CDN Creative Placemaking Convocation

Workshop - McCormack and Hood

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English Transcript

[ MUSIC PLAYING ]

>> LAUREN: I assume that means it is time.

>> LYNNE: How are you doing today? I see some friends. Nice to see you. I am Lynne McCormack. I am the director of LISC, Creative Placemaking program. I will talk about LISC in a few minutes. I am here with Lauren Hood who will be our co‑presenter today and we are happy to see you here at this time of day, at this time of the week, thank you for showing up and being here. If the group stays small, we will keep it small and then we will join in with you instead of doing break outs. If it gets bigger, we will break you into groups and have you do break out work without us.

Hello. I am an AfroUrbanist planner and facilitator working in community development.

I want to recognize tom. Thank you for bringing us together.

I will call on you. Karen, would you start.

>> SPEAKER: There are four of us on staff, that means a lot. There is a lot there. I am excited about this. I will pock talk more about what I do as we do our later conversations.

>> LYNNE: Shannon?

>> SPEAKER: I am Shannon. I am with the Tennessee arts commission and the director of community arts development.

>> SPEAKER: I am a research associate with NASAA, I am going to be a fly on the wall.

>> LYNNE: I am going to do an overview of LISC. I want to give you a sense of what LISC is and talk about the program and then I will go into basic stuff that you know.

We just ‑‑ Tom brought us together and we became friends in this work and we are excited to be here with you today I worked in city government for 18 years, I am a fellow government ‑‑ I am a ‑‑ I am a graduate of government. Lauren, do you want to say a little bit more about what your work is in Detroit and where you worked? You are muted.

>> LAUREN: Okay. Yeah. I have a consultant practice where I facilitate conversations on racial equity and the past five years been able to translate that into community development work but professionally, I worked at ‑‑ economic development for municipalities. I am the director of programs in a nonprofit and I ran a community development corporation in the neighborhood I grew up in. I have a full range of experience with regards to community development work.

>> LYNNE: LISC partners with residents and organizations on the ground with the goal of forging resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America. This looks open ended but we are talking about working in the most disinvested places in the country. So we work to strengthen existing alliances with new collaborations to get people and places moved along a spectrum of economic stability. We develop leadership and capacity. We do capacity building work. We try to bring in resources to equip underserved communities with skills and credentials to compete so they can build quality, income and wealth building for themselves and their families. We invest in building and housing and community infrastructure, including arts and culture. We work with real estate development, with most of our loan funds and we also have national programs that support different kinds of community development programming. We drive local, regional and national policies. We have a policy decision in D.C. that does a lot of work making sure we continue to bring resources to disinvested places. We existed since 1979, so we celebrated our 40th birthday. We are supposed to go out of business in ten years but the funders and the board decided to keep us going because the need did not disappear for our organization to exist. You can see we leveraged billions of dollars toward community development. Particularly in affordable housing and community spaces. We pride ourselves on having a high S&P rating. We worked in ‑‑ we work all over the country. We have ‑‑ up to 37 offices now. Just expanding in Memphis and in Louisville. And we also have a rural program that serves many rural communities across the country. We have a pretty broad base around who we impact. The Creative Placemaking program was started five years ago with a big investment. At that time, they were investing in larger organizations, intermediaries, in parks and community development, in policy and so our program was started with a large grant and continues to be in partnership with them and we work with the National Endowment for the Arts. Our core values around Creative Placemaking and, you know, the Creative Placemaking we will get to but our core values around the way that we think about Creative Placemaking are putting artists as leaders and problem solvers in community, everything we do, everything that we support has a community development outcome at the end of it. All the activity. Racial equity is always at the center. You would think as a community development intermediary we wouldn't need to be explicit about that but we do. The work that we do implies racial equity but we need to put it at the core of the work on a daily basis. Our program believes in development without displacement. We know Creative Placemaking sometimes gets put on the gentrification wagon there. Anything that we do is about investing in the community ‑‑ in the inherent community assets in a community and being comprehensive and community driven and the change that we make positively benefit the current residents. Does not displace them. National program objectives are similar to the National Endowment for the Arts. We help build social cohesion in our communities, we use our tools to create opportunities for physical transformation. We invested over 24 million in the last two years in real estate development and now we are working on economic inclusion and creative economy as part of that, as well as real estate development.

