s media segment is its pool of creative talent in film and television production.

Asbury University, a small Christian college in Wilmore, offers degree programs in journalism, media communications and theater/cinema performance. This list does not do justice, however, to the breadth and depth of the school’s media and film programs.

The new Communication Arts Building, which opened in 2011, houses back lots, a black box theater, a media museum (which includes an original set from Citizen Kane as well as Desi Arnaz’s camera), a recording studio, TV studio and radio station. In addition to operating its own radio station, faculty and students produce an award-winning situation comedy, “Friends Like You.”

Asbury graduates have been remarkably successful in finding jobs in the film and video industry. Since 1984, more than 600 graduates have worked on Olympic television broadcasts, and alumni have landed at just about every major television channel—primarily outside Kentucky—in addition to working in film production, including directing the recently released Christian-based comedy film “Mom’s Night Out.” At the August 2014 regional Emmy Awards, Asbury affiliated talent was nominated for 24 awards.

### OTHER PROGRAMS OF NOTE:

Students in the photojournalism program at Western Kentucky University have claimed top honors in the William Randolph Hearst awards competition for 19 of the past 21 years.

Over the past four decades, Appalshop, an independent community-based nonprofit in Whitesburg, has fostered several generations of award-winning Appalachian media artists and documentary filmmakers.

Housed in the University of Kentucky’s College of Communication and Information, the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues fosters an understanding of rural issues for metropolitan journalists and helps non-metro journalists define and explain local impacts of major issues.

military veterans' experiences during wartime, and skating as a means of escape from aspects of daily life that are less than ideal. This year's curriculum also expanded to include photography and audio storytelling as stepping-stones to learning documentary video.

Western Kentucky University's Mountain Workshops visit a different region of Kentucky each October to chronicle its life and culture through photojournalism and short-form video productions. The workshop participants, who spend a week learning visual communication and storytelling skills taught by top professionals in the field, produce the videos. Mountain Workshops have been held in Henderson and Owensboro, two Ohio River towns, and more recently, in Berea.

In addition to film and video production, Kentucky cities and towns have a number of modestly sized film festivals, including the Western Kentucky Film Festival in Bowling Green, the River's Edge International Film Festival in Paducah, Owensboro's River City Festival of Films, the National Paddling Film Festival that takes place at the Buffalo Trace Distillery, the Louisville Jewish Film Festival, Louisville's International Festival of Films, and Asbury University's Highbridge Film Festival that showcases the work of Asbury students and Kentucky high school students. The Louisville Film Society, located in the city's historic Portland neighborhood, has merged its Flyover Film Festival with the annual IdeaFestival organized by the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation. Extremely unique to the Kentucky film-scape is Maiden Alley Cinema in Paducah. Operated by the Paducah Film Society, the cinema has been screening foreign, independent and documentary films for the greater Paducah community since 1991. In recent years, the cinema expanded its offerings from monthly to weekly films and offers special film events, children's programs and a vintage film series, to people in the city and surrounding area.



Maiden Alley Cinema in Paducah

# Summary of Findings

-  Literary arts continues to be an area of particular strength in Kentucky, with many prominent authors and literary groups.
-  With an array of affordable training programs, relatively low costs and a diverse topography, Kentucky could incubate a stronger film and video industry, especially if it focuses on encouraging smaller-scale productions and documentaries.
-  Kentucky's film production tax incentives program is not as generous as those in other, more competitive states. Filmmaking companies are likely to be attracted to greater financial benefits elsewhere.
-  Large corporations in Kentucky — notably the bourbon industry — tend to use out-of-state production crews, and do not often look to the local film and video industry.
-  The newspaper industry in Kentucky has fared relatively well compared with much of the country, but employment has still contracted. While newspapers remain major employers in the state, they are likely to experience a continuing decline in coming years, to be replaced by emerging alternative types of media.
-  Newly emerging sectors in video game and app development hold promise for the future of the media segment in Kentucky.



# CREATIVE CONVERGENCE: EXTENDING CREATIVITY ACROSS SECTORS



Squallis Puppeteers at Kentucky Crafted: The Market

## OVERVIEW

Thus far, the report has examined four creative industry segments that are dominated by businesses that require and rely on creative content. However, such companies are also part of, and/or contribute to, other industry clusters in Kentucky's economy.<sup>16</sup>

Those members of the creative industry that intersect with other clusters often represent some of those clusters' most innovative and imaginative members. A number of businesses that manufacture goods, process or prepare foods, deliver healthcare, develop new technologies, construct buildings and places, and engage and entertain tourists — each part of its own explicit industry cluster — are at the same time defined by and dependent upon creative content.

Furthermore, many businesses depend on creative employees and creative environments to spur innovation and enhance productivity. The more than 11,700 Kentuckians who work in creative occupations outside of the delineated creative segments represent some of those employees, but many others are classified in other occupations.

For example, manufacturers employ industrial designers but also employ engineers responsible for design. Financial institutions have advertising staff as well as Web and graphic designers but also IT staff who may design websites. Hotel chains employ interior decorators and landscape architects. Churches employ music directors, musicians and some even have recording facilities.

Hospitals and medical offices use art, music and design to reduce stress and anxiety and accelerate healing. Corporate businesses use landscaping, art and design to enhance productivity and creativity and influence clients and customers. Cities, towns and neighborhoods use outdoor art, design and landscaping to enhance quality of life and to retain and attract talent and business.

Perhaps even more importantly, creative interaction among people from different disciplines and backgrounds stimulates imagination, produces new ways of thinking about problems, and leads to innovation, called *hierarchies*.<sup>17</sup> For small and mid-sized firms, those interactions are likely to occur among peers with different competencies and perspectives.

Creative employees outside of creative industries that are in designated creative occupations can be identified in national databases and counted. Creative businesses outside of creative industries have no such classification and can only be identified through a rigorous firm-by-firm analysis and included only as examples, not in the verified data tally of creative jobs.

The following examples illustrate some of the many ways that creative sectors and creative occupations in Kentucky intersect with and impact other commonly defined industry clusters.

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16. A cluster is simply a set of similar or interdependent businesses located within a specified geographic region large enough to produce economies of scale and, in many cases, a brand. Creative industries are rarely considered industry clusters largely because their particular form of interdependency—common reliance on the production and sale of creative content—is difficult to pin down and because many of its most dynamic and emerging sectors are dominated by microenterprises and freelancers and difficult to measure.

17. Stark, David. For a Sociology of Truth, Center on Organizational Innovation, Columbia University, October 2000.

## FESTIVALS — WHERE TOURISM AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CONVERGE

Throughout the calendar year, Kentucky festivals provide the state's creative industry with opportunities to draw large audiences and contribute to the Commonwealth's tourism industry.

Music festivals are the bread-and-butter of Kentucky's festival circuit. Forecastle, the largest, takes place over three days in July at Louisville's Waterfront Park. A 2013 study found that the festival, which began in 2002, created \$7.9 million in direct expenditures in Louisville and was responsible for a \$14 million total economic impact for the city. While the scope of the festival extends beyond Kentucky, organizers do seek to retain something of a local flavor; for its 10th anniversary in 2012, Forecastle invited Louisville's native sons, My Morning Jacket, to curate the festival's lineup.

Craft festivals also are found in abundance. The headliner is Kentucky Crafted: The Market, the annual wholesale-retail market place that *AmericanStyle Magazine* anointed as the country's top craft event each year from 2010 to 2012. The 2013 show generated \$2 million in spending. In 2012, Kentucky Crafted: The Market had some in-state company on *AmericanStyle's* list, as Francisco's Farm Arts Festival in Midway and the St. James Court Art Show in Louisville both made the cut. The latter draws between 200,000 and 300,000 attendees during its weekend run in October.



*Before the Race*, painted photograph by Judi Rosati, Louisville

## Tourism as Cultural Experience

Kentucky's tourism industry is the most direct beneficiary of arts and culture. Taken together, the Commonwealth's creative industry and tourism industry represent what is sometimes called the "experience economy," where the consumer attaches value to the nature of a personal experience.<sup>18</sup> A large share of those experiences emanate from the creative industry, which fosters creative communities and creative districts that produce memorable events and places that attract and engage visitors.

While tourism is defined as recreational, family or business travel from one destination to another for a limited period of time, the creative industry represents one of the leading reasons for travel and provides the experiences that generate the travel. Festivals and fairs, special events, wayfinding trails and other cultural destinations that feature artisanal food, music, craft or historical significance often attract tourists from within and beyond the state.

The state's best-known tourist attraction, the Kentucky Derby, has long provided inspiration for artists and craftspeople and, in turn, has been boosted and enriched by the arts. The Kentucky Derby Museum, official art of the Kentucky Derby, fine art of the Derby, movies about the Derby and the legendary champion horses, designer apparel, and specialty drinks and foods are all creative products and services associated with what is, in essence, a nationally renowned sports event.

For many viewers, local residents and visitors alike, the multicolored 60-foot-tall mural of Abraham Lincoln that presides over the urban landscape of Lexington evokes both surprise and a sense of wonder. Created in 2013 by visiting Brazilian artist Eduardo Kobra on the back of the Kentucky Theatre, it exemplifies a more daring and contemporary attitude toward art and culture that today characterizes much of the city's visual arts culture. It clearly beckons to tourists who are intrigued to find out more about what the city has to offer.

18. Pine II, J.B. and H.H. Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1998, pp. 97-103.

One of the state's most successful and most direct connections between art and tourism is the 21c Museum Hotel, which opened in Louisville in 2006 as an innovative union of genuine Southern hospitality, design, culinary creativity and rotating exhibitions from emerging and internationally acclaimed artists. This new model has been acknowledged in *Travel + Leisure*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *National Geographic Traveler* and was voted by readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine as one of the top 10 hotels in the world. The success of the Louisville location led to the development of other properties in Arkansas, North Carolina and Ohio.

Rural Kentucky places, too, draw visitors who want to discover more about these communities through an exploration of locally produced visual arts, ranging from traditional craft to abstract expressionism.

In eastern Kentucky, the Arts House in Pikeville, a downtown gallery space funded by the city, demonstrates the diversity of the region's visual arts, displaying work curated through the Pikeville Artists Cooperative. In nearby Hazard, a series of artistically crafted tiny doors that mysteriously appeared throughout the downtown have drawn visitors from near and far to ponder their origins and purpose.

Kentucky's diverse theater offerings, ranging from highly professional productions to small volunteer-supported community-based presentations, also are an important draw for cultural tourism. The Artists Collaborative Theater in Elkhorn City, tucked away in a rural location that nonetheless benefits from its proximity to Breaks Interstate Park, is a 100-seat black-box community theater that draws visitors and tourists from three states. RiverPark Center, the premiere civic landmark on the downtown Owensboro riverfront, draws overnight visitors with its resident theater, dance and classical music presentation, as well as with its major theatrical productions.



Photo courtesy of Forecastle Festival and photographer Willie MacLean

# Artisanal Food and Culinary Art

Food and agriculture have long provided subject matter and functional applications for artists and designers. Some of the earliest artisan craft involved the production of dinnerware as well as cooking vessels and utensils. From the dinnerware produced by Bybee Pottery in Middletown, to the handcrafted knives made at the Kentucky School of Craft in Hindman, to the cutting boards produced and sold at Berea College, Kentucky art today enhances the culinary experience.

Farm life and the culinary arts also have inspired some of the world's greatest works of art, film and literature. Art, design and live entertainment play key roles in county and state agricultural fairs, clearly evident in craft competitions, music and stage performances, and artisanal foods.

But never has the convergence been stronger and synergy greater than in recent years. The desire for meals as creative experiences has become a mainstream art form in its own right, moving well beyond the more conventional decorative domain of pastries and other sweets. Today's top chefs are regarded as artists, many with their own cookbooks, television shows, websites and devoted followings. Eating establishments offer multi-dimensional experiences that combine food, interior design, music, theater and art.

Farmers' markets across the state offer opportunities for Kentucky artisans to sell their goods alongside local food producers. Many offer performance opportunities to local musicians as well, making a weekly trip to the market an opportunity to experience local culture in many forms.

A significant number of Kentucky wineries are also music venues. Talon Winery in Shelbyville has live music most weekends. Smith-Berry Vineyard and Winery in New Castle has regular music plus dinner concerts. Brooks Hill Winery in Brooks posts a regular schedule of mostly traditional music concerts.

Some restaurants display original art for sale and/or provide music or theater to accompany the meal. Natasha's Bistro and Bar in Lexington has a performance stage featuring musical groups. The Bluegrass Mystery Theater offers a multi-dimensional experience of food, drink, travel and mystery theater at various types of venues across the state.

Food festivals, popular across the state, match the exploding interest in locally sourced foods. These festivals inevitably include artisanal foods, craft, music and various performing arts. Crave Lexington is billed as a food



Wine caddy by Doug Haley, Berea

and music festival. The Mountain Mushroom Festival in Irvine includes art, craft and music, as do the Sorghum Festival in West Liberty, the World Chicken Festival in London, Apple Days in Paintsville and the Apple Festival in Casey County.

Kentucky is known around the world for its bourbons, a corn-based whiskey distilled in the Commonwealth since the 18th century and recognized by the U.S. Congress in 1864 as a distinctive U.S. product — and mainly associated with Kentucky. While large and well-established companies, such as Jim Beam, Maker’s Mark, Early Times, Buffalo Trace and Old Forester, produce bourbon for export, the rapid rise in popularity of artisanal alcoholic beverages has generated a number of craft distillers.<sup>19</sup> An annual Kentucky Bourbon Festival celebrates this distinctly Kentucky beverage in Bardstown and all it inspires in the arts including visual art exhibits, concerts, dance, tastings, food and more.

A similar upsurge of interest in local and artisanal foods is generating growth in Kentucky wineries, with 34 now on Kentucky’s wine trail. The most recent craft business is beer, with microbreweries and brewpubs popping up across the state. These breweries represent a fast growing industry, one that depends on discriminating buyers willing to pay more for a creative product based on quality of taste, design, brand and reputation.

## Manufacturing Experiences

Kentucky’s comparative advantage in high volume, standardized manufacturing has diminished as lower-cost global competitors have acquired advanced production technologies and skilled workforces. At the same time, mass markets for many products are splintering into niche markets for green, organic, trendy, religious, political, regional and/or lifestyle products.



Mountain Mushroom Festival in Irvine



Kentucky Bourbon Festival, Bardstown

19. Rosen, Clay. “The Billion-Dollar Bourbon Boom,” *Fortune*, 169 (February 24, 2014), 58:65.

## IDEAFESTIVAL

Kris Kimel, president of the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC), views IdeaFestival as a way to ignite innovation and creativity in a state better known for its traditions and history than for its research and technology. The inaugural event, launched by KSTC in Lexington in 2000, attracted about 1,500 people. By 2013, the event had grown to four days, featured nationally and internationally known presenters from the arts, science and business, and attracted 15,000 attendees to its home in Louisville.

Many people who attend IdeaFestival are in positions of influence. In 2013, 73 percent had advanced degrees and 60 percent were from upper management. Ninety-five percent, however, say they come to learn new ways of creative thinking, and most say they have no preconceived notions about outcomes.

The theme of IdeaFestival is “stay curious.” Events are designed to spark creativity as well as target public spaces to disrupt. Last year, a discarded sofa was set up outside and for three days people sat, networked and photographed. They also held a “lights out” dinner where people ate a four-course meal blindfolded to experience just the tastes. It’s all in the spirit of fun, and yet, as one recent participant observed, “Creative thinking is a key skill to success in the 21st century.”



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

These growing niche markets create new opportunities for Kentucky manufacturers to develop more sophisticated products that command high value not only because of their function and reliability, but also because of the experiences or special applications they provide to customers. Big Ass Solutions in Lexington, for example, announced in 2008 that they would “soon unleash a sleek and silent design solution unlike anything you’ve experienced.”<sup>20</sup>

While some specialized or highly branded large-scale production will survive the competition, the growth of Kentucky’s manufacturing is likely to depend on user-driven innovation and the sector’s ability to create new experiences for consumers. This depends largely on the pooled creative talent of product and artistic designers, engineers, skilled employees and support staff.

