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Artspace receives major support for innovative "creative placemaking" projects

ArtPlace, a new public-private entity, awards $1 million to project in East Harlem, $300,000 to project in Honolulu

Minneapolis (Sept. 16, 2011) – Minneapolis-based Artspace Projects has received a pair of major grants from ArtPlace, a new national funder established by 11 foundations, to support new creative placemaking projects in New York and Honolulu.

The grants, two of 34 awarded by ArtPlace in its first round of funding, will provide $1 million in capital support for El Barrio's Artspace (PS109), an Artspace project in the East Harlem district of New York City, and $300,000 to support planning for an Artspace project now in predevelopment in Honolulu.

ArtPlace is an initiative of 11 leading foundations working in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts and seven federal agencies. Its aim is to drive revitalization across the country by putting the arts at the center of economic development.

"Over the last 30 years, Artspace has championed the once radical idea that artists living on the edge of poverty and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage transformative social change," said Artspace President Kelley Lindquist. "Our work has repeatedly shown how targeted arts investments can advance a multitude of community goals – including affordable housing, job creation, safer streets, transit oriented development, and historic preservation."

The foundations that joined forces to create ArtPlace are the Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, The Robina Foundation, and an anonymous donor. In addition to the NEA, federal partners are the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education and Transportation, along with leadership from the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council.

Federal partners do not provide funding to ArtPlace but participate in the ArtPlace Presidents' Council and Operating Committee meetings, ensuring alignment between high-priority federal investments and policy development and ArtPlace grants.

The PS109 project will transform the former Public School 109 in East Harlem, into a mixed-use facility containing 90 units of affordable housing for artists and their families and 10,000 square feet of community space for arts and cultural organizations. The project, a partnership between Artspace and El Barrio's Operation Fightback, a nonprofit community development organization based in East Harlem, is expected to go into construction in December.

The Honolulu project will create a multi-purpose cultural facility that helps sustain and nurture native Hawaiian artists and arts organizations, provides affordable artist housing, and helps connect Honolulu-based artists and arts organizations with peers and constituents across the state of Hawai'i. It will be developed by Artspace in partnership with the PA'I Foundation, whose mission is to preserve and perpetuate Hawaiian cultural tradition for future generations.

"ArtPlace is accelerating creative placemaking, where cities and towns are using the arts and other creative assets to shape their social, physical and economic futures," said Rocco Landesman, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts. "This approach brings new partners to the table to support the arts and recognizes the arts as vital drivers of community revitalization and development."

"Economic development historically has been about bagging the buffalo—competing for the big employer to move operations to your city," said Carol Coletta, President of ArtPlace. "But now we know the economic development game is all about how you deploy local assets to develop, attract and keep talent. So why would you not deploy every asset you have—including artists and the arts—to do that? That's what ArtPlace is all about."

"ArtPlace represents a new paradigm," says Luis A. Ubiñas, President of The Ford Foundation and Chairman of the ArtPlace Presidents' Council. "It brings to the arts the kind of economic development thinking that has long been pursued for attracting and developing businesses, big and small, across the country. ArtPlace's integrated, interwoven approach has the potential to kick-start local economies and transform communities. The arts can play a central role spurring local economic activity."

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Over the last 30 years, Minneapolis-based **Artspace** (artspace.org) has brought our hard-earned expertise to more than 200 cultural facility planning efforts that have resulted in the creation of more than 50 affordable arts facilities from coast-to-coast. Of these projects, 30 have been developed and are owned and operated by Artspace itself, representing a unique, nearly half-billion dollar investment in America's arts infrastructure. By engaging artists and arts organizations, our projects transforming communities – creating jobs and density, enhancing safety, and making more livable communities.

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