I am here to set the stage for, you know, some of the stuff that we talk about in the field around placekeeping and placemaking. Over the last 24 hours I had a lot of conversations that have made me a little crazy. A little nuts. I wanted to talk about some of that stuff with all of you. We have this whole idea about placekeeping versus placemaking. You know, where the field is going and where we want to be. I am curious to hear what you have to say about that. Tactical urbanism hurt the creative placemaking definition so I want to call that out in terms of ‑‑ when we talk about gentrification and artists gentrifying areas, it is often urbanism that supports the gentrification of a place because that is a different form of the Creative Placemaking that Creative Placemaking LISC is practicing. At LISC we go back and forth between placemaking and placekeeping. Yesterday I was having a conversation about the difference between the two and, you know, how we come to terms with these two ‑‑ with these two words and it is important that we think about that. I am sure you had amazing conversations over the last couple days in that area.

The other thing that is coming up is the ‑‑ there is this new center called the Bass Center for transformational placemaking and so it is interesting to see some other agencies and organizations starting a really kind of ‑‑ the Bass Center is a partner at ours at LISC so I don't want to say anything too negative but what I see is a field builder of Creative Placemaking for the last 10 years, we are almost losing the narrative a little bit of arts and culture in the placemaking field. That is something I wanted to call up to talk about. They have been using all the same tenants but calling it transformational instead of creative. I worry about that a little bit.

We are here to talk about gentrification and unintended consequences. Lauren is going to dig into that but I want to call out a few things before we get to that. The definition of gentrification, we all know, basically making a place ‑‑ improving a place ‑‑ to the point where the folks who live there and have lived there for decades and have a history there are priced out of the place. And we have to ‑‑ it is not just about that, it is about power dynamics, about historical racism, about systems that are existing in cities that support gentrification and don't fight back against gentrification. And so it is not something that just happens passively. It is something that is intentional by developers, by real estate owners. And even sometimes by the laws that exist within city governments and state governments. As we think about gentrification we need to pull back the different layers of it and when we think about unintended consequences, I think sometimes artists get a bad rap around the unintended consequences piece, which is why I think the Creative Placemaking words are getting a bad rap as well. We know that artists never go into an opportunity to make it something else than it is. Sometimes that could happen but many times it is ‑‑ the artists want to build a community and they create a community that is appealing to other people and then the other people move in and the artists can't say. When we talk about gentrification in terms of an artist driven gentrifying approach, I feel like that needs to be teased out a lot too. There are so many players to it that ‑‑ the thing I wanted to call out was ‑‑ in Providence, in the '90s there was a large contingency of artists who graduate from Rhode Island school of design, white, young, crazy artists who started this community within an industrial zone. It wasn't ‑‑ nobody was living there. The businesses left. It was a postindustrial apocalyptic corridor where nothing was happening and over the last 20 years the corridor has been invested in, been developed, it has been done very intentionally with city government and developers who were sort of enlightened. There is a history to that that is really complicated. It is a good example of how when planning work can come together with community, the unintended consequences may not be as dire as something like in Cincinnati where over ‑‑ just changed a neighborhood, you know, for the people who wanted to be there and not for the people who live there.

Even at LISC, this was not talked about a lot. We are seeing opportunities now to really put residents in the driver's seat around the futures of their neighborhoods. How do you ‑‑ what is your role as a state arts agency in that work and how do we as arts and culture practitioners support good, equity development.

As we do work across the country, and we, you know, try to support other project based things that are particularly happening, we try put up this community engagement spectrum around how to engage community. There are different engagements, there are different ways to engage community. A lot of times government, particularly city and state governments, have public meetings and they call them public meetings but they are about informing residents about what is going to happen to them, not about obtaining public feedback or anything like that ‑‑ it is just done in a very ‑‑ the power dynamics are interesting to say the least. The informed piece is one ‑‑ the basic map of community engagement. The feedback, you are obtaining the public engagement with alternatives or decisions.