Some of Kentucky’s large employers — such as General Electric’s Appliance Park, recently acquired by Electrolux — have been changing the way they do business and what they make in efforts to bring back to Kentucky manufacturing that previously had been outsourced. As of August 2014, before the acquisition by Electrolux, the division had a 20-person design department. What they were making, however, was not “your mother’s refrigerator anymore.” The high-end French-door refrigerator designed and manufactured at Appliance Park has a unique auto-fill water spigot. It is lit inside by 10 recessed LED bulbs that use almost no energy, create almost no heat and never burn out. And the unit costs \$3,099.<sup>21</sup>

Some of the greatest manufacturing opportunities are in the toys, fashion and furniture industries, all hard hit by low-cost global competition but with growing markets among more affluent, younger and choosier populations. Kentucky has more than 7,000 employed in its toy industries, not counting the makers of artisanal handcrafted toys.

20. Metropolis, March 2008, p. 56.

21. Charles Fishman, “The Insourcing Boom,” The Atlantic, December 2012



UK HealthCare Arts in HealthCare Program, Tuesdays at Noon Concert Series, Lexington

Examples of creative manufacturing and production in Kentucky include:

- Tiffany & Company has a manufacturing plant in Lexington producing luxury jewelry.
- Bourbon Barrel Artisan, located in Louisville’s Butchertown neighborhood, creates fine handcrafted furniture from used bourbon barrels.
- Cuddle Clones in Louisville creates one-of-a-kind stuffed animals that look like customers’ pets.
- Lucas Equine Equipment, owned and operated in Cynthiana, is a fully equipped custom manufacturer of horse barn stalls, doors, gates and more, that employs an in-house architect as part of its full-service design and manufacturing capabilities.

New opportunities also may emerge from entrepreneurial microenterprises created in Kentucky “MakerSpaces” with shared resources and new technologies like 3-D printers.

## Information and Related Technologies

Art and technology, once joined at the hip but later separated by mass production, are now back in sync. The most obvious intersection involves the use of technologies to produce art and design as well as to provide creative content for new communications technologies — e.g., software publishing, audio and video equipment, mobile platforms, 3-D printers, web development and graphic arts.

Some of these firms are included within the creative industry but many others are claimed by related information and advanced technology clusters. Software publishing and audio and video equipment, for example, are part of the Economic Development Administration’s information technology and analytical instruments cluster, and Web-based advertising and Web design are typically included in information technology clusters.

## UK “BODY MAPPING” FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANT PATIENTS

Eight organ transplant patients at the University of Kentucky spent four days drawing and painting colorful maps of their own bodies as part of a creative exercise designed to help them reconcile complex emotions associated with having received the gift of life at the expense of the death of the donor. All eight of the body maps created during the intense week of drawing and painting found visual metaphors and words to express their feelings, including a deep sense of gratitude to the donors.

“The method is very much inspired by a therapeutic method called memory tunes,” said Xavier Verhoest, a visiting Kenyan artist-in-residence who led the art therapy sessions. “The idea is to take back people into their own body and create a representation of their lives through a life-sized painting.”

All participants agreed to donate their artwork to the Hospital’s permanent display. The body mapping provides insight and affirmation to medical professionals involved with organ harvesting and transplant. The project was a collaboration among the University of Kentucky’s College of Fine Arts and School of Art and Visual Studies, Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates, Ruth Hunt Wood Foundation, and Art2Be organization.

The Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC) seeks to identify and promote ways to draw on the imaginative capacity of the arts and design to advance technology. Since 2000 its annual IdeaFestival has earned a reputation as a “unique non-linear event designed to stretch people’s horizons and promote breakthrough thinking... utilizing multiple venues to showcase, discuss and connect important ideas in science, the arts, design, business, film, technology, education, etc.” The festival attracts highly diverse thinkers and artists from around the globe to explore and celebrate innovation, imagination and cutting-edge ideas with its diverse, wide-ranging audiences.

KSTC’s 2012 Strategic Plan set as one of its major goals to “Create the Kentucky Design-Centered Innovation Initiative,” an initiative that would promote industrial design that adds value to the products created by Kentucky manufacturers. In 2013, Kentucky manufacturers employed more than 200 design professionals, but many enterprises still contract externally for design services.

## The Healing Arts

The effects of art and creative expression on the recuperation and overall well-being of patients as well as their friends and families have been widely acknowledged. The design, sound, scent and artistic environments of hospitals, clinics and medical offices are important factors in minimizing anxiety, aiding treatment, accelerating healing and improving the quality of care.

Environments can be specially designed for different age groups and needs. Owensboro Health Regional Hospital contracted with artist Mary Carothers for art in the atrium that would provide “Soothing colors. Serene scenes that you can escape into. The coolness of water and the warmth of sunshine.”<sup>22</sup> “Putting the right art in place supports patient care, and can even lead to shorter hospital stays...Studies indicate that patients need less medication and exhibit more positive attitudes when exposed to artwork featuring natural surroundings.”<sup>23</sup>

Art therapy today is part of nearly every health care community, from individual classes to entire programs that are devoted to various forms of creative expression. The University of Kentucky College of Design, for example, is working on designs of environments for people in assisted living arrangements and the last stages of life.

22. <http://www.owensborohealth.org/community-wellness/news-media/2012/art-program-for-new-hospital/>

23. <http://www.owensborohealth.org/community-wellness/new-hospital/artwork/>

Work by many of Kentucky’s best-known artists can be found throughout the halls and incorporated within the architecture of the University of Kentucky Chandler Medical Center.<sup>24</sup> Convinced it would lead to faster healing, the hospital raised \$5 million to purchase art to “make public spaces empathetic and relaxing.”

In Louisville, the Kosair Children’s Hospital’s Healing Garden partnered with the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft to bring children connected to the hospital and their families together to produce art for the hospital. In addition, the interactive environment of the garden, designed by acclaimed architects De Leon & Primmer, has five zones based on Kentucky’s geography — meadow, forest, cavern, valley and river.

The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville brings instrumental music, vocal music, storytelling, dance, drama and visual art to patients. The UK HealthCare Arts in HealthCare Program partnered with the Kentucky Arts Council in 2013 for a free concert series featuring Kentucky performing artists that was open to hospital patients, their families, hospital employees and the general public.

Alternative medicine and health care, for which there are as yet no formal industry classifications, is another rapidly growing sector where art intersects with health care. Cedar Haven Wellness & Arts Center in Berea, for example, brings together related art forms to assist in healing and personal fulfillment that include yoga, massage therapy, watercolor painting, Tai Chi, drawing, learning a musical instrument and medicinal Qigong energy healing.



Photo courtesy of the UK HealthCare Arts in HealthCare Program

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24. Tom Eblen, “UK Chandler Hospital is a ‘notable art museum’, Lexington Herald Leader, December 11, 2011.

# Summary of Findings

- ❁ Most enterprises have multiple products, services and markets and therefore can be claimed by more than one type of industry sector or cluster. Thus, creative content is far more pervasive than creative industry employment data indicate.
- ❁ It is difficult to distinguish between (a) a creative enterprise, or even a creative sector that competes by finding new ways to differentiate itself and its products from the traditional company and (b) a firm that is primarily an imitator depending on production advantages. Many of the most creative businesses work across disciplines, integrating research and design, production and marketing/branding.
- ❁ Arts and design play major roles in the competitive advantage of many manufacturing firms but designers have few connections to, and are not sufficiently valued by, the manufacturing organizational and support infrastructure.
- ❁ The content side of computer systems and information technology sectors depends heavily on creative employees. Moreover, the cluster into which they connect and place themselves may be a chance event depending on the firm's history, customer base and primary sources of knowledge.
- ❁ Tourism depends heavily on creative enterprises to provide a large proportion of the experiences that attract and retain tourists. The primary difference between the two may be the priority-assigned outcome measures, i.e., beds, meals, purchases and transportation for tourism; and attendance, product or ticket sales, and reviews, for the creative industry.
- ❁ Food rapidly is becoming recognized as an established art form in itself, as well as a companion to a wide range of other art forms, especially as consumers increasingly look to food for experience as well as nourishment.
- ❁ Alternative healing arts, soothing environments and wellness programs all take advantage of creative disciplines to improve health and well-being.



# KENTUCKY'S CREATIVE PLACES



Photo courtesy of Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova

## OVERVIEW

In 2014, two of 55 highly coveted creative placemaking grants that were awarded nationally by ArtPlace America went to Kentucky grantees who had proposed innovative projects in Hazard and Louisville. That same year, the National Endowment for the Arts recognized four more creative placemaking projects in the Commonwealth — in Hindman, Cumberland, Lexington and Louisville — as recipients of its prestigious Our Town awards.

Remarkably, those NEA awards arrived on the heels of five earlier Our Town grants that had been disbursed in 2012 and 2013 to equally ambitious projects in Covington, Jenkins, Berea, Vanceburg and Cumberland. Two earlier ArtPlace grants, also in 2013, went to Lexington and Covington.

The total financial investment awarded over just the past three years to these inspired Kentucky creative placemaking projects, solely from these two high-profile national funders, is \$1,865,000. Significant as those dollars are, however, their greater value lies in the innovative work they are underwriting and the outcomes they will be leveraging.

The Kentucky Arts Council, hoping to amplify the benefit from this remarkable cohort, began to foster an informal network among the Commonwealth's creative placemaking grantees in 2014. It encouraged them to share ideas and look for possible avenues to work together on new projects. Such a collaboration, it is thought, could encourage and support not only the grantees' local creative placemaking efforts, but might also help inspire a widening circle of other Kentucky neighborhoods and communities with their own creative placemaking projects.

But what is creative placemaking, exactly? Why does it matter? And how have these place-based initiatives become such an integral part of efforts to strengthen Kentucky's creative industry? About a dozen years ago, the rising importance of creativity and innovation to the nation's overall economic competitiveness led to a general dialogue about how to foster "creative places" that could attract, develop and retain outstanding creative talent.

Since the early 2000s, however, the notion of "creative placemaking" has evolved to a more thorough understanding about what it means to engage independent artists and the entire creative sector, broadly speaking, in economic and community development.

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, in their groundbreaking 2010 white paper, developed an initial definition for creative placemaking that succinctly addresses this more panoramic sense of its full scope: "In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired."

Following the lead of this definition, the full integration of artists and designers into commercial and civic activity becomes paramount. In short, artist and architect alike quickly become far more than "the makers of glorified objects." They forge working partnerships with scientists, engineers, business teams and civic leaders to develop and market new and improved products and services, more effective organizations and institutions, and more livable and more prosperous neighborhoods, towns, counties and regions.

But how does any local Kentucky place — a rural town, an urban city, or even the entire Commonwealth — set out upon such a sweeping journey of creative reinvention? What is needed to facilitate the cross-disciplinary creative teams that can imagine, research, design, prototype and test the bold strategies, projects and programs that over time will accomplish such an ambitious undertaking?

In fact, the current wave of bold creative placemaking that is taking place across the Commonwealth has roots that reach back as far as the inspired community conversations that took place at the 2010 Creative Cities Summit in Lexington.

The current work also draws inspiration from many other diverse sources, including the initial Higher Ground community theater performances and public dialogues that took place in Cumberland around 2005, from the colorful streetscape murals that Kentucky artists have painted across rural and urban settings over the past 20 years, from the diverse cultural art festivals that are staged every year all across the Bluegrass state, and from the documentary films and videos about Appalachian culture that Appalshop, as well as other Kentucky media artists, have created during the past several decades.

All of these artistic endeavors have set the stage for today's vital coalescing of both younger artists and their elders in networks of stakeholder conversations and small working groups determined to launch shoestring initiatives as well as bold projects funded through highly sought-after ArtPlace America and NEA Our Town grants.

The coalitions that take part in these experiments include diverse partners who are working together for the first time — entrepreneurs and artists, youth and elders, long-time residents and newly arrived VISTA volunteers, college faculty, business leaders and local elected officials. They are economic development professionals tasked with recruiting new jobs and local dreamers who long have wanted to see a new public gathering space, children's park or community garden.

Kentucky's rising tide of creative grassroots renewal is lifting the aspirations of small towns and urban neighborhoods across the Commonwealth. Ideas sketched out on the back of a napkin and discussed over coffee have found initial investment from local community foundations and online crowdfunding. It's been a time even for novices to design small-scale entrepreneurial projects that can test proof of concept, go rapidly to prototype, measure the early outcomes, and then iteratively refine the process and project for the best outcome.



Higher Ground, photo courtesy of Chris Jones

# Kentucky Creative Commonwealth Network

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the promise and the practice of creative placemaking will be to look more closely at each of the community-based projects at the core of the emergent Creative Commonwealth Network. Most are in the early stages of their work. Even so, their energy and enthusiasm already reach beyond the specific proposals of their grant awards, inspiring others to take up the challenge of strengthening these and other creative places in Kentucky.

## BEREA (2012)

Long known as a center for Appalachian craft and, more recently, as a designated Kentucky Cultural District, the City of Berea and the Berea Arts Council are using their NEA Our Town grant to commission a local graphics design firm to create a craft-oriented wayfinding trail and implement artistic signage to direct visitors and residents to cultural destinations throughout the city. In fact, the new signage will connect three distinct art districts within the city. In so doing, the project will strengthen local and regional awareness of Berea's cultural identity, serving local residents and attracting cultural tourists.



Berea's Old Town



Photo courtesy of City of Covington

## COVINGTON (2013)

Covington Arts, the City of Covington's arts initiative, and Renaissance Covington are partnering with the American Sign Museum in neighboring Cincinnati to commission local artists and professional fabricators to design, produce and install creative signs for local businesses in the city's newly identified economic redevelopment area. Anticipated benefits from Covington's NEA and ArtPlace America investments include training and employment opportunities for artists, engagement of local Hispanic communities, and integration of the arts into ongoing citywide revitalization efforts. Covington, too, is a designated Kentucky Cultural District.

### CUMBERLAND (2013 AND 2014)

Coordinated by the Appalachian Program at Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College, the nationally acclaimed Higher Ground Project uses a performance-based blend of storytelling, music, art and design to create theatrical experiences that investigate long-term issues affecting Harlan County. The Appalachian Program also seeks to mentor and train young artists as they embark upon community art projects, mini-festivals, public art residencies, and creative writing and documentary film workshops. Investment from ArtPlace America and the NEA is increasing the capacity of the college and its local partners to coordinate a regional rebranding effort that celebrates the arts, tourism, local food and the creative potential of area youth.



Photo courtesy of Higher Ground



Photo courtesy of the River Arts Greenway, Hazard

### HAZARD (2014)

The River Arts Greenway, a project of Pathfinders of Perry County and InVision Hazard, an innovative downtown revitalization program, is launching the phased development of a multi-faceted, arts-focused public greenway in the heart of downtown Hazard. The project's initial work will expand community gardens and construct a pedestrian walkway connecting key community art spaces, including a renovated community arts center, formerly the downtown bus station. The greenway also will feature public art, programming that invites local residents to make art, and a welding rodeo that brings together artists and coal miners who have lost their jobs due to the downturn in Kentucky's coal industry. The artists and miners will make public sculpture out of scrap and reclaimed industrial materials. It also provides a highly visible field of possibility for entrepreneurial projects that demonstrate the viability of arts-led small businesses. The project is funded in part with an ArtPlace America grant.

## HINDMAN (2014)

An NEA grant is supporting the Appalachian Artisan Center's Dulcimer Project, which celebrates the living history and contemporary artisanship of the dulcimer, the state instrument of Kentucky. By collecting oral histories, offering workshops in constructing dulcimers, and staging festivals for local musicians, the project will assist Hindman and Knott County as it reinvents itself as a hub for artisanship and creative activity. Its professed goal is to have Hindman widely recognized as the dulcimer capital of the world.



Master luthier Doug Naselroad, left, with apprentice Mike Slone, Hindman



Appalshop recording session

## JENKINS (2013)

In Jenkins, the NEA grant will support the creation of murals, a large-scale photographic installation, and a guided walking tour that celebrates the city's cultural history, all reflecting the city's coal mining heritage. Created in partnership with Appalshop, located in nearby Whitesburg, the project will strengthen the cultural identity of the city and attract visitors. It also will work hand-in-glove with the city's ongoing effort to procure designation as a Kentucky Trail Town.

## LEXINGTON (2013 AND 2014)

In an effort to turn neighborhood liabilities into assets, the North Limestone Community Development Corporation will renovate 40 shotgun-style houses originally built to serve the textile industry in Lexington. The goal is to provide affordable housing and workspaces for artists and other residents. LuigART Makers Spaces, the lead partner in the redevelopment effort, also will renovate a 14,000-square-foot former malt and hemp factory that later operated as a jazz club in the 1920s and 30s. The overall project, with funds from ArtPlace America, will create a home ownership program for area residents, housing for visiting artists, an incubator space, and gallery space for the artists, makers and partner organizations. The group already launched a monthly night market that features booths by local artists and makers with a wide selection of art and handmade goods. The night market currently attracts an average attendance of more than 2,000 people. By the end of 2014, it is expected to have yielded an economic impact of more than \$300,000, all in return for an initial \$15,000 investment. The NEA also is supporting development of a community-based cultural plan as well as public art for the North Limestone corridor.



Photo courtesy of Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova, The Night Market

## LOUISVILLE (2014)

IDEAS 40203, the nation's first contemporary art chamber of commerce, has launched a new initiative, funded by ArtPlace America, to establish a creative innovation zone in the city's long-marginalized Smoketown neighborhood. The creative innovation zone will offer innovative community programs at multiple sites throughout Smoketown that integrate art, technology and entrepreneurship. IDEAS 40203 and its Brooklyn-based partner organization Residency Unlimited are using their NEA funds to establish the Artist + Entrepreneur Co-Innovation Accelerator which, over a six-month period, will integrate artists into research and development teams

at local businesses representing each of Louisville's seven leading industry clusters. A formal analysis of these residencies will lead to a report, database and an interactive website, as well as presentations at a symposium profiling best practices and lessons learned.



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203



Photo courtesy of Promising Futures

## VANCEBURG (2012)

With its NEA award, the Center for Appalachian Philanthropy and its Promising Futures program is partnering with the City of Vanceburg and several other organizations to develop a creative industry cluster that will connect five creative places to foster economic development for the greater Lewis County area. A top priority is to renovate the historic Carter Hotel in downtown Vanceburg. Project activities include architectural design, community engagement activities, and educational programming to help local artisans to develop their business skills. The renovated hotel will serve as a creative hub for as many as 100 local artisans develop and operate small businesses that produce and market Appalachian goods and services.

During its initial two meetings in Benham and Pikeville, the network participants identified — as commonly shared themes — their desire to use community stories to help shape a proactive vision of the future, explore the arts as a vehicle to increase heritage tourism and promote health and wellness, and strengthen both job development and diversification of local economies across Kentucky. They plan to develop a common platform for promoting their activities, both individually and as a group, and to identify resources and skills that they are willing to share with one another. They also would like to identify and strengthen a network of creative leaders across Kentucky who can champion the impact of art and design on the state's economy. In so doing, they foresee an opportunity to partner with other groups, such as the Kentucky Innovation Network, to look more closely at design-based entrepreneurship.

## Other Creative Placemaking Efforts in Kentucky

The Creative Commonwealth Network is not the only matrix of innovation that has spontaneously arisen during the past year among artists and community leaders who are investing in arts-driven community development activities across the state of Kentucky.

Art of the Rural, a digital platform that facilitates engaged urban-rural dialogue and cross-sector exchanges, is partnering with Appalshop to launch the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange. Thirty-six participants from Whitesburg, located in the coalfields of southeastern Kentucky, and Louisville, the Commonwealth's largest city, met in June 2014 to establish working partnerships and begin to address their shared cultural and economic futures. The gathering resulted in 16 rural-urban partnerships organized around three cohort areas — arts and culture, small-scale agriculture and food systems, and small business and local economy. These groups worked throughout the summer of 2014 to identify and co-design priority projects and then reconvened in late September in Louisville to assess their progress and sustain their momentum.

Most of the creative places across the Commonwealth, however, do not belong to regional networks, nor are they necessarily funded by national philanthropies. Many are deeply engaged with local public art projects that provide creative ways to engage local residents in a much keener sense of their place, its heritage and future prospects. Among these are community-based initiatives as enduring as the murals painted by artist Kevin Tipton on the exteriors of brick facades in rural places like Ravenna and Mount Sterling. The Bronze Buffalo Trace public art in Owensboro calls attention to the buffalo trail that once passed through the town. And the Barn Quilt Trails found in all areas of the state offer tangible evidence of the living traditions and values that continue to shape how residents view their communities.



Barn quilt in Barren County



Photo courtesy of John and Jessica Winters, Lincoln mural by Eduardo Kobra, Lexington

Each generation of Kentuckians, it would appear, is finding ways to reinvigorate those living traditions and bring art into the mainstream of community life. A University of Kentucky class project in arts administration unexpectedly matured into an innovative community-based arts organization, funded through an online crowdfunding campaign, that seeks to place “Art in Unlikely Places” throughout Lexington, where it is accessible to underserved city populations. Meanwhile, in Louisville, a class of students exploring the history, theory and practice of socially engaged art created the Smoketown Social Club, a temporary art project that offered students and residents of the inner city neighborhood the opportunity to explore their shared interests and have fun, too.

All across Kentucky there are outcroppings of sustained creative placemaking, as is abundantly evident in the oral histories of women artists collected by Joy Gritton, a professor at Morehead State University, for her Eastern Kentucky Arts Project. The life journeys of these women artists further illuminate the intersection of art-making and social justice in strengthening local community. Equally as compelling are the stories emerging from the SpreadLoveLou program in Louisville, where the city’s artists and poets deployed art to disrupt cycles of violence in the aftermath of racial confrontation.

Even work as daring as the Lexington Tattoo Project, a recent community-based collaborative art experiment created by two professors from Transylvania University, point toward the many ways that art can bring an entire community together. What started as a Facebook request for local residents to ink their bodies with words from a love poem by a local poet evolved quickly into both a local and national phenomenon. In Louisville, a project called “Weaving Unity into Community” invited young people and residents of the Parkway Place public housing community to work with a fiber artist and art therapist to produce a community art project that strengthened their sense of pride in place.

The St. James Court Art Show in Old Louisville is an annual world-class, community-led arts event that strengthens a sense of neighborhood cohesiveness and civic pride, even as it showcases more than 700 artists and draws more than 300,000 people. In fact, myriad arts festivals of every size and description take place each year all across the Commonwealth. Community-based theater productions also play an essential role in creative placemaking. In rural eastern Kentucky, a new outdoor drama, called Blood Song, retells the story



Lexington Tattoo Project, photo courtesy of Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova



Downtown Covington

of the legendary feud between the Hatfields and McCoys. This time, however, members of the local community, working with an experienced regional playwright, have taken charge of developing the historical tale themselves, in their own way, presenting a painstakingly researched, more contextualized narrative.

Kentucky today designates a small number of towns and cities as “Kentucky Cultural Districts,” a relatively new program created in 2012 by the Kentucky Arts Council. In fact, Kentucky was only the 12th state to develop such a statewide program. Current Kentucky Cultural Districts are Bardstown, Berea, Covington, Danville, Maysville

and Paducah. The certification is primarily a marketing tool. The cultural districts lack enabling legislation or direct budgetary allocations from state government. Nonetheless, the process of applying for the certification typically has motivated these towns to pull together diverse community leaders and organizations in ways that strengthen social capital and inspire creative collaboration.

It is often the case that civic innovation goes hand-in-glove with creative placemaking. The Creative Cities Summit in Lexington in 2010 opened up a much wider conversation about how to integrate creativity and the arts into local civic life in Lexington. Louisville has located its Commission on Public Art within the city’s Department of Economic Development, in part to emphasize the significant impact that the arts and design exert upon the regional economy of the state’s largest metropolitan area. Owensboro local government allocates more money per capita to the arts than any other city in the Commonwealth.

## Funding Creative Placemaking

As suggested by the short profiles presented in this report, creative placemaking initiatives across the Commonwealth embrace diverse organizational strategies. Some are formal and well-funded. Others are ad hoc and operate with the leanest possible budgets. Even so, in an era of fiscal restraint among public agencies, nearly all are looking to alternative sources of funds to launch new projects and sustain existing ones. The good news is that Kentucky communities today can access a range of new and innovative tools for attracting capital investment that can be used to fund creative placemaking initiatives. The Kentucky Transfer of Wealth study (2010)<sup>25</sup> estimates that \$72 billion will be available between 2010 and 2020 for intergenerational transfer in Kentucky households. Even a modest portion of that wealth could be set aside through local community foundations for investment in creative communities. Other potential funding tools range from local hotel and restaurant tax initiatives available to some categories of Kentucky localities to online fiscal sponsorship and crowdfunding possibilities.

In truth, there is no lack of potential investment capital that might support and sustain creative placemaking initiatives across the Commonwealth, provided artists, designers and community leaders are willing to work together and think outside the box. A large part of the challenge, of course, will be to measure outcomes and demonstrate to both potential investors and the general public that these initiatives actually do make a significant difference.

25. Don Mackey, Ahmet Binerer, and Deb Markley, Kentucky Transfer of Wealth: Technical Report to the Kentucky Philanthropy Initiative, Inc., Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, July 2010.



*Nexus*, by Erika Strecker and Tony Higdon

## Tools and Strategies for Creative Placemaking

Each of Kentucky's creative placemaking projects — regardless of their mix of creative disciplines, or whether they are rural or urban — is developing its own repertoire of tools and strategies. That's one reason why so many are reaching out to one another as learning and innovation partners. They are eager to share insights about their ongoing challenges and lessons learned, helping one another discover which tools and strategies work best in particular types of situations.

Another invaluable resource is documentation of diverse Kentucky art and cultural projects that has been created and archived for public access by Appalshop, Kentucky Educational Television, the Kentucky Farm Bureau, the Mountain Workshops organized through Western Kentucky University, the Kentucky Folklife Program at Western Kentucky University, the Eastern Kentucky Arts Project at Morehead State University, and the Kentucky Arts Council. These archives provide perspective for Kentucky artists who wish to ground their own creative practice within the larger context of what has come before.

Arts reporting of leading news sources and publications that persistently catalyze stakeholder conversations about the impact of art and design upon culture, community and the economy is also vital. The Lexington Herald-Leader, Louisville's Courier-Journal, Kentucky Monthly, Kentucky Living, Story magazine, Kentucky Educational Television, Kentucky's network of National Public Radio affiliates and others impact the view of the creative landscape in the Commonwealth. How artists, designers, business people and civic leaders learn to tell the overall story of how Kentucky firms and communities embrace creative approaches to heighten economic and community development matters a great deal toward establishing a fresh perspective on brand identity for both individual places and the entire Commonwealth.

Most of the Kentucky groups currently engaged in developing place-based creative communities are keenly aware they must build upon existing assets, engage diverse constituencies within the community, and link the goals of their art and design projects to measurable outcomes. It is reasonable to say that the knowledge and skill to develop and apply such measures is in the early stage of prototyping and testing in Kentucky, as elsewhere. Some community groups, like InVision Hazard in Perry County, are just beginning to collaborate with a regional university partner — in Hazard’s case, an Appalachian Studies class at Eastern Kentucky University — to develop and implement these appropriate measures.

## Impact on Economic and Community Development

The importance of these creative placemaking initiatives to Kentucky’s economy over the long term cannot be overestimated. Creative places and their amenities attract and develop talent and generate new business opportunities. They also strengthen Kentucky’s overall brand and help establish the individual brand identities of the Commonwealth’s local places and regions, further enhancing the value and appeal of their creative products and services. Creative places catalyze and encourage business and civic innovation. They foster a stronger sense of short-term adaptability and long-term resilience.

Across the board, creative placemaking efforts mobilize underutilized local assets in the service of enhanced community development. Artists and designers, arts and culture organizations, cooperative extension and fine arts extension agents, and others engage local residents and their organizations in a deeper relationship with the neighborhoods and regions around them. Public art — murals, performances and even tattoo projects — build bridges among disparate cultural groups, ethnically and intergenerationally. Just as sharing a meal sourced from locally grown food can remind community residents about what they have in common, shared artistic experiences, too, can bring people together in remarkable, deeply moving ways. In the end, communities thrive when neighbors gather together, share their stories, imagine new frameworks to address persistent challenges, contribute their talents, launch new creative enterprises and celebrate their successes.



Latitude Artist Community, Lexington

# Summary of Findings

- ❁ Kentucky communities across the Commonwealth are actively engaged with creative placemaking projects. A number of these initiatives are becoming recognized nationally for their inventive, resourceful approaches that may serve as models for other places.
- ❁ The Kentucky Arts Council is taking a leading role in catalyzing and convening an informal network of Kentucky's creative places so that artists and entrepreneurs representing each one can meet one another, share insights and information, and explore opportunities to collaborate on new projects.
- ❁ Artists, designers and entrepreneurs in some Kentucky places are joining forces so that each cohort can learn from the other. Their shared goal is to help one another to design new creative enterprises and creative projects as well as to rehearse and refine the pitch presentations they will make about those projects to prospective investors.
- ❁ Kentucky's creative places are exploring new investment possibilities for their local initiatives, including crowdfunding, fiscal sponsorship arrangements with local and national nonprofit organizations, and the intergenerational transfer of wealth opportunities that can be managed through local community foundations.
- ❁ Contemporary creative placemaking across the Commonwealth has its roots in earlier conversations about the role of the arts, design and creative enterprises in economic and community development. The 2010 Creative Cities Summit in Lexington and the annual conferences of the Brushy Fork Institute in Berea, among others, have inspired both public and private leaders to explore and support today's creative placemaking initiatives.
- ❁ Kentucky's Cultural District Certification offers an opportunity to recognize and support both creative placemaking efforts and the development of new creative enterprises across the state.
- ❁ Learning how best to tell the emerging stories about Kentucky's creative places is key to sustaining the early momentum of the state's art- and design-led initiatives as well as to developing a creative brand identity that integrates and expresses the exuberance and vitality of their creative experimentation and fresh discoveries.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo courtesy of Great American Brass Band Festival



Cabinet by Mark Whitley, Smith's Grove



Performing artist Cheryl Pan, Lexington

## INTRODUCTION

Kentucky's creative industry is unquestionably important to the overall health and vitality of the state's economy. It provides more than 60,000 direct jobs and supports another 36,000 jobs found in companies providing services to the state's creative enterprises or resulting from the spending of those employed in this industry.

Beyond these creative jobs, Kentucky's creative talent and creative companies are important to the competitiveness and growth of other important sectors of the Commonwealth's economy, including tourism, culinary arts, manufacturing and health care. Moreover, they are driving the revitalization prospects of many Kentucky communities, from newly reinvigorated small towns like Hazard to resurgent inner-city neighborhoods within Lexington and Louisville.

Some of this success has been due to early strong support by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. State government has played a key role in building the state's creative infrastructure and with ensuring its reach across the state. Kentucky benefits from a legacy of investments in creative and cultural assets that have improved the state's quality of life and economic competitiveness.

The question more recently, however, at a time of fiscal restraint for state and local government, has been how to further nurture and sustain this long-standing promise. There is a profound need for a coordinating function within the public or nonprofit sector that can help focus existing resources, and development new opportunities as well as leverage investment.

The Kentucky Arts Council is positioned to take a leading role in building a network of leaders and other creative industry stakeholders throughout the state. It has recently added a new staff position that will focus exclusively upon the Commonwealth's creative industry.