The next step is involve. That is working directly with residents consistently to consider their concerns and aspirations.

How do you partner with residents in the decision‑making, including the identification of the solutions that they may be looking for and what kind of policies that you put in place that require artists to get to think about collaboration in that way and how do you work from the state arts agency level to empower residents in making the decision and leading the solution based efforts some of your art and Creative Placemaking programs may be looking for. How do you work with artists to get them to understand that collaboration and resident decision making is key to the work of Creative Placemaking and to really guarding against gentrification as it may occur in these projects.

Gathering the community, having the community imagine together with an artist and digging into the community and discovering and sharing what the community is all about before the decisions are made before the artist decides to create a project, to get them to really work with community and design and refine a project that will solve a problem and together take action and assess results and celebrate together how that all comes and going back and forth and stopping along the way to make sure there is no harm being done and that the constituents that will be affected most directly by the art and the work that is being made are directly involved. We have Marty Pottenger on here, she is like the star of this work in her community and has done amazing things. I am sure some of you already know Marty. Just thinking about that.

I am going to stop there. One of the things we wanted to kind of have a conversation about, we were going to put you in breakout rooms but since the group is small, we should talk about these things and answer questions as well. What does the role of state arts agency play in this work, what kinds of policies and procedures can state arts agency enact that will protect against the unintended consequences of Creative Placemaking or all these things that you have been talking about for the last couple days.

Lauren, do you have anything you want to add or comments on that?

>> LAUREN: Not yet. I am curious to hear what other folks have to say, how these principles show up in their work.

I am going to stop sharing so I can see everyone. Does anyone want to start with what is on the top of their mind or what kinds of policies do you have in place to kind of make these things work in your communities.

>> SPEAKER: I feel like ‑‑ I feel naive in this space. You lived this. You live this on a daily basis. Placemaking, placekeeping. Shannon is running a program and a lot is going on in different states. I am still grappling with some of this stuff and so you are asking me to start and I was hoping we could ‑‑ that I could bring you ‑‑ I could move with you through to that point, which is you are talking about intended consequences of gentrification. That is right. Yeah. I guess there would be. I am always focused on the unintended. Thank you for the reminder there are unintended consequences.

You talk about the tension between placemaking and placekeeping. Revisiting that conversation from years ago, I moved through that to a yes and. And in this week, I have also added ‑‑ maybe it was last week ‑‑ I added the place reclamation piece. Prom the indigenous point of view, historic point of view, I had not thought of that in that way. Now in my mind I am playing with those three terms.

Several years ago, I said ‑‑ Marty, I am a major fan girl of yours. A naive question saying I need a list of Marty Pottengers. I need a list of people who graduated from the St. Louis CAT institute. I need a list of artists who know how to do this work ethically and well so I can connect with them and have them connect with artists in Wisconsin. I need to know how to find in Wisconsin, I need to know who the artists in this state are because I am not hearing about them and I am working with arts group all around the state but I am somehow missing that kind of work. I am kind of hearing about it but ‑‑ I want to connect with them. I want to build more of the skills of the artists who want to do this work ethically, and I didn't get a list back. I got the expected silence. Right? Of course, they would be silent.

>> LYNNE: I am not sure at that point they had the list but I think there is a list growing and I think ‑‑ springboard for the arts put out a nice workbook for the artists who want to learn how to do this work. I encourage you look at that and I think that ‑‑ lot of this work tends to ‑‑ yeah. I think that would be a good place to start. I think that, like ‑‑ yeah. The unintended consequences can happen anywhere. In a rural setting, an urban setting, in many different ways.

Does anyone else have anything on the top of their mind that they want to react to?