These recommendations focus and build upon Kentucky's identified creative assets and

opportunities. It is challenging to predict from data and interviews exactly what sorts of endeavors can leverage the best return-on-investment, whether in the public or private sectors. Even so, it is expected that inclusive stakeholder conversations can provide a good starting place for making strategic decisions.

## AUDIENCES

In that spirit, the recommendations in this report target three key audiences, each of whom will play an important role in their implementation.

The first audience is the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Some of the strategies can best be undertaken at the state government level. Some of the recommendations may require state resources or legislative action. Many involve the Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, playing more of a catalytic or convening role.

The second audience is local communities. Municipalities and counties throughout Kentucky increasingly appreciate the unique role that the arts, culture and creative enterprises can play in their communities, whether through creative placemaking or civic innovation. In addition, throughout the state there are chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, tourism councils and other nonprofit organizations that are promoting and marketing their local communities. Some of these recommendations can be taken on at the community or regional level.

Third, many of the recommendations seek to engage the business community, both those within the creative industry as well as the other businesses across the state that are closely allied with creative firms and creative workers. Businesses can provide support, sponsor actions that address specific recommendations, and take a leadership role with regard to supporting the state's creative industry and its infrastructure. Over the long run, a stronger, more resilient economy and a vibrant quality of life can benefit every business in Kentucky.

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

In its role as the lead advocate and network weaver in support of the recommendations in this report, the Kentucky Arts Council will begin implementing recommendations and best practices during the next 24 months, beginning with the public release of the report in December 2014.

Across that span of time, the arts council and, where appropriate, the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet, will encourage public and private sector partnerships to help promote the report's findings and priority recommendations. They will convene stakeholder conversations and informal working groups to explore, design and, where feasible, implement strategies to address them.

The arts council also will develop — once again, in collaboration with the appropriate partners — the key measures needed to track and assess outcomes resulting from the report's highest priority recommendations and resulting projects.

The state arts agency further will seek to foster working partnerships across the state to document and share the overarching story as well as local narratives that illustrate lessons learned from these ongoing efforts to build and strengthen the Commonwealth's creative industry.

Networked creativity across diverse disciplines can result in replicable innovation. Public-private partnerships are just one example of such highly focused stakeholder networks. Facilitated smart networks can accelerate rates of innovation, refinement and replication. Cross-industry collaboration also provides an enhanced field of possibility for innovation.

Accordingly, many other state, regional and local groups in Kentucky, public and private, also will be encouraged to convene creative industry stakeholder conversations as well as organize specific working groups. Across-the-board, it will be useful for all of these projects to prioritize their strategic actions to achieve a mix of short- and long-term goals. They can share regular updates about their ongoing work with the arts council so that the state agency and its partners can track, document and widely communicate about them.

Across these efforts, artists can play essential roles as members of well-integrated teams that tackle myriad challenges posed by emerging new technologies, economic diversification, workforce development and civic innovation. From the very beginning, these recommendations call for artists and designers, entrepreneurs, business innovators, economists, policymakers and many others to be at the table where they collaborate to shape and guide implementation of local and statewide projects and initiatives.

This report fully acknowledges that success of even the most promising community and economic development can take a long time. Along the way, in addition to pursuing specific economic and community development goals, it will be important to make a concentrated effort to include input from as many community members and stakeholders as possible to reach a desired outcome that will benefit all.

### **A WORD ABOUT K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

The respective roles of, first, K-12 education in introducing young people to the arts as well as to design and media and, second, of post-secondary education in developing their skill sets in targeted creative fields, are undoubtedly important to Kentucky's need to provide a skilled, creative workforce. Even so, the recommendations presented here do not address their workforce development roles comprehensively.

This strategic decision reflects the immediate priority that the report places upon other goals, including creative workforce development that takes place in other settings. The decision also reflects the limited influence, especially during the initial 24-month implementation time frame, that the Kentucky Arts Council, as the lead advocate for the report and its recommendations, would have in addressing proposed recommendations addressing Kentucky's overall education system. Even so, the report does offer specific recommendations that encourage leaders from Kentucky's K-12 and higher education institutions, as well as from their professional associations, to join with stakeholders from other disciplines to explore and discuss shared priorities, consider strategic gaps in workforce development services, and recommend or initiate targeted action.



Lebanon Middle School mural, Lebanon

# Recommendations

The following recommendations suggest goals and actions intended to build and strengthen creative enterprises, talented people and creative places. They recognize, reach out to, and foster both existing and emerging segments of Kentucky's creative industry in order to generate new sources of wealth, expand economic opportunities, and further position the Commonwealth on the vanguard of creativity and innovation.

## CREATIVE INDUSTRY OVERALL

### **Support the Kentucky Arts Council as catalyst, convener and facilitator of stakeholder conversations and emergent networks among groups relevant to the state's creative industry.**

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An essential first step in laying the groundwork for a coordinated approach to strengthening Kentucky's creative industry is to position the Kentucky Arts Council as the statewide hub for convening stakeholder conversations and emergent networks around priority opportunities and challenges.

With a newly designated staff position for creative industry, this catalyzing and convening role consolidates and expands previous Kentucky Arts Council activities in this arena. This broader role as the creative industry's network weaver assures that diverse groups of stakeholders will have the opportunity to collaborate strategically across a broad range of local, regional and state priorities.

The Kentucky Arts Council will catalyze and convene stakeholder groups, helping them to ask the right questions, explore gaps and opportunities, and serve as mini-learning and innovation networks. Wherever appropriate, the arts council will seek to help the stakeholder groups build their capacity to function independently, even while belonging to an overall network of such initiatives. In addition, the arts council will seek to provide information to the state's media to document and tell the emergent story of the state's creative industry.

### **Engage stakeholders, mobilize opportunities and leverage investment throughout Kentucky to grow and develop Kentucky's creative industry.**

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Engaging established and emerging public and private sector leaders statewide who can champion and support the creative industry throughout Kentucky is fundamentally important both at the outset and throughout this initiative. The Kentucky Arts Council can take a leading role in this overall effort to catalyze and convene both statewide and regional networks which help lay the groundwork for a robust creative industry sector.

## **Stage an annual creative industry conference with the first one in October 2015.**

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An annual statewide conference focused on Kentucky’s creative industry can highlight progress toward declared goals, honor creative leadership across the state, and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to network and share what they are learning across a broad spectrum of projects and initiatives. The conference offers a platform, too, for the Kentucky Arts Council and creative industry stakeholders across the Commonwealth to revisit and possibly update the goals and recommendations of this report. Overall, the event can help strengthen the creative industry’s profile both among local and regional communities, statewide with policymakers and business leaders, and beyond Kentucky among a broad range of audiences, including potential business partners.

## **Continually promote Kentucky’s creative industry.**

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Kentucky’s creative industry will benefit from ongoing public promotions that will assist in stakeholders’ understanding and engagement with the sector. These efforts should support Kentucky’s creative entrepreneurs, creative places and the creative industry. Along with the overall promotion of the sector, local communities, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations can sponsor “Buy Kentucky Creative” efforts that help increase the market for locally sourced creative products and services. This might include hosting local live showcases for creative workers — for example, artists, artisans, performers, graphic designers, videographers and photographers — and/or creating Web-based showcases for local creative work.

## **Encourage reportage and creative storytelling across multiple platforms — journalism, live performance, videos, multimedia installations, social media and apps — that can share the emerging story of Kentucky’s creative industry.**

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Figuring out how best to strategically document, promote and widely share the story of Kentucky’s commitment to strengthen its creative industry is fundamentally important to the success of these recommendations as well as to the individual enterprises and infrastructure that comprise the state’s creative industry.

The Kentucky Arts Council can convene and facilitate initial conversations among stakeholder groups across targeted creative disciplines to identify opportunities that focus upon telling the story of the state’s creative industry and creative placemaking efforts. These discussions could lead to specific small-scale projects that showcase and celebrate the best of Kentucky-focused storytelling efforts at the annual creative industries conference. It is likely, too, that bringing together these creative artists and producers may help the arts council and its partners to gather ongoing data about specific needs within these creative segments and develop new recommendations that can be presented at the annual conference and other arenas.

## **Support expansion of the University of Kentucky's cooperative extension fine arts program.**

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The Arts Extension Program in Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service has proven valuable in the counties it reaches. The program could be even more useful if: 1) It had the resources to expand to serve other parts of the state; and 2) Agents had the capacity to work with creative enterprises in other segments beyond visual and performing arts, such as design services for rural communities and even the manufacturing industry. An expanded network of fine arts extension agents across the state could play an important role in developing creative assets, creative enterprises and creative communities. A pilot effort to promote expansion of the existing program into at least six additional locations, including serving multi-county areas, would be an important first step.

## **Provide greater access to the national and international marketplace.**

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In an increasingly global economy, creative businesses in Kentucky need to aspire to serving markets outside of the state. It is not advisable to depend entirely upon local or even regional markets for sales. Many visual artists, designers, filmmakers and performers in Kentucky already recognize this and market their products or services across the state, nationally, and in some cases globally.

Such access may be particularly important for Kentucky's media enterprises whose national markets are concentrated in New York and Los Angeles. Visual artists who seek opportunities to attend art and craft festivals outside of Kentucky benefit from seeing new ideas and can survey the quality of the competition.

The Kentucky Arts Council can work with professional associations and other groups across the creative segments to encourage expanded opportunities for artists, designers and creative enterprises to gain such exposure and to share their observations and insights with their professional peers and colleagues in Kentucky. In many cases, it may be useful to document such events and share presentations by Kentucky creative talent who are traveling and working beyond the state's borders or even by Kentucky natives who now live and work elsewhere.

## **Address the needs of all Kentuckians through the arts and creative industry.**

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Kentucky's rural and urban places represent different expressions of the single state economy. They are mutually interdependent and together serve as a dynamic asset for the state's creative industry. Likewise, Kentucky's racial and ethnic groups share a stake in conserving and promoting their individual and collective cultural landscapes. All Kentuckians contribute essential talent and skill to accomplishing the overarching goal of creating a just and sustainable society. Equitable access to opportunity, as well as ongoing dialogue and creative exchanges among all of these groups, are vital to the shared success of all Kentuckians.

## **Coordinate recommendations with statewide and regional endeavors to enhance community and economic development.**

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Creative enterprises are explicitly or implicitly incorporated into much of the organizing structure of community and economic development initiatives — tourism, regional identity, education and retraining, and business incubation.

There are efforts underway in many regions of Kentucky, both formal and informal, that are providing invaluable platforms for Kentucky artists, designers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, community activists, civic leaders and others to embrace the arts and design as a means for strengthening local and regional economies, as well as enhancing the quality of life in towns and cities across the Commonwealth.

Entities developing implementation strategies ought to coordinate with the Kentucky Arts Council as well as other creative industry initiatives that follow this report and consider the potential of applying and adapting its recommendations. The Kentucky Arts Council can encourage these collaborations and, where feasible, advise and support their efforts, especially regarding identifying possible financial support as well as networking them with similar conversations.

## **Use creative resources to assist schools in implementing the National Core Arts Standards in the K-12 school system.**

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The arts have proven effective in the development of the skills and talents that students need to be prepared for the 21st century workforce. The hands-on and experiential nature of creative subjects can be used effectively to teach basic skills as well as develop creative talent that has economic potential. The Kentucky Arts Council should continue its support for arts education following Kentucky's adoption of the National Core Arts Standards, which emphasize instruction in dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts. The arts council can act as a resource for educators, schools, districts and the Kentucky Department of Education in finding ways to address and support the implementation of the core arts standards. In addition, Kentucky's arts organizations that offer arts education curricula and activities should be regarded and utilized as a highly valuable resource in helping the state's educators meet program review requirements.

### **CREATIVE ENTERPRISES**

## **Grow jobs and income through enhancing the success of creative entrepreneurs and small businesses in the creative segments.**

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Creative enterprises are similar to other businesses in that they must establish a legal structure, conform to business regulations, write a business plan, manage and monitor finances, and search for financing. For help with these needs, creative businesses can turn to a robust network of general business assistance resources in Kentucky that can support small businesses in creative industries.

Creative entrepreneurs and enterprises, however, have many characteristics and needs that don't match traditional manufacturing or service businesses. Creative enterprises tend to stay smaller, rely more on social networks, be more portfolio-oriented than credential-based, and have less well-defined markets. Moreover, the business models in many creative segments — especially where creative enterprises are directly impacted by rapidly changing technologies, often in their design, modes of production, marketing and distribution — are currently in a stage of dramatic transition.

The growth and success of creative businesses depends upon support and advice from people and organizations that understand the uniqueness of their business models and circumstances. Unfortunately, beyond the workshops and seminars currently offered by the Kentucky Arts Council for working artists and artisans, business services directly targeted at these creative workers are in short supply. The Louisville Small Business Development Center does have one staff person with a background in the arts, which is the exception rather than the rule among most organizations that provide small business services. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension has three fine arts extension agents who serve their respective counties. But these resources can meet only a very small portion of creative industry small business needs across the state.

## OVERALL

### **Expand targeted business services and workshops for the creative entrepreneur.**

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The Kentucky Arts Council presents an ongoing series of workshops and webinars that help develop the technical and professional skills of artists and artisans throughout the Commonwealth. It also sponsors special events in collaboration with other organizations, such as the Citizens Institute for Rural Design, that help educate and train individuals, organizations and communities in skills and strategies relevant to the creative industry and creative placemaking. All of these events offer invaluable service to Kentucky creative entrepreneurs. Looking to the future, it will be useful for the arts council to explore how its presentations might be documented and archived for online access. It also will be advantageous for creative enterprises and possible partnership organizations with interests in expanding Kentucky enterprises to consider underwriting production and distribution of additional workshops and webinars.

### **Encourage entities that offer business training services and workforce development to explore training opportunities to support the creative industry.**

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One of the major strengths of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System is its ability to create targeted training programs to address Kentucky's workforce needs. Local elected officials, business leaders, chambers of commerce, and economic development directors, among others, should consider assessing the needs of their local creative industry sector to discover workforce needs. After uncovering existing needs and gaps in the local workforce, these entities could work with their area branch of the KCTCS to develop targeted training opportunities that will benefit local creative economies.

## **Educate and support artists and creative enterprises in the effective use of mobile apps, social media and the Internet.**

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Many artists are insufficiently knowledgeable about the potential of online and device-based communications for marketing, connecting and selling. A third of all survey respondents expressed a high need for this assistance and another quarter expressed a moderate need. Workshops and webinars with ongoing support for artists, musicians, writers, designers and others could open new sources of business.

## **Promote targeted opportunities for designers, artists and businesses to collaborate on innovative projects.**

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Collaborative activities that reach across the traditional and applied arts, and engage both established artists and performers and younger people in the more media-centered arts, may lead to better understanding and appreciation for the talents of each. Projects may be more fully developed when these entities consult with one another and utilize their strengths for a common goal.

## **Assist artists and creative entrepreneurs in marketing art through traditional and alternative means.**

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The Kentucky Arts Council might explore alternative ways to market art by utilizing its many resources and partnerships. Staff can facilitate learning opportunities for artists on new technology and methods, and increase support for using websites, blogs, e-commerce platforms and social media.

The Kentucky Arts Council can fortify its ongoing efforts to introduce continual learning opportunities for artists by convening stakeholder conversations among: 1) Artists, artisans and designers, especially architects and interior decorators; 2) Artists and retailers/wholesalers; and 3) Younger people and underserved populations in Kentucky.



The Carson Center in Paducah

## **Establish a Kentucky business advisory group on art and design.**

Design is a rapidly growing part of Kentucky's economy and has game-changing potential. Unfortunately, it now rests at the margins of the arts, technology and marketing — not completely embraced by any camp but playing a vital role for each. A business advisory group could support the integration and application of the arts and design within the Kentucky business community in ways that enhance businesses' working, marketing, innovation and creative environments. Many businesses located in Kentucky, including Alltech, Owensboro Healthcare, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Gray Construction and Tempur-Pedic, are using the arts and design very effectively. The goal of the advisory group would be to further develop the connections between the arts and business.