>> SPEAKER: One of the challenges that I know we have with ‑‑ one is being invited to the conversation. So people understanding that to have these conversations and to really bring and convene a lot of these folks together before the work has begun. I am watching this happen right now in Reno, in particular. There was a development group that has come in and they bought up a number of dilapidated properties and motels that were weeklies and there ‑‑ they were talking about this arts and culture space that they are creating and I don't know where they have brought the community together to discuss this. It is more kind of happening within their own confines. Burning Man has an interesting influence so they are talking about we will bring in a lot of Burning Man art and place that around in community space. It sounds interesting and they are doing it. They are taking down all the properties and building this up. They displaced a number of residents, they have talked about that they put them in ‑‑ now who they are and how many of them are ‑‑ into other places ‑‑ I haven't seen that data or that information. They talk about it as a win. This area they are redeveloping was really dilapidated and down and yet they are building a place that is not for the residents and it is meant to really push this group aside and bring in something else and build up other kinds of community engagement.

In many ways it is for all the wrong reasons. They will make it a very nice place, I am sure but is it for whom and is it the proper way of doing that. My concern with it is, again, who is consulted in that, who are the power players, do they care? And so I think where we are in my take, in Nevada anyway where we are, is really ‑‑ we are struggling to get that understood. And getting, you know, getting to be asked about what is the right way and the correct way and intentional ways we can make this work for the communities that are ‑‑ that we want to come in and effect.

It is not something I have been involved with that has been a positive but something I have seen that is the opposite of what we want to happen. There is multiple places like that within Nevada that that is occurring.

>> LYNNE: Yeah. I think that comes down to what the local zoning codes are and who is going to hold them accountable. If the community can't hold them accountable, then, the government official needs ‑‑ it is complicated.

>> SPEAKER: This seems like a perfect conversation with the people here because it seems like state arts agencies if they felt they would ‑‑ instead of the one right of way but a real informed sense of how the various opportunities ‑‑ the ways this could go, which are always multiple, right? And the people involved that as the state art agency, where does a 600‑pound mother gorilla sleep, anywhere she wants to. Right? Entering that conversation, there is already a chair I think at the table that wouldn't be assumed until state arts agency says this is a part of what we do and here is some of the ways we are thinking about it, how are you thinking about it? Here are some of the people we ‑‑ you would like ‑‑ you know, hate to ‑‑ I feel like wow, what a nice power base. What are they going to say? Oh, hi.

>> SPEAKER: I hear what you are saying.

>> SPEAKER: It is exciting.

>> SPEAKER: Yeah.

>> SPEAKER: I think what you described, Tony, sounds so traditional, right? Just so ‑‑ without any conversation that is how it would go.

>> SPEAKER: The buzz word. In some ways it is thoughtful but, you know, a lot of it happens behind the scenes and you hear about it after everything is established or discussed. There is not even ‑‑ seems at times ‑‑ opportunities to have that conversation. Or to say before you break ground, let's talk about this, before you displace all these ‑‑ you know, people, let's talk about this. It just is ‑‑ it is the haves who are the developers, those that are coming in and talking and have this grand plan and they just go.

>> SPEAKER: Could the State Arts Agencies host a forum with the governor and the realtor community, the real estate community about these possibilities? Just to start putting ‑‑ you know, putting a flag in the ground on it?

>> SPEAKER: If we could get the governor to do that, I suspect that would have impact. The question is, would the governor do that and there is the connection, right, with all the things, in particular, and I feel ‑‑ I am not trying to be negative, I think it is an opportunity for us and I love that idea, I want to pursue that idea because we are at a point with COVID and the revitalization and the economic challenges that are in front of us, we are in an opportunity where there may be more willingness to listen. But it is getting the governor's attention for sure.

>> LYNNE: Yeah. That is a great segue into Lauren's presentation. I think we should get Lauren going.

>> LAUREN: Thank you. Let me get to my presentation here.

Can you see my screen? What I want to talk about preempts the negative impacts of gentrification. Instead of being so responsive how can we proactively behave so we don't have to address those things on the back end. How can we lead with culture and how can community development work be restorative instead of so destructive and extractive? What I have developed is what I am calling a restorative, culture centric approach to community development. Putting culture first and I will go through the characteristics of what I am calling repair‑ations, an approach to doing community development work.