Tempur-Pedic Headquarters installation by Don Ament, Lexington

The group should include design, design education and major users of design, in its make-up. It would then be situated to confer with existing design firms to see whether they can better support design-based innovation, develop new design strategies, and create a statewide plan for a design network.

## **Increase access to makerspaces/ fabrication labs across the state.**

This is particularly valuable at community college and career centers. Such spaces can encourage art, design and technical students interested in production as well as stimulate design-based innovation and entrepreneurship. These facilities could also operate as shared incubator spaces for creative microenterprises and for new product development. It includes supporting the annual Maker Faires in the state and taking them beyond the Louisville area

## **Explore strategies that can help Kentucky's art venues attract and engage local audiences.**

The Kentucky Arts Council and/or another high-profile stakeholder in the management of events within the performing and visual arts segments could convene a stakeholder group of representatives from arts venues to network and explore topics relevant to sustaining their futures. This group can explore the effects of the continual development and implementation of new technology on business models, new strategies for audience development and other important issues.



Great American Brass Band Festival in Danville

## **Convene stakeholder groups among music scenes in various locations across the state to assess the needs of musicians and find better ways to promote Kentucky music.**

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The Kentucky Arts Council can convene stakeholder conversations to look more closely at music scenes in both rural and urban places where the demographics are favorable to encourage local music scenes that energize and thrive with the convergence of visual arts, local foods, higher education, and, where appropriate, outdoor recreation.

## **Explore ways to strengthen the pivotal role that a local music scene can play at coalescing and sustaining creative community and economic development.**

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The state's many festivals and fairs draw crowds locally, regionally and from surrounding states. Many, but not all, of these events incorporate Kentucky musicians, dancers, storytellers and other performers who add deeper cultural experiences to the event, reinforcing the impetus for a celebration of all things local. The Kentucky Arts Council can teach community members, organizations, festival presenters and others who are interested in incorporating local culture into events, how to do so through its Community Scholars Program and other resources utilized through the agency's Folk and Traditional Arts Program.

## **Target incentives and other forms of support to small, independent filmmakers, videographers and video game start-up firms.**

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Kentucky should review the incentives available for major film production in light of potential costs and benefits to the state and determine how they can be revised to spur greater levels of production in the state, higher rates of local employment, and a greater return-on-investment. Although the Kentucky Film Office's resources are focused on attracting major-market feature films, the greater opportunity may be on a different scale, one focused on smaller independent films, documentaries, animation and video production for advertising, marketing and local TV production. These smaller productions likely depend more on local talent and services. Rather than providing ever-more expensive subsidies to lure large productions, the state can revise tax incentives to focus on smaller-scale productions by actually reducing the minimum investments required of the production companies.

## CREATIVE CONVERGENCE

### **Integrate creative enterprises and talent into other sectors of Kentucky's economy.**

Creative enterprises and people can positively influence and impact many diverse sectors of Kentucky's economy. This convergence and confluence of creative industries and other industries, if understood and harnessed effectively, can generate powerful new forms of innovation and competitiveness and benefit all the sectors involved.

### **Foster creative industry projects within state government — beginning with the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet and Cabinet for Economic Development — that demonstrate the economic development benefits of art and design, especially in support of other related sectors.**

The Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet can take the lead with initiating and/or supporting at least one and possibly two projects for which art and design are a clear strategic advantage. An underlying goal for such a project would be to broker collaborative activity during the next 24 months that can achieve measurable outcomes.



Louisville Water Co. installation by Arturo Alonzo Sandoval of Lexington

### **Collaborate with the Kentucky Science and Technology Council's IdeaFestival to more actively integrate art and design with technical fields.**

The Kentucky Arts Council can partner with the Kentucky Science and Technology Council to stage at least one or two regional events annually that provide an open environment for artists, designers, scientists and other creative people from the industry, to exchange ideas and viewpoints that lead to innovation. The two organizations also might encourage local groups to hold community-led events that stimulate local networking and discussion.

## **Create business residencies for artists/designers in order to influence the environment and expedite corporate problem-solving.**

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Residencies would supplement artists' incomes and benefit the employers. This has proven successful across the U.S. at hospitals, financial institutions and manufacturing companies.

## **Connect artists and artisans to architects and builders and Kentucky handcrafted materials and products.**

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Architects and builders could do more to utilize artists and artisans who produce handcrafted architectural elements, such as doors, windows, railings, lighting and fences. By networking the building sectors with local talent, consumers will benefit from having more options to choose decorative elements that represent more authentic construction. The Kentucky Arts Council can approach professional associations and individual firms to organize a stakeholder conversation about how best to go about implementing this recommendation.

### **CREATIVE PLACEMAKING**

## **Accelerate creative placemaking in Kentucky.**

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Continue to provide support and encouragement for the Creative Commonwealth Network. The Creative Commonwealth Network, initially convened by the Kentucky Arts Council, is developing as a statewide independent association of creative placemaking initiatives across Kentucky. The group would like to help position Kentucky nationally as the first state to fully embrace such a collaborative model for creative placemaking.

The Kentucky Arts Council can continue to support and champion the ongoing work of this emergent grassroots network, connecting it, wherever possible, to resources and leadership across the state that can help the group develop and implement its ideas.

## **Bring together local and regional leaders in art and design-led downtown revitalization, historic preservation and tourism.**

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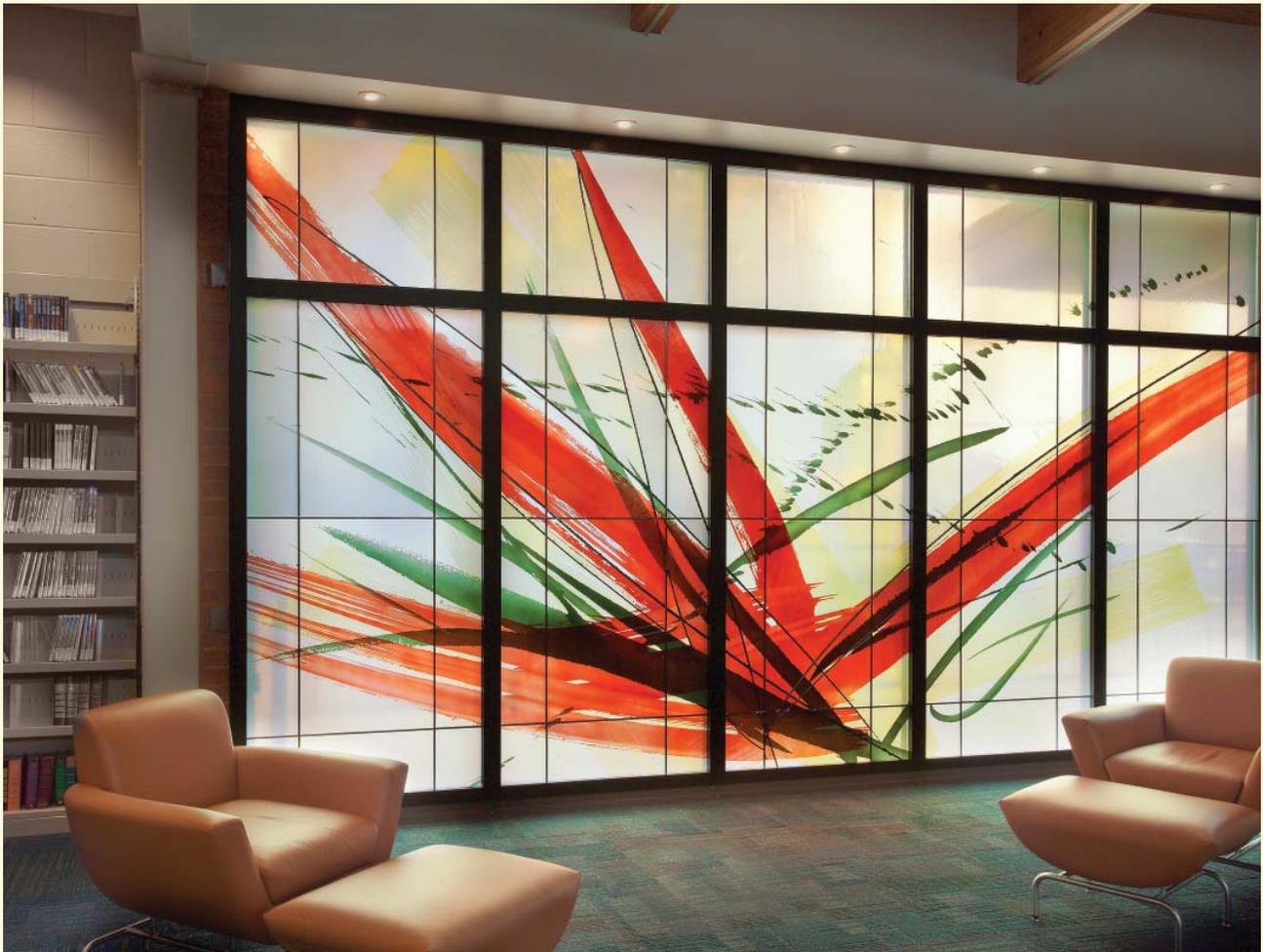
In rural and urban places all across Kentucky, community-led initiatives are embracing the arts and design to lead successful downtown and community revitalization initiatives. The Kentucky Arts Council can partner with the Kentucky Heritage Council, the Kentucky Main Street Program, the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, the Brushy Fork Institute and others to bring together regional leaders in community economic development and chart a set of strategies for supporting existing initiatives and documenting lessons learned that will be useful for other communities.

## **Redesign Kentucky Cultural District program and explore incentives.**

The Kentucky Arts Council has a process for certifying cultural districts but currently there are no financial or other incentives attached, as many other places have put in place. The results could be greater if there were grants, stipends, tax advantages or public sector investments that are made available through the designation to qualifying creative enterprises and places.

## **Investigate and promote community design projects that engage students and citizens.**

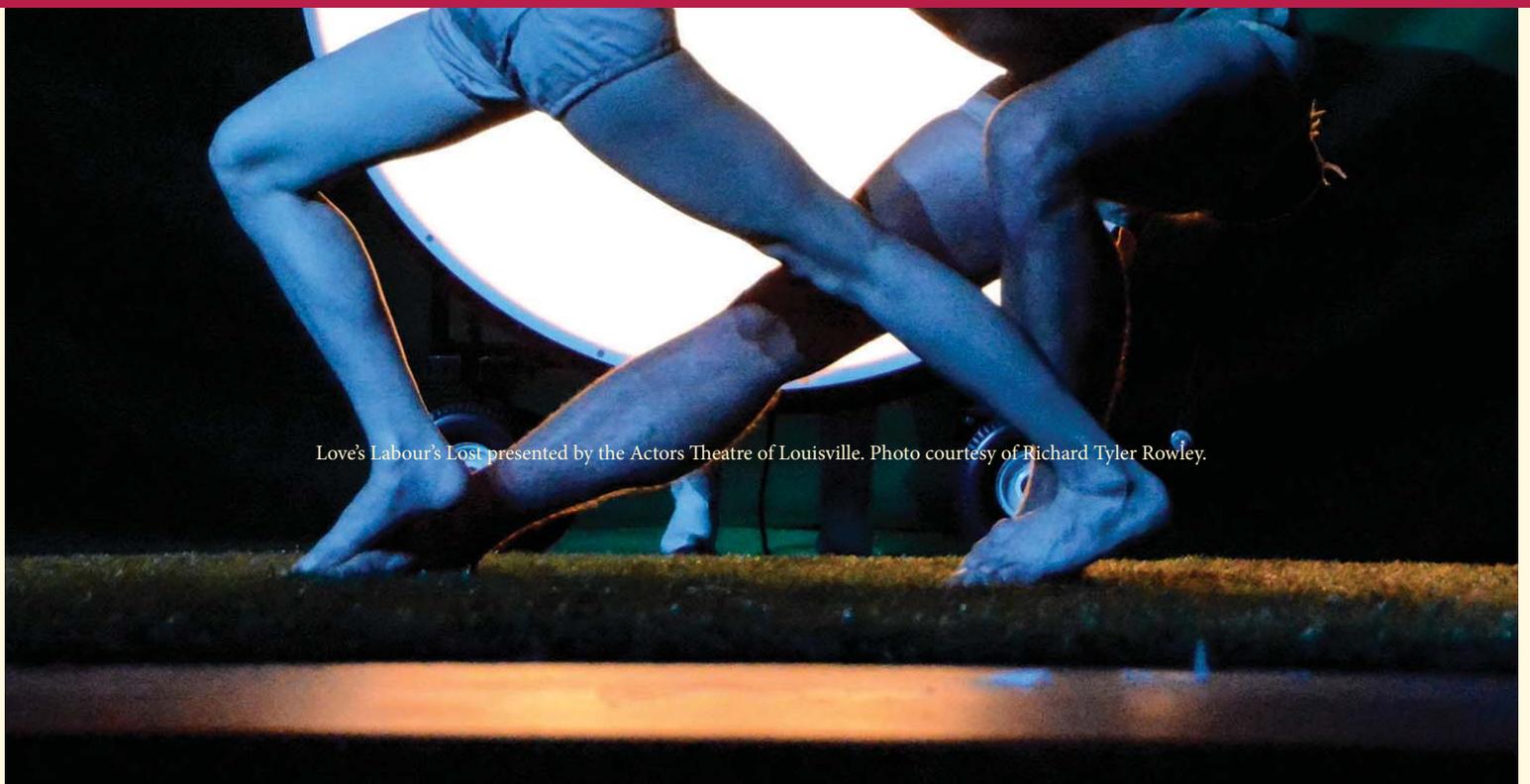
Many colleges and universities already require or strongly encourage students to take on design projects in communities. Some are already coordinated by state chapters of national design organizations. Such projects could be systemized and coordinated at the state level, some involving cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary teams to enhance both the creative and learning processes.



Anderson County Public Library commission by artist Guy Kemper of Versailles



# CASE STUDIES



*Love's Labour's Lost* presented by the Actors Theatre of Louisville. Photo courtesy of Richard Tyler Rowley.

# The Ultimate HomeGrown Industry: Berea Sees Art as Economic Development

For a town of just under 15,000 people, Berea, Kentucky, leaves a huge footprint when it comes to the creative economy. From a unique partnership with a local college, to hosting one of six cultural districts in the state, to a visitors center focused on the arts that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors, Berea is a community that embraces the notion that the arts are not just about aesthetics — they are a comprehensive strategy that can create a lasting economic impact.

## THE STATE'S ARTS BILLBOARD

You get your first taste of the arts in Berea as you drive down I-75. Just off exit 77 sits the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, not your average interstate rest stop.

“The center was constructed to be the state’s arts billboard,” says Victoria Faro, who directs the center. “We are able to introduce people to new art and to Kentucky.”

At the center, visitors can see samples of handcrafted wares created by artists from around the state. More than 250,000 annual visitors are able to not only view the pieces, which are chosen through a rigorous selection process, but also can attend demonstrations offered by artists every Saturday.

Although it serves the entire state, the center has a special relationship with Berea. Berea’s tourism commission has a booth set up at the center, and center staff often direct visitors to the town’s vibrant downtown to showcase the multitude of artists that live and work in Berea.

That Berea Tourism has a special spot at the center should not be a surprise given its strong support of the arts in town. Berea Tourism is financed in part through a special restaurant tax that allows it to spend a substantial amount of funds promoting the arts in town. Only smaller cities in Kentucky are currently eligible to levy such a tax on restaurants. Restaurants in Berea are subject to a 3 percent tax that, when coupled with a motel tax, generated more than \$1 million for the town’s tourism office in 2013.

One of the ways in which Berea Tourism is investing its money is through an innovative event called the Festival of Learnshops. The festival, which runs annually for 16 days each July, encourages visitors from throughout the country to spend time in Berea taking classes on skills such as dulcimer playing and making gourd birdhouses.