Traditional urbanism, a way of life characteristics of cities and towns. AfroUrbanist, responding to what is now an international movement of people recognizing that Black Lives Matter, how can we center the lived experience of black folks, the culture of black folks, most of the communities that community development is happening in is communities of color. We don't prioritize what they are thinking, feeling or care about. We can say things like black and put Afro in front of things. People are okay. Before, no way. A couple principles I apply, the community is always the client. I find when I am working with other consultants, they are beholden to who is paying the bills. In my mind, that doesn't matter. If you serve the community you are working in, your clients will be pleased with whatever you produce. I am asking the community what do you want, how can we serve you, never mind city planning department is footing the bill. They will be happy if the community is happy.

There is always a chateau scope. I find with my colleagues that people have a hard time doing work outside of what is on paper. No, we have real work to do. If there is an emergent issue that comes up to the extent we can, we have to address it. Parks are a low hanging fruit thing here. For the folks in the communities, they much rather have the abandon house next door dealt with or the two on the other side of that dealt with. How can we think about our work as broader. Place based expertise is more valuable than professional experience. When you are doing place based work, we enter the space having been told what we know is the highest and best knowledge there is, but when you do place based work, a person who lived in a community for 40 to 50 years, they have a Ph.D. in that place, their degree in place is as valuable as whatever training or experience that we have and we tend to ‑‑ we put community knowledge on ‑‑ if it there is a hierarchy, we put it at the bottom. Place based work, you have to place that at the top.

Relationships over real estate. As I mentioned, I ran a community development corporation in the neighborhood I grew up in and my funder wanted me to do real estate development, even though the mission was to improve quality of life for the folks in the neighborhood. I prioritized relationship building. For the first year and a half of my work, all I did was build relationships and restore trust. I think that there is a tendency in the community development ecosystem to prioritize what happens to property. What are we going to do with that vacant store front, that vacant lot. People are no, I want to be more connected to my neighbors. I want to know the people that are making the decisions here. What is the decision tree look like when it comes to community development in my neighborhood, who is in control, who is making the decisions. That is what people want to know. It is more about relationships than about buildings or vacant lots.

Process over product. My colleagues ‑‑ when I say colleagues, I am thinking of the arts professionals I work with, architects and urban designers and traffic studies and other planners, really technical minded folks that are thinking about what is the product, what is the deliverable here. If you focus more on the process, can you develop a process by which everybody feels included, everyone feels hurt, everyone ‑‑ you reflect back to people how you included the input they have given you, the process are so much important than the deliverable itself.

Culture over commerce. If you could get people thinking around what are the aspects of the culture that need to be focused on, amplified, you get better outcomes than just starting at what kind of business needs to go in the space. Start with the culture of the place, what is important to you, why do you stay when you could leave. Just start with the culture versus the commerce capitalist retail space.

Transformation over intervention. We do this tactical urbanism stuff, it is cute, looks great in foundations like annual report but it probably doesn't have a lot of transformational sustained impact. This is a photo when I ran the CDC in the neighborhood I grew up in. We did a farmer’s market. Looks cute but doesn't go as deep as I could go. In partnership with the university across the street from here, they own the lot, we put on the farmers’ market. 300 people came on a Sunday afternoon, but it is still segregated in here. People from the neighborhood are at different tables than the people from the university. We got low level results. We did a thing, and everybody was in the space, but we didn't get the interaction that would be flares to make this transformative versus doing some sort of one-off intervention.

I want to introduce principles of repair. These are the kinds of things I think that if you enter in any space during community development space with these outcomes in mind. It will be restorative instead of people feeling victimized and on edge. Go in thinking about these kinds of things, I will go through what each of them means. We think about the history of a space, we enter a community, we don't take into account all the policy violence that happened. You are, like, looks like these people don't care. Meanwhile, the Federal Housing Act, the Highway Act, all these things that were beyond the control of the people that live there that set the stage for what you see today. If you have this in mind, you treat the folks differently. Recognize they are owed something. They shouldn't be punished and extracted. We are there to restore this damage that has been done. This is a synapsis of what was lost in one of our neighborhoods. Detroit, rich in culture black neighborhood was decimated for a highway. Lots of times when we hear about black bottom we talk about the state of the buildings and how it was decrepit and the conditions, but we don't talk about what was lost. 423 homes, 151 physicians. Think about all that is lost when you get rid of one of those communities, you approach it differently. It is important to understand the history of the place. People lived in this neighborhood, they remember this, they remember these people's businesses taken away, homes taken away and there is still residual feelings around that. If we could add this to our considerations when we enter our space, it could help us reconcile the space, it gets better outcomes but we don't take this stuff into consideration.