## “WE GOT STARTED BECAUSE OF BEREA.”

The Learnshop concept came out of a desire to increase overnight stays in Berea and to build upon the great strides that had been made in the community, in large part through the support of the Kentucky Arts Council. When the city wanted to



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

encourage more visitors to stop by artists' studios, the arts council provided grants to create signs that not only promoted where the studios were located, but also provided educational information about the artistic process. Thus, tourists could purchase beautiful craft while getting a better understanding of the skills necessary to produce these works of art. In 2009, the arts council recognized Berea as one of the first cultural districts in the state, giving even more attention to the community as a center of Kentucky arts.

But while the programs developed with the assistance of the state were undoubtedly successful, there was still a strong desire to make sure the visitor could spend more time, and ultimately more money, in town. To figure out ways to increase this type of overnight visitation, the town went on an exploration of similar artist communities throughout the region.

A group associated with Berea's Tourism Commission traveled to places such as Penland School of Crafts and Design and John C. Campbell Folk School in the North Carolina mountains to get some ideas of what the town could do to attract visitors. The answer, the group discovered, was to look internally.

"Every place we visited, people told us, 'We got started because of Berea,'" Belle Jackson, executive director of Berea Tourism, explained. "We realized that we don't have to be who they are. We are a living, breathing community with a history of celebrating art."

So the concept of the Learnshop was born — a way to encourage individuals and groups of individuals to travel to Berea for single-day or multiple-day classes on a variety of different forms of arts. For Mayor Steven Connelly, the Festival of Learnshops was a way to put Berea's own stamp on the traditional craft festival.

"We began to think, how do you reinvent the craft fair?" Connelly stated. "We saw the value of experiential tourism. Let's set a new paradigm for a festival where you come and spend a lot of time."



Photo courtesy of Berea College Crafts Program



Artist painting at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

In 2014, the festival featured nearly 150 Learnshops ranging from Acrylic Painting with a Squeegee to Writing Your Family Album. Attendees not only spend money on classes, but they also spend money on local hotels and restaurants. And, the structure of the festival encourages such participation. For instance, all classes break for lunch at the same time to encourage groups of individuals who may be taking different classes to meet at a local restaurant. Visitors, therefore, are spending money on food at restaurants and many more people are staying overnight at Berea's local hotels.

One of the reasons for the festival's success is the commitment organizers have made to the teachers and artists. A master teaching class for artists is offered to help instructors, most of whom are artists first and businesspeople a distant second or third, understand the intricacies of the business side of running a class. This includes how to price individual Learnshops and how to interact with students. Berea Tourism handles all advertising, collects all tuition from attendees, and currently returns all fees directly to the artists. And, critically, the town provides full liability insurance for the instructors.

Participation, according to Jackson, is a pretty good deal for the artists, most of whom are locally based in Berea. "You get 100 percent of the money and you are held harmless," said Jackson. "We also guarantee a certain minimum number of students to allow instructors to at least break even."

This idea of helping the artists is another important reason for the festival and, indeed, the town's support of the arts community in general — artists themselves are seen as economic drivers in the community. "One thing towns lament is the lack of entrepreneurs," says Mayor Connelly. "But in Berea our entrepreneurs are artists."

By emphasizing creative ways to allow the artists to generate money, either through activities such as offering classes like the Learnshops or through the selling their work, the town can help a critical industry in the community thrive and grow.

The Festival of Learnshops is just one component of the city's plan to enhance the arts industry in the community and thus increase its economic impact. As the city's tourism director, Jackson knows that creative solutions are essential. "We are not an Appalachian theme park," Jackson noted. "We can't raise the price of admission because we are a living breathing place where artists work."

## **TOWN, GOWN AND HOMEMADE BROOMS**

You might be forgiven for thinking a town with such an international reputation for the arts would be a bit larger than it actually is, but Berea is a town of just under 15,000 residents, and, in many ways, life there still centers on the college that gave the community its name. Berea College has a reputation for providing a world-class education to its students, the majority of whom come from Appalachia. And, one thing that makes the college stand out is its tuition-free philosophy, especially in this era of logarithmic increases in payments for college and corresponding growth in student debt. At Berea College, students pay no tuition; instead, their education is paid through work at the college, whether it is answering phones in the English department, working at the college-owned hotel, or creating works of art to be marketed through Berea's Student Crafts Program.

Berea College's Student Crafts Program markets and sells a wide variety of traditional Appalachian crafts nationally as well as internationally. Products range from traditional brooms to handcrafted furniture, all created by students who are given detailed instruction from experienced artisans employed by the college. Most of the students don't come to Berea as trained artists. In fact, Tim Glotzbach, who directs the Student Crafts Program at the college, estimates 98 percent of his student workers have limited or no experience in the arts.



Photo courtesy of Berea College Crafts Program

What Glotzbach and the college are trying to imbue in their students is the importance of work itself. Glotzbach believes, “The philosophy behind student labor is that each member of the community needs to give back to the community. We also want to provide experiential learning to the student. In fact, each student when they leave is given two transcripts, an academic transcript and a labor transcript.”

There is also recognition that the craft the students are producing is art rooted in place. The connection to Appalachian Kentucky is what makes the art popular with consumers and what creates a deeper bond “between town and gown.”

“There is no such thing as Appalachian art, but there is art from the Appalachian region,” Glotzbach explained. “We think that this art has three qualities: 1) excellence in design, 2) respect for materials, and 3) honor in work.”

Glotzbach and Berea College carry forth the commitment of the Student Crafts Program in interactions with the town. Said Glotzbach, “Arts have always been the connecting point between the college and the town.” So, when the call came to offer classes, or Learnshops, the college was eager to sign up. The result is a selection of Learnshops offered during the festival in the same facility where students themselves make craft.

### **THE ARTISTS OF TOMORROW**

While the vast majority of the Learnshops take place at locations outside the college grounds, those who developed the concept understand the symbiotic relationship between the town and the college. And, it helps that one of the leading forces of the Learnshops, current Berea Mayor Steven Connelly, is himself a graduate of the college.

The success of the collaborative approach in offering the Learnshops demonstrated the power of partnership between the city and the college. So, when the town looked to make the community a more attractive place for artists, particularly younger artists, to set up shop, it made sense to take advantage of the asset that Berea College represents.

In 2014, the city, in collaboration with locally based nonprofit Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED), introduced an innovative program, the Berea Fellowship in the Arts, to encourage young artists to begin their careers in Berea, an especially important goal given the aging profile of most of the artists who currently live and sell their work in town. Under the program, the city chooses, through a rigorous application process, two graduates of Berea College to support through both an annual stipend and dedicated studio space. Training and technical assistance, especially on business practices, will also be offered to the fellows. Berea Tourism funds the program.

Peter Hille, executive vice president of MACED, described the process of instituting the fellowship as a “perfect storm.” “The city was concerned about empty storefronts,” he said. “The college needed opportunities for their student graduates, and Berea Tourism had the budget to make this happen. All we had to do is put the hooks and loops to make the Velcro stick.”

One of the hooks is the location of the arts accelerator itself — the city-leased studio space where the fellows set up shop. The studio space is in Old Town Berea, a part of the community that has not fared well in recent years. The hope is that having young artists creating exciting work will bring tourists and other consumers to the area and create growth for that part of town.



Photo courtesy of Berea College Crafts Program



Photo courtesy of Berea College Crafts Program

# LESSONS LEARNED

**Build on your community's assets:** More so than perhaps any town in Kentucky, Berea's identity is rooted in the arts. From the location of the Kentucky Artisan Center off Interstate 75 to the established history of Berea College, the town of Berea is seen by Kentuckians and people across the U.S., and even internationally, as a center of the arts. In creating the Festival of Learnshops, town leaders focused on building upon that reputation to increase visitation to the community. Understanding what makes your community attractive to people from outside your region, including tourists, is key to launching any initiative on the creative economy.

But it is also something that has to be understood by community leaders. Leaders from the business community and from town government embrace the idea of the arts as a driver in their community's economic future. The mayor of the city, Steven Connelly, consistently talks about the arts as promoting entrepreneurship and as a way to complement more traditional notions of economic development such as recruiting large firms to move to town. The arts, thus, are not just seen as a driver of tourists, but as a key economic engine in town.

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**Develop collaborative partnerships:** The new arts fellowship program is an example of what can be created when different entities work in collaboration on a project. The initiative brings together local government, a strong postsecondary institution, and a leading nonprofit to create an innovative program that benefits all three institutions and, ultimately, could have a big impact on the town as a whole. It is not the first time that institutions have worked together towards promoting the common goal of creating economic impact in the community. The collaboration between the Kentucky Artisan Center and Berea Tourism is another example of close association between two entities. A booth at the center draws people, who may just be stopping for a bathroom break along the interstate, to perhaps spend more time down the road in Berea's many places of interest. Just as important though is collaboration with organizations outside of the city limits. The support of the Kentucky Arts Council has been critical in not only cementing Berea as a center of the arts through the cultural district program, but also providing funds to support other critical areas, such as signage, to make sure visitors have a full-fledged artistic experience when they visit.

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**Investment matters:** In many ways, the success of Berea demonstrates the power of treating the arts as you would any important industry in your community. In places with successful economic development programs, dollars are spent to recruit industries and to help provide the assistance needed to help homegrown businesses thrive. Berea treats the arts community in much the same way through significant investment. The tourism commission invests a great deal of its budget to make sure the arts community, a homegrown business if there ever was one, remains strong. The Festival of Learnshops, for instance, is successful because Berea Tourism covers the costs of advertising and insurance for the artists. Berea Tourism is also committing substantial dollars to fellowship programs. Without this dedicated investment, the community could not take full advantage of its stalwart reputation in the creative economy.

# The World's a Stage in Owensboro: RiverPark Center Helps Train the Artists and Technicians of Kentucky's Future

Putting on a Broadway quality show takes a staff of individuals with skills ranging from belting out a tune to rigging massive lighting structures. And the skills it takes to put on those shows are in demand in industries other than theater — from journalism to construction to manufacturing, if a student can manage putting on an elaborate stage production he or she is likely going to be in high demand when it comes time to enter the world of employment.

In Owensboro, Kentucky, an innovative program centered in a theater downtown is helping students from three colleges develop the skills they need to enter the world of theater while, just as importantly, using arts as a way to give them the skills they need to make them attractive in a 21st century economy. The program in many ways speaks to the city of Owensboro's philosophy that arts can be the foundation of becoming an economically vibrant community.

## THE CENTER OF IT ALL

RiverPark Center sits on the banks of the Ohio River in the center of Owensboro's rebounding downtown district. Opened in 1992, RiverPark Center boasts a 1,500-seat theater, designed by the architect responsible for Carnegie Hall's famed renovation. The theater is home to the city's community symphony and home to touring productions of the latest Broadway musicals.

RiverPark Center enjoys broad support from local government, receiving significant financial investment from the city and county, which recognize the key role that RiverPark can play in Owensboro's economic development.

"Local economic development professionals get it," says Roxi Witt, the director of RiverPark. "One of the reasons our arts program is so strong is because the city government is so supportive."



An evening at RiverPark Center

Local economic developers highlight the range of programs RiverPark offers as a way to attract new businesses to Owensboro. Executives from businesses considering relocating their firms are brought on tours of RiverPark to show them the world-class entertainment available in town.

RiverPark Center also receives substantial support from the state, including the Kentucky Arts Council, as well as federal funding through the National Endowment for the Arts.

A major reason for the investment is the understanding of the critical role RiverPark plays in town. One of the most unique elements of RiverPark Center is its ability to attract world-class theater to Owensboro. These touring theater



Photo courtesy of RiverPark Center

productions generate millions of dollars of economic impact for the town not only in ticket sales, but also in hotel stays, restaurant dollars, and other associated expenses paid by patrons of RiverPark Center as well as by the massive staff associated with putting on these productions.

From “Fiddler on the Roof” to “The Producers,” Owensboro is a stopping point on national tours of lavish theatrical productions. The support of the ticket-paying public who attend the shows is, of course, the main draw for productions to stop at RiverPark Center. But more than just a stop, RiverPark is actually where shows start their national tours. Creating the magic of the lights going on at just the right time and the curtain dropping not a moment too soon, takes practice. And more practice. And even more rehearsals ... and well, you get the idea. It takes a few weeks of preparation in a facility that has the equipment and personnel to make sure it goes off without a hitch. RiverPark Center is such a facility.

RiverPark Center works closely with a local theater union out of Evansville, Indiana, a short drive away, which can supply the manpower to perform high-tech tasks such as rigging and electronics. It also works with local laborers in the Owensboro area who provide additional support, such as the unloading and loading of trucks and assisting with costumes and makeup on an as-needed basis. The fact that the theater is serviced by both non-union and union workers is critical for another reason — it allows local students and teachers to get experience working on a production and while observing the dedication it takes to be involved in professional theater. Many times union restrictions do not allow non-affiliated workers, even students, to perform tasks that could be done by individuals affiliated with a labor organization.

## AN EYE-OPENING EDUCATION

RiverPark Center thus serves as the cornerstone of a collaborative approach to arts education in the community. Three institutions have developed a joint program that creates a pathway for a bachelor's degree in theater arts. Owensboro Technical College (OTC), part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, offers the technical courses such as stage electronics, while two private four-year institutions in Owensboro, Brescia University, and Kentucky Wesleyan, focus on elements of theater such as acting, writing and design. The structure of the program allows students to take classes at varying institutions and gain credit to obtain a bachelor of arts in theater using credit from multiple schools. Students with this degree can pursue careers in the arts or use the strong foundational skills to explore careers in a wide variety of technical and creative disciplines.

And, central to the collaborative arrangement is the presence of RiverPark Center. Nick Brake, now superintendent of Owensboro Public Schools (OPS), but previously head of the city's economic development office, points to RiverPark as critical to getting the program off the ground and as a way to capitalize on what he saw as a key component to the city's economic future.

“For a town our size, we have a larger than expected arts footprint, and we see the arts as a niche area we can use to distinguish ourselves,” Brake says. “We looked at the theater program at the three schools as a way to capitalize on the RiverPark Center's presence.”

Key, of course, was Roxi Witt and her staff's creation of a facility that could accommodate the touring companies. RiverPark Center features a backstage that accommodates two trucks to be unloaded at the same time. Given the massive amounts of equipment and the necessity for a quick turnaround between shows, speed of this technical aspect of the production is key.

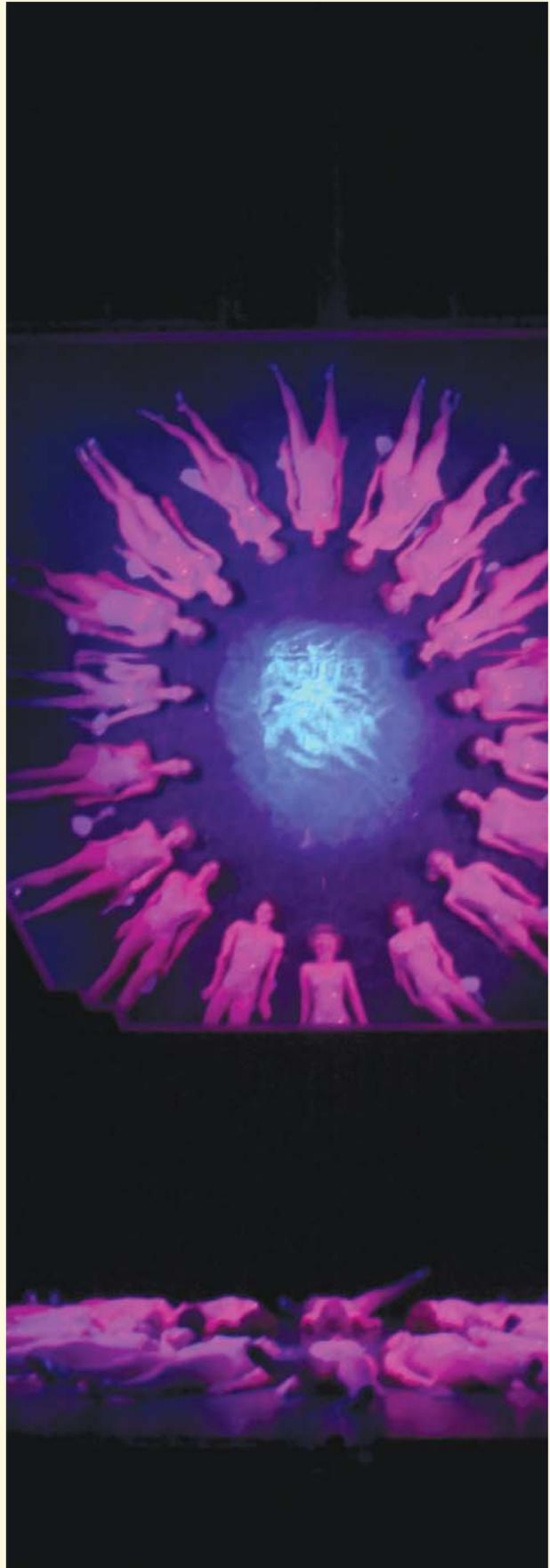


Photo courtesy of RiverPark Center

The ways in which the schools take advantage of RiverPark Center are multifold. OTC students take their stage electronics classes at RiverPark taking advantage of the high-tech equipment available in the facility. Interested students can work at RiverPark Center, helping in a range of production tasks from unloading trucks, to assisting with costumes.