This is a quote from a professor of planning. We wrote this about urban renewal in the '60s but you could apply that same quote to what's happening today and it would be true. Talking about how black folks being dislocated in the name of progress. Lots of revitalization efforts are displacing black folks as they did under the name of urban renewal in the '60s. We shouldn't repeat our sins of the past. These are photos of different events that I held where through storytelling and people sharing their lived experience, you can heal some of the injustices of the past. Where you can have a storytelling event, where long‑time residents get to talk about their experience, it goes a long way. We have to reconsider what we think about as experts. We want to invite people from the organizations that are in charge, from city government, the people that lived there a long time are the experts.

Empowering people. I did everything I could to create platforms for residents in the neighborhood to have their voice heard and I would leverage my network of elected officials and leaders, decision makers within the community development ecosystem to get folks in the room so residents could tell their own stories.

Let people tell their own stories. We should create platforms for that when we can.

Often times these revitalization efforts occur at the cost of culture. We might get something new and shiny but it voids out the culture that is meaningful to the people. How can we preserve culture when we are doing this work. Some of the things that we might look at and be, like, I don't get it, it is important to the people that are there. These are some of the things ‑‑ people want a healing session. Might not be something on our radar but right now a lot of folks in black communities are about healing. It is something that folks in Detroit, we have a vacant lot on the east side, every Sunday in the summertime, Memorial Day through Labor Day, there is live jazz and hundreds of people show up. Low budget, it is supported in the way you support church. There is a donation bucket passed around and people throw in their own money but the foundation community would be, like, they need a grant, they don't want it, they want to do their own thing. Sometimes there is a culture happening that is off our radar but we have to recognize things are going on that are important. That is preserving the culture. Recognizing what is already going on.

Making the distinction between placemaking and placekeeping. You can't look at a community with hundreds of thousands of people in it and say it is a blank state. That is something we always heard in Detroit. We don't have as many people as we had but we still have 700,000 people here. So for people to come in and say 700,000 people aren't doing anything and there is nothing culturally significant, kind of a slap in the face. You have to adjust your lens to see what is outside your frame of reference and peek into what other people see as valuable.

Asset frame, we often look at communities of color as of lesser value and we talk about them in terms of what is wrong with the place. Disinvested, marginalized, underachieving. How can you look at a community and start with this asset? This slide is representative of a neighborhood I love. When you do an asset map you will look at there is a school, a museum, but what is meaningful to this neighborhood, you are right there, an internationally known house music label that is an important institution, you might not recognize it from the outside but it is important to this place. There is a food co‑op. There is an academy there that teaches people how to have businesses, there is a bookstore that matters to people and I think we think of institutions when we are thinking assets, how can you think about the culture bearers as assets. These people know a lot of folks in the neighborhood. Her family has been in the north end for three generations, there is all this rich history that she has and she has this vast asset, she is a culture asset. How can we value humans in these spaces as assets as well.

Lots of time when we ask people what they want, they respond to what is going on right now. Fighting gentrification, fighting foreclosures, they want the lights turned on, the trash picked up but it doesn't set the stage for the future that people deserve. We keep them locked in this respond to what is going on, no, I am trying to incorporate Afro future thinking. We have to create space for imagination to show up and not just responses to outside actors.

I think the point of this is about restoring the spirit. When I talked about black bottom before, I walked residents through a visioning process as part of a strategic plan process. I said of all the cities in the world that you have ever been to or dreamed of going to, what is your favorite place, the first person said black bottom. If you Google black bottom what you will see is that it is decrepit and falling apart. But why of all the places in the world did the woman say she would like to go back to black bottom. She grew up there as a kid and she loved how rich the color was and everybody knew each other and there was a sense of black pride. If you can restore the spirit through the work you are doing, all the other things fall into place. The economics, the buildings, the vacant lots, the activation, if we can start with restoring people's spirit, giving folks hope for a better tomorrow, all the other things then fall into place. I think that is my last slide. Yes, that is it.

Thank you. That was a lot. Reflections, reactions, are those principles that seem like they are able to apply when broken down piece by piece like that?

>> SPEAKER: I think ‑‑ it is like a framework that is transferable from place to place. In Nebraska we have two cities and then the next six hours west is small towns for the most part. What we see in those rural areas, the history there is about the genocide against Native Americans. That historical process, this framework accommodates that as well.

>> LAUREN: I just do Afro because I am a black person and live in a black city but you can transfer it to any cultural group.

>> SPEAKER: I want to say I had this flash when you talked about replacing culture but like a lot of ‑‑ well intentioned folks replace culture with art. It is kind of like, you know, it is being blind to what is there and the value of what is there and at the same time, a lot of this is done on purpose. All of the ‑‑ every city in the country had a black community that was ripped apart for highway construction. It was on purpose. It was not just isolated incident or this is the easiest way to go, it was done on purpose. I think understanding that the power of colonialism and how much we still practice many of the things of colonialism, even though we don't intend to, it is part of our language, part of the way we do things, so understanding colonialism I think is really important to be able to turn around this work so it is about empowerment.

>> LAUREN: How we learn planning and development, it seems basic that people would understand about redlining and the housing act but not everybody knows this stuff. I assume everybody coming into this space had that basic knowledge. If you don't have that lens to be able to recognize how we are recolonizing neighborhoods, your approach is different. But we have to start at planning school. You have to incorporate a decolonization class into planning and architecture discipline.

>> SPEAKER: Does anyone know if that is happening?

>> LAUREN: A little bit. But I think it is coming from students. I am on an advisory board, decolonization in community development, the school might not be there yet but at least the students are challenging it.

>> LYNNE: I would say at LISC, LISC is ‑‑ you know, working in neighborhoods all over the country and in rural places all over the country and our younger program officers are pushing the agenda, which is amazing to see because we have a black CEO and he has been very cautious about pushing too hard but now it is helping move that ball forward because he is feeling supported by the organization to kind of push some things out in a more explicit way.

>> LAUREN: It is a moment to be bold.

>> SPEAKER: I am wondering something that your presentations have sort of spurred, I need to maybe reframe Tennessee Arts Commission Creative Placemaking program, we have been using the traditional language developed by the NEA and ArtPlace, I think I might be outdated. And talking about activation of space, and listening to you, Lauren, you know, that ‑‑ this space is not blank, even if it is empty, it is not blank, there is still a history that was there and so I am thinking that from here on out, really for our program, and this dove tails with the purpose and the outcomes we have for the program, to really talk about providing residents, agency or that projects should help residents have agency in, you know, developing their own spaces through arts and culture. And I am just wondering if you have any reaction to that.

>> LAUREN: I was going to say yes. And you said activating spaces but when you talk about agency, it is activating people. You can condense it and say we will turn the focus to people. We are just acting the folks.

>> LYNNE: I think when we look at how we make ‑‑ how organizations and State Arts Agencies, local art agencies make grants, there has to be examination of that as well. I ran a program in Providence for ten years, we gave $3,000 to community based organizations and we started out by giving the grants to the artists to do this public programming in parks and we flipped it around two years in and started making the grants more to community based organizations because the community based organization activated all the folks in the neighborhood and really took that $3,000, which wasn't a lot of money, but made it sing in a totally different way than giving the money to the arts group. They were doing cultural programming. We were letting the neighborhoods run wild with what they wanted and it changed it so much. Made it so much stronger and so much more relevant to the communities that it actually spurred all these parks to start friends groups because we gave the power to the neighborhood residents and they still ‑‑ they booked the artists that were relevant to them. It was really amazing. I think that, like, that ‑‑ the way that we define things and the way that we as arts administrators think with specific structures, if we could break those open a little bit, and putting the money into the people's hands that live places, it changes things so much.