Perhaps most importantly, students get to see what is involved in making a production take shape. “It’s one thing for a drama teacher to tell people that the process is the process; the opportunity for students to come and watch rehearsal for 30 minutes tells them more than they can get in years of classes,” explains Witt. “They see actors doing it the same way every time, with the same intensity and focus. It’s an eye-opening experience.”

Isaac Duncan, a former Brescia student, agrees with the revelatory nature of the experience, especially participating in the loading and unloading of the massive amounts of materials required to put on a show. “You don’t realize how much stuff is required,” he says. “You see it on stage, but it doesn’t hit home until you realize that it all has to be unloaded.”

Julia Ledford, who directs the theater program at OTC, is not surprised by the reaction of students like Duncan. “It’s fun to look at the expressions on their faces when they open the doors to unload the trucks,” she says. “It’s hard work but they get to see it in a different light.”

And while RiverPark Center provides a cornerstone, the four-year schools realize the key component to making the program work is the participation of the local community college. Simply put, the technical classes could not be offered through either Kentucky Wesleyan or Brescia. Belinda Thomson, who directs the drama program at Brescia, notes, “Without OTC, we can’t offer the tech programs to make this effort possible.”

OTC is just one of two colleges in the Kentucky Community and Technical College system that offer an associates of fine arts in theatre arts. The other is offered through Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Lexington.



Photo courtesy of RiverPark Center

For Brake, the former head of the city's economic development office, he finds the emphasis on technology a key part of the program. "There are so many jobs around tech," he says. "Everyone wants to be on stage, but there are abundant opportunities when you study tech, and these are very transferable skills."

### THE ART OF EDUCATION

Brake sees the collaborative program among the three institutions as just another way to stamp Owensboro as a community that values and appreciates the arts, and he is fully committed to the program in his role as superintendent of the local schools.



Photo courtesy of RiverPark Center

The school system offers a wide range of arts programs, meaning that more than 65 percent of all students at the middle school and high school levels are enrolled in some form of arts program. Whether it's the chorus, which is more than 200 strong, or taking dance from a former Rockette at Owensboro High School, students are fully engaged in the arts in the system. And, they have the backing of the system — all arts instructors are employed directly by the school system so that no principal or individual school can cut the arts on an ad hoc basis.

Visible evidence of this art emphasis can be seen in the form of awards — OPS consistently wins national awards for its theater productions, including being named one of four finalists for a Kennedy Center award honoring the school system's support for the arts. Another visible impact is in the form of attracting new students to the school system, an unusual phenomenon for a system like Owensboro that serves a low-income population — 76 percent of its students receive free or reduced lunch. About 350 students transfer annually to Owensboro schools from the county. Of course, the concentration on the arts is not without some controversy, especially in the high-stakes world of educational testing. Brake, however, putting on his old employer's hat, sees the emphasis on the arts as a strategy firmly rooted in economic development.

"Translating what we are teaching into jobs is difficult, but translating what they are doing into learning that can prepare for jobs is different," he says. "You are creating people that may not be art professionals, but may be attracted to other fields."

RiverPark Center provides a wide range of programs for the schools, including offering at least one Broadway production that students can attend at a reduced rate. And, when it comes time for the lavish school productions put on by OPS, Cannon Hall at RiverPark Center plays host. RiverPark Center estimates it offers educational programs to at least 200,000 people on an annual basis.

### YOUR NAME UP IN LIGHTS OR AT LEAST CREATING THE LIGHT SHOW

Of course, all this work involves much collaboration among all the players in the community — the public schools, the colleges and RiverPark Center. It is not without its challenges. Managing a collaborative with multiple colleges that have different institutional missions and even different semester start times is demanding. Furthermore, with OTC located outside of town, simple issues such as getting students from Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan to take classes can be challenging. As a result, the numbers of students taking full advantage of the bachelor of arts program has been somewhat disappointing to the instructors

and administrators responsible for the program. However, just because a student does not end up as an artist, doesn't mean the arts education he or she received through the program didn't have a profound impact on his or her career. Students who take technical classes at OTC end up pursuing careers or degrees in electronics, and students who take stagecraft classes at Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan can use their analytical skills to pursue careers in teaching and writing.

What comes through in looking at the Owensboro example is the sense that the community sees the arts, and most particularly the theater, as something that is truly unique about the community. It's not just that this relatively small city has high quality theater productions, or that this high-quality theater happens in a state-of-the-art building in a growing downtown, it is that the community sees the arts either directly or indirectly as a real way to prepare young people to enter the world of work. If that means becoming the next Broadway star then so be it. If it means designing lighting for Owensboro's convention center, that's fine as well.



Photo courtesy of RiverPark Center

# LESSONS LEARNED

## **Education is a way to rally the community to support the arts:**

RiverPark Center is undoubtedly a key to the arts being a large part of the Owensboro community. However, leaders recognized that a first step to getting the community to support RiverPark Center's efforts was to focus on youth programs. RiverPark offers classes to public schools and hosts frequent concerts put on through its award-winning public school system. The success of these programs and the commitment shown by RiverPark engage the public. The influence of the Kentucky Arts Council should also not be discounted — a requirement of grant recipients is to make sure educational outreach is part of their efforts.

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**Collaboration is important . . . and hard:** The bachelor of theater arts program brings together multiple institutions to create a program that meets the requirements of students with different needs and challenges. The only way the program can be successful is by each institution working in close collaboration with one another and understanding what each brings to the table. Challenges such as coordinating times of classes offered due to different class schedules need to be worked out through constant communication between program leaders. A reason for the bachelor of theater arts program's success is the collaborative nature of the relationship. Each institution understands the mutual benefit that it brings to the program and understands the role that the non-educational institution — in this case RiverPark Center — plays in the program's success. No one can go it alone.

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**A well-respected base institution is critical:** The arts programs profiled in this case study happen in large part due to the presence of RiverPark Center. Having an anchor institution through which programs can be developed to both support and take advantage is critical, particularly if there is one that has the respect of the community. RiverPark Center, through its support of local educational institutions, its hosting of national tours that generate significant economic impact, and its offering of a wide range of cultural activities, has the attention and respect of city residents and leaders. Local economic developers see RiverPark as promoting another key industry in town — one that commands their respect and attention. As programs are started and continued, being able to build upon that institutional capital is critical.

# How to Make an International Quilt: Paducah Becomes a UNESCO Creative City

In 2013, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Paducah as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art. With that designation, Paducah is just one of seven craft and folk art cities so named in the world. In total, the UNESCO creative city designation has only been awarded to 40 cities around the globe, with Iowa City, Iowa (literary arts), and Santa Fe, New Mexico (crafts and folk art), the only other cities in the U.S. to receive the recognition.

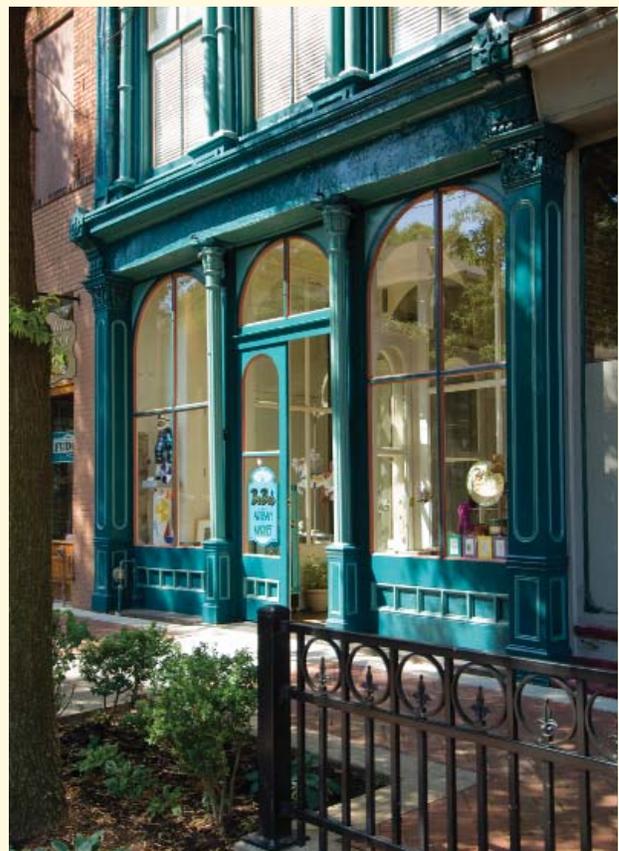
The story of Paducah's designation is the tale of how the 15th largest city in the Commonwealth recognized the importance of the arts to its economic development future. It is a culmination of years of work — some more successful than others — to take this old river town and make it a center of creativity the entire world can look to for inspiration.

## THE ARTS COME ALIVE IN LOWERTOWN

Certainly, the arts have been on the mind of Paducah leaders for a while. And, for several years, the community received a great deal of recognition for an innovative program that encouraged artists to relocate there. The Artist Relocation Program offered artists the chance to purchase abandoned homes or parcels of land for greatly reduced cost in the once thriving LowerTown neighborhood of the city. The program, started in 2000, was aimed at encouraging artists from across the country to make the city their base of operations, with the idea that not only could a neighborhood be rebuilt with committed citizens, but also that these artists would set up shops and spur visitors to make Paducah a destination.

The program has been successful in that it has revitalized LowerTown. Where once stood crumbling buildings stands a vibrant neighborhood that abuts the growing downtown interest. Much of it is due to the artists who have set up shop — and, of course, the associated city and private investment in the community. The city investment topped more than \$9 million to revitalize LowerTown, including investments in streetscapes and making the neighborhood more walkable and accessible.

The relocation program has been seen as a success in creating new live and work spaces for artists from around the country who moved to the community. Hopes that this new studio space would create a vibrant local market for the artists have not necessarily materialized yet. Part of this is due to the fact that Paducah is a relatively small community — the market for artists locally is, by definition, not particularly large. But many of the artists who do set up shop in LowerTown are nationally known, showing their products around the country, helping to get the name of Paducah out nationally.



Downtown Paducah



Photo courtesy of the Paducah School of Art and Design

## BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH EDUCATION

LowerTown is also home to an innovative educational program, the Paducah School of Art and Design (PSAD), which works to sustain the arts presence in Paducah. Indeed, sustainability is a critical part of what allowed Paducah to obtain the UNESCO designation. The application to become a creative city required demonstration that Paducah could continue to support the arts community, and the city designation is one that has to be renewed on a regular basis, meaning evidence of support will be continually evaluated. PSAD's programs to educate the city's artists — both young and old — demonstrates that continual commitment.

PSAD is part of Western Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC). The school offers arts degrees to students enrolled full-time at the college and also provides continuing education classes to community members. In addition, the school offers master classes with artists during the summer, bringing nationally recognized artists to Paducah to offer short intensive workshops to community members and visitors.

The school was the first in the Kentucky Community and Technical College system to offer an associate's degree in fine arts. The program is designed primarily as a transfer program, with most degree recipients moving on to four-year institutions in Kentucky. The school is growing rapidly, starting with 130 students in 2008 and now serving 430, in both curriculum and the continuing education process.

Paul Aho, who directs the program, believes the college is part of the key to Paducah moving beyond the Artist Relocation Program to creating a more lasting approach to creative expression. "Thanks in large part to the artist relocation program, LowerTown is what it once was," he said. "Artists, however, didn't realize the foot traffic they had hoped. So what the art school does is add sustainability to this effort."

That sustainability will take the form of a permanent building to be located in LowerTown, which should cement the district as an arts location for the community and beyond, and demonstrate to UNESCO the city's continued commitment to the arts. The application to receive the designation included plans for the expansion of PSAD, with the new building a critical part of that growth.

## FROM ASWAN TO FABRIANO TO PADUCAH

The UNESCO designation didn't come easy. Hours of volunteer time plus the active participation of the Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) were put into submitting an application. The CVB, led by its marketing director at the time, coordinated the process but sought the active participation of both public and private partners, including the office of the mayor and local artists — anyone who could help tell the story of why Paducah was a world-class creative city. The CVB invested its own dollars into the effort, in terms of staff time, to prepare the application as well as to send representatives to the international conferences sponsored by UNESCO.

The application contained detailed documentation of the arts contributions to Paducah, including the history of the community's work and its commitment to sustainability going forward. The application also included letters of support from entities such as the Kentucky Arts Council, Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, and U.S. State Department, as well as from two communities in the U.S. that had also received the designation. And, while the content is probably what won over the staff at UNESCO, Paducah put its own creative touches on the application, wrapping it in paper handcrafted by artists from the community.

Once the application was submitted, there was a series of negotiations between the community and UNESCO. When the announcement came that the city had received the designation, there was a palpable feeling of joy and a sense of new possibilities. "This opens doors," said Mary Hammond, who directs the Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Among the open doors is traveling to international conferences where Paducah can promote its art establishments and learn from other cities. Participation has already borne fruit with the city hosting international musicians from Bologna, Italy, and a Paducah band being invited to perform in Dublin, Ireland.



Market House Theatre in Paducah



Photo courtesy of the Paducah School of Art and Design

And there is also the thrill in knowing that Paducah is internationally recognized through a rigorous application process by perhaps the premier international agency working in the arts. The roster of other cities with the art and craft designation demonstrates in what esteemed company Paducah finds itself. There is the city of Aswan, Egypt, noted for its Nubian art, and the city of Fabriano, Italy, where centuries of papermaking were recognized by UNESCO.

Other communities are already curious how a town like Paducah can join such illustrious company. “We went to a Chinese city of 12 million and people asked us, ‘How did you do this?’” Hammond said. “I told them showing up is half of it. And it helped that we had depth, we had authenticity, and we had all our ducks in a row.”

## MAKING PADUCAH A DESTINATION

Authenticity certainly comes from the city’s reputation as a cultural destination in Kentucky. Paducah is one of six cultural districts as certified by the Kentucky Arts Council. The arts council, in making the designation, pointed to the abundance of arts organizations, including world class museums, found in the community.

Perhaps what Paducah is known most prominently for is its strong association with the fiber arts, something the Kentucky Arts Council, as well as UNESCO, has recognized. Paducah is home to the American Quilters Society (AQS), the leading trade organization for fiber arts in the nation. AQS puts on quilt shows across the country including QuiltWeek, held annually in April in Paducah. The event is now promoted with advertisements that tout Paducah as one of seven UNESCO Crafts and Folk Art Creative Cities worldwide.

Paducah’s fiber arts presence is dramatically shown through the National Quilt Museum. The museum attracts thousands of visitors annually, generating millions in tourism that has impact beyond the museum’s walls. Despite the museum’s success, Frank Bennett, the director, is hopeful that the UNESCO designation can offer even more.