>> SPEAKER: That is a perfect segue into the question I was going to ask, you who have been thinking about this for a long time, as you talk with State Arts Agencies folks invested in community development through the arts, community development, what would you have us ‑‑ if you could dictate, what would you have us know, what would you have us hold up? I think we hold up some things, but to hear from your mouths what you would like State Arts Agencies to know and hold up and move toward doing in our states, in placemaking, placekeeping. That would be great to hear.

>> LYNNE: One thing we have been talking about, my friend and I had this conversation, showing up as your true, authentic self in these places and in this work. Making it less about your job and who you are in that job but more about who you are as a person and breaking down the power dynamic that exists as a state arts agency, you know, professional or, you know, staff member. I think as government employees, there is this notion of service. How do you as an arts leader perform in that space in service? I think that would be something I would love people to think about, how am I showing up as my own authentic self every day to do this work.

>> LAUREN: That is super important. Usually I break down all my identities, it talks about the lenses through which I see the world and the work and I would say just be aware of the biases and the judgments that you are coming in with and try to keep them at bay to the best of your ability. I feel like we are ‑‑ we don't make ourselves aware of that when we are entering a different space but it guides all of our decision‑making and our ‑‑ what we prioritize and we are just not thinking about it and our value systems are different than the folks in the communities we are working in. Maybe less for me because I am a black middle-class person working in black middle‑class neighborhoods so I feel peer to peer working with folks. If you are working in a community that is different from you, be aware of ‑‑ that your value systems might be different. I would go back to that one slide that prioritizes place-based knowledge, recognize that folks have knowledge that you don't have and it is equally as valuable.

>> SPEAKER: I appreciated your reinforcing the idea of individuals being cultural resources. When we go into the communities around Wisconsin and help with asset mapping, that is always the question I ask if it doesn't come up. Who are your culture bearers? That leads to interesting conversations.

>> LYNNE: We have time for one more question and then we will have wrap up from the staff, from Gali. Anyone have any final thoughts or things they want to share?

If not, that is okay.

>> SPEAKER: Thank you for all the work everybody is doing. To help invigorate and seed this conversation.

>> SPEAKER: I was going to add in your flow chart, empower. Also thinking about co‑creating and co‑creation, which is similar and there is more conversation these days about co‑creating. I think there is a lot of practices artists can bring but there is lots of tools, lots of ways artists can help with that empower end of your spectrum there. It is important to define those artists and nurture those artists and to bring them into those situations.

>> LYNNE: Lauren, do you have last thoughts before we sign off?

>> LAUREN: The future of community development lies with the artists. I think the creative spaces is kind of the last liberated space, as I recognize artists don't have bosses and I think about a lot of my colleagues in community development are, like, I wish I could but my CEO, I wish I could but my executive director, the artist doesn't have the considerations so I feel the future of this work is having more artists at the table in the community development conversations to free us up.

>> LYNNE: Thank you. That was great final comment. We will wrap up for now and bring back our tech and share with you some housekeeping stuff. Thank you so much for joining us. I am glad we had a small group, it was nice to be able to have a conversation together.

>> SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you everyone for showing up today and being so engaged. Lovely to see you folks. We have our last plenary today at 3:45 p.m. it is going to be in the same Zoom room so when you come back on, just get on the same way you did just now. And then that will be the end of this Convocation. Enjoy your 20-minute break. Leave the Zoom room because we have to use it for the sound check.

>> LAUREN: Who is the last speaker?

>> SPEAKER: Great question. We have Leila Tamari who with Carlton Turner, Tamara Mozahuani Alvarado and Evan Weissman.

>> LAUREN: What are they talking about?

>> SPEAKER: Something good.

>> SPEAKER: And then there is ‑‑ carton is from Jackson, Mississippi, smart guy.

>> SPEAKER: We will have an original music piece composed by Mike Bond, based off the conversations that have been happening throughout the Convocation. Hope you stick around to see that. That is all for this session. Thank you.

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