“The UNESCO designation gives us a new podium,” he said. “People who have never paid attention to us are paying attention. UNESCO gets people interested into considering Paducah a legitimate weekend destination, not just to see us as a random museum in the middle of nowhere.”



National Quilt Museum in Paducah

# LESSONS LEARNED

**Build on the energy created by past efforts:** The LowerTown Artist Relocation Program has created a great deal of attention for Paducah, including featured profiles in national media outlets. While the goal of creating a massive amount of foot traffic in LowerTown for artists has not yet been realized, what is undoubtedly true is the once prosperous neighborhood that had fallen on hard times is now seeing revitalization. It is a revitalization that happened, in large part, due to the support of local government which progressively saw the ways an investment in the arts could lead to greater growth in the community. And it wasn't just LowerTown. The thousands of visitors who descend on Paducah for QuiltWeek, and the regular stream of visitors who head to attractions such as the National Quilt Museum, show how the arts can effectively lead to economic impact. So when individuals suggested applying for the UNESCO designation, they could draw upon a real example of the arts in their community. Demonstrating success in your own community is always a good selling point when trying to attain support from those who may be unaccustomed to understanding the influence and impact of the creative economy.

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**The arts can drive tourism:** Paducah is using the UNESCO designation as a way to increase the number of visitors it gets on an annual basis by promoting the city as an arts destination. The director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes the city as an alternative location for conventions that might choose culture-driven cities like Branson, Missouri, and Asheville, North Carolina. The presence of the National Quilt Museum draws thousands of visitors annually to the community as does the QuiltWeek show, demonstrating the importance of cultural attractions in increasing tourism activity. The designation of Paducah as a cultural district by the Kentucky Arts Council further attracts visitors. While Paducah is a beautiful city that enjoys many natural amenities, it is one that has hitched its tourism brand in large part to the arts, and with substantial economic success. According to the Kentucky Department of Tourism, McCracken County, where Paducah is located, generated nearly \$204 million in direct tourism expenditures in 2013. That figure is the sixth highest in the state, despite the county being only the 12th largest in terms of population.

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**Individual actors matter:** The UNESCO designation was championed by a few key people who were determined to make it happen. In particular, individuals in the Convention and Visitors Bureau believed that getting the designation would drive tourism in the community. Without the commitment of these individuals, it is likely the effort would have been abandoned when the application became tied up in matters far beyond Paducah's control. As in any effort, the passion of a few committed people is key to making sure energy is sustained and ambitious goals are met. But, just as importantly, these individuals knew that they couldn't go it alone. They coordinated others within the community to help share the Paducah story with the world and got the support of organizations and people from outside the city who could attest to the special qualities Paducah possesses.

# IDEAS 40203: A Contemporary Art Chamber of Commerce in Louisville

On a Friday evening in Old Louisville, inside a small commercial building tucked away on shady, tree-lined Fourth Avenue, neighborhood residents, artists, entrepreneurs, local business owners, and even Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, are engaged in rapid-fire conversations about the intersecting roles of art, commerce and social entrepreneurship.

Such gatherings are becoming almost commonplace in Old Louisville, thanks in great measure to IDEAS 40203, the nation's first contemporary art chamber of commerce. Founded in 2012, the organization has launched a diverse portfolio of projects that are changing the ways artists, entrepreneurs, corporations, and community-based nonprofits collaborate for mutual benefit.

IDEAS has organized, for example, a monthly gathering for artists and entrepreneurs to pitch new project ideas to their peers and potential funders; offered small business workshops to aspiring professional artists; organized a series of poetry, music and dance performances that explored the creativity of local young people as an alternative to violence; and raised funds to send two local students to France to study creative approaches to urban gardening that can address unemployment, food deserts and underutilized vacant lots.

In summer 2014, two national funders took notice of all that IDEAS and its partners have been accomplishing and made substantial grant awards that are supporting two major new initiatives:



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

- The first grant, \$250,000 from ArtPlace America, is establishing a Creativity Innovation Zone in the economically distressed Smoketown neighborhood. Four artists and other innovators will work closely with the community to develop and implement projects around education, public design and entrepreneurship.

- The second, \$50,000 from the NEA's Our Town grants program, is placing select artists with specialized skills within seven different firms, each representing one of Louisville's seven key industry sectors. The artists will work as integral parts of research and development innovation teams and in other key roles with their respective companies.

The placement of skilled professional artists within the neighborhood initiative and corporate residencies has caught the interest of many artists and entrepreneurs in the Louisville community who are eager to see what can be learned from these bold experiments.

## WHAT IS A CONTEMPORARY ART CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

IDEAS began as a collaborative art exhibition between the Old Louisville Chamber of Commerce and Residency Unlimited, a Brooklyn-based nonprofit that works with strategic partners in many locations to arrange customized residencies for artists. That initial project soon led to the establishment of a wholly new type of organization — a contemporary art chamber of commerce.

A chamber of commerce, typically speaking, is a professional association that advocates for its members' interests. As a contemporary art chamber of commerce, IDEAS' main member groups are professional artists, entrepreneurs and nonprofits engaged in social entrepreneurship.

At the heart of the organization's overall approach lies a dramatic rethinking of the ways that Louisville's business community and low-income inner-city neighborhoods frame and integrate into their work the roles of artists and the creative arts. "We help creators to lead and leaders to create," explains Theo Edmonds, an artist and lawyer who is co-founder and executive director of IDEAS.

As such, IDEAS has organized its core programming around four key areas:

- Mutual improvement networking, in the same spirit as Benjamin Franklin's Junto Club.
- An advocacy focus around promoting the role of artists as skilled professionals and change agents. IDEAS educates artists on how to become more than cultural producers, expanding their contributions to sustainable innovation economies and policymaking, with an emphasis on social and environmental justice that involves public spaces, food and culture.
- Corporate engagements, matching selected artists with specific skills who can act as agents of change within specific firms representing Louisville's leading industry sectors.
- Community engagement, demonstrating various ways artists can be valuable in developing new systems for holistic community revitalization, especially focusing on workforce development as the primary driver of economic growth and sustainability.

Across all of these areas, IDEAS is painstakingly developing key measures that will define project goals at the outset and then carefully document and assess progress over time. "Once we can measure and show that artists' involvement have produced these results in a quantifiable way," Edmonds explains, "then we will have done something that nobody else in the country has done. That's economic development!"

## EARLY WORK

Early on, IDEAS began to reach out across its own inner-city neighborhood and beyond to artists, activists, entrepreneurs, local residents and to public officials. It began to formulate and present a mix of programs that could bring diverse groups together to discover ways to collaborate to each one's own, and their mutual, benefit.

"We started going to all the business meet-ups," Edmonds recalls. "We started creating partnerships. As an entré, we started doing art shows in those business accelerators. We were trying to figure out how we could use that entrepreneurial model, because it works well. It does what it's called — that is, it accelerates stuff. So, how could we use that model, and then look at the work that we are doing in community development — safety, especially — and see if we can't plug that in there."



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

Mix and Pivot, one of the programs inspired through this research, has become a popular monthly gathering. It brings together two artists and two entrepreneurs to pitch their new project ideas to a blended audience of their peers and prospective funders. The event, which rotates among various locations, provides an opportunity for each group to socialize with and learn from the other.

At one of those events, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, whom Edmonds describes as “a natural entrepreneur,” asked Edmonds and Josh Miller, co-founder of IDEAS, if they would be willing to collaborate with the city and a local poet, Lance G. Newman, to help pre-empt a possible cycle of violence that had sparked in the downtown area.

The initiative that grew out of that conversation, called Spreadlovelou, ultimately drew in other community partners and resulted in four days in mid-May 2014 of community art performances, including poetry, music and dance. They took place in locations as diverse as the steps of Metro Hall, the Arts and Cultural Center in the West Shawnee neighborhood, and The Nucleus Building, which opened in 2013 on the University of Louisville campus as a high-tech innovation hub for the city.

The overarching goal has been to provide teens with alternatives to violence for self-expression. “This is a start,” says Anthony Smith, director of Louisville’s Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods program, in an interview with WFPL, a public radio station. “I think we’ve got something to build on.”

In Summer 2014, IDEAS partnered with YouthBuild Louisville, an education, job training and leadership program, to send two local young people to apprentice in the King’s Kitchen Garden at Versailles. They studied, kept a blog about their trip, and began to think pragmatically about new projects of their own to launch upon their return to Smoketown.

“It starts with equal opportunities,” Edmonds says. “Depending upon your personal interests, your skill sets and your willingness to work for what you want. And with safe neighborhoods. So without safety and fairness and education being addressed first, true long-term economic development cannot even start.



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

“That’s one reason,” he continues, “why IDEAS focuses heavily on arts-related programming in its role as a contemporary arts chamber of commerce. When we send two young people to the Garden of Versailles, that’s economic development, because we’re using education, we’re using art, we’re using landscape architecture to provide opportunities for two young leaders who have proven by their actions that they are willing to work for it. This is not a marketing project. Those kids are coming back to create a project of their own. And we’re going to support them.”

## CREATIVE INNOVATION ZONE

Smoketown was Louisville’s first established African-American neighborhood. In fact, it has a long history of thriving business and industry. Today, however, its zip code is the 13th poorest in the United States.

In 2011, the Louisville Metro Housing Authority received a federal HOPE VI grant to demolish the Sheppard Square housing project in the Smoketown neighborhood and replace it with mixed-income residential development, funded by a federal grant. By 2015, more than 200 former Sheppard Square families are likely to return to the neighborhood; about half of them will be under the age of 25.

The ArtPlace America grant provides IDEAS and its community partners, especially YouthBuild, with the seed investment needed to develop a Creative Innovation Zone (CIZ) in the Smoketown neighborhood. The project launched in early October 2014.

The IDEAS partnership with YouthBuild emphasizes workforce development as the primary driver of economic growth and sustainability. It will include two artist residency projects, each with four artist-innovators. These teams will work with local residents to develop and implement projects around education, public design and entrepreneurship.

“Based on our research, we knew the community had identified certain needs that were in a plan,” Edmonds says. “So how do we take this educational model so there can be digital literacy outside the school system that leads into digital storytelling and game development? How do we design public gathering spaces that actually encourage science? Can artists, because of their very involvement, create new businesses and jobs?”

The collaborative project has set forth three strategic sustainable growth initiatives:

- Create new pathways to opportunity for young people by helping YouthBuild Louisville to expand its capacity to serve students.
- Develop a new, small prototype play park that integrates social justice concerns with culturally aware environmental design, and advanced manufacturing and economic sustainability.
- Design new approaches to creative entrepreneurship that increase literacy levels across several disciplines. This may serve as a precursor program to apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing.

Lynn Rippy, executive director of YouthBuild Louisville, underscores the relevancy of this approach: “At its core, YouthBuild is a youth-driven community development and rebuilding model. Through the ArtPlace America collaboration, young people are joining the artistic, economic and physical rebirth of one of Louisville’s most historically significant African-American communities.”

## THE ACCELERATOR

The NEA Our Town grant provides seed funds for IDEAS to create an artist-in-corporate residence program in Louisville.

Over a 12-month period beginning in fall 2014, the organization will function as a virtual consulting firm that develops selected artists who have just the right mix of skills to engage deeply with large businesses representing Louisville’s seven major industry sectors — advanced manufacturing, finance, food/beverage, healthcare, logistics and technology.

Each corporation will work closely with IDEAS to negotiate very specific engagement projects with narrowly defined measurable deliverables prior to artist identification and selection. The goal of these residencies is to create measurable business outcomes that demonstrate the artist’s potential value to the corporate sector in new ways.

Residency Unlimited will conduct the national call for artists based upon criteria identified by IDEAS and participating corporations. Artist-innovators will come to Louisville for six-week residencies. The initiative will culminate with a one-day symposium in fall 2015, reflecting upon best practices, measurable outcomes and lessons learned.

The first artist-in-corporate-residence will work with XLerateHealth, a Louisville-based healthcare industry business accelerator, and their affiliate corporation Thrive365 — a proprietary mobile health platform addressing a worldwide market of 385 million individuals living with diabetes. For



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

each artist residency in Louisville, GE FirstBuild, a design division of General Electric, will provide materials, equipment, technological supervision and “maker space” for production of any artwork that may be generated in tandem with the corporate operational and business outcomes of each artist residency.

“It may be difficult at first to explain how artists can contribute to the design and innovation process,” says Amelia Gandara, a former professional ballerina and chemical engineer who works at FirstBuild. “Mostly because, when you say the word ‘artist,’ most people think only of two-dimensional painting. That’s the type of artist that comes to their mind, not realizing there are actually all these different types of artists — such as conceptual artists who might use a whiteboard and a marker to convey a message.”

“There’s so many different ways to be an artist,” says Gandara, who also is a board member at IDEAS. “You can have someone who programs a website that itself is a piece of art, and you have to interact with it. There are people who are coming up with art that you have to download an app to interact with it. So there are all of these different things. People are taking more of a ‘maker mindset’ when they come to creative art now.”

## LOOKING FORWARD

As all of its projects move forward, IDEAS will continue to pursue an emergent path of partnership, collaboration and experimentation. Edmonds and Miller look forward to measuring and assessing the outcomes of the organization’s multifaceted initiatives, to confirm early promise with hard data. They also expect that everyone will get better at telling the story, especially in ways that make it easier for new participants in their membership-driven organization to understand the fundamental approach and apply it to new projects.

“The thing I find really refreshing and really exciting, is that not everything is going to work,” Chris Radtke, an artist who chairs the Mayor’s Commission on Public Art in Louisville, says. “My sense is that a few things are going to work. They are going to work and they can be replicated. They are going to start small and work well. Instead of everything just being about the commerce of art, you are going to have artists directly engaged in commerce itself. Put them right into metro government. Put them right into these seven industrial sectors. Put them right into these neighborhood groups. Not just to make art or do art things, but as creative thinkers and doers who help us get to jobs, to safer neighborhoods, to something sustainable.”



Photo courtesy of IDEAS 40203

# LESSONS LEARNED

## **Bring artists and entrepreneurs together to inspire and learn from one another:**

The skills and talents of artists are rarely fully utilized. Artists are creative problem-solvers who think outside the box and can help find solutions even to seemingly intractable challenges — whether working on a product or service development team for a major corporation, or addressing a community workforce development issue. The initial challenge is to create innovative opportunities for artists and entrepreneurs to work together in new ways. IDEAS began by staging art exhibitions at local business accelerators, which simply provided a way for artists and entrepreneurs to meet one another socially; moved quickly to staging Mix and Pivot events where artists and entrepreneurs are each pitching new ideas; and currently is exploring a project proposal that will place artists on industry development teams.

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## **Be mindful that changing the nature of the conversation about the contributions artists can make to community and economic development likely takes time:**

Initial overtures by IDEAS to partner with the Metro Louisville government on federal grant proposals, for example, were listened to with interest but ultimately turned down. Even so, these early conversations merely incentivized the leadership of IDEAS and their community partners to rethink and refine the way they talked about these evolving new roles for artists — making the argument clearer and clearer, and ultimately even just the repetition of these ideas in convivial settings helped open doors to a deeper conversation and working partnerships.

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## **Over time, the patience and persistence required to develop and build trusted working partnerships can genuinely pay off:**

Initial engagement with the Metro Louisville city government began in 2012 when IDEAS approached Ted Smith, the city's new chief of economic growth and innovation, with some ideas for a National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant proposal. That particular idea did not come to fulfillment, but the ongoing discussion did engage the city with the work that IDEAS was developing. IDEAS and the city collaborated on other small projects before later successfully collaborating on the larger grant awards that came to fruition in 2014. The point is, just keep exploring possibilities. Even if you don't succeed with an initial grant proposal, don't lose the partnership, energy and momentum that you developed through the application process.

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## **Measure project outcomes and weave those documented results into a compelling story:**

A high priority for IDEAS is to find ways to measure effectively and share the documented impact of its innovative partnerships with the public and private sectors. Solid data will lend greater credence to the emerging community and corporate narratives about how authentic collaboration with artists has yielded breakthrough innovations and sustainable outcomes.





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