

2013 MERIT

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LYCEUM

A traveling fellowship in Architecture



Cincinnati's Gateway district is revitalized along Main and Vine Streets, but the area between remains dead and perceived as unsafe. Redevelopment may eventually remedy this situation, but what can we do in the meantime, and how can those actions influence future redevelopment to be more inclusive of the existing population?

THE STORY : CONVERSATIONS LEADING TO THE PROPOSAL



MICA 12/V : NEW BUSINESS

In speaking with local businesses on Main and Vine streets, I got the impression that development had brought stability to their streets, but the neighboring area inbetween is viewed as unsafe. Michael, owner of Mica 12/V said 'It's hard to get people to cross the undeveloped streets to businesses on Main.'



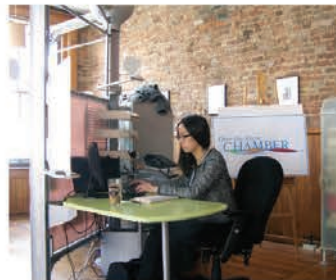
VACANT BUILDINGS AND PARKING

The area between Main and Vine Streets is seen as unsafe by the pedestrian because it is inactive. This is caused by the excess of vacant buildings and private parking lots.



OWNED BUT UNOCCUPIED

All of the vacant buildings are owned by private developers such as 3CDC. Without redevelopment the buildings will continue to remain inactive and contribute nothing to the street. Any efforts to activate this area will need to take place in public; on the street.



OVER-THE-RHINE CHAMBER

I went to the chamber of commerce to inquire on the subject of development in the area. They said 'Nothing is on the books for the next five years.'



GENTRIFICATION DEMONIZED

At the Contact Center they referred to the redevelopments as gentrification. While the developments include lower income housing, there are close to no affordable establishments in the area. Future development must be mindful of everyone in the community.



TALKING WITH TUCKER

Bob Tucker opened his diner back in 1946, he said 'That this area has been in flux and that the redevelopment is part of that continuum, nothing new.'



ART ACADEMY : GETTING INVOLVED

The Art Academy occupies an entire block in the area in question and they want to be involved in the community. They want the building to be more inviting, but lack funds to do anything architectural. The building has difficulties being welcoming because of it's fortified street fronts. Galan Crawford, the community affairs officer, wants to host more community art projects. They've done a few projects in the past, but he feels they need regular projects that get them involved in the surrounding community. Many of the students shared this sentiment, looking to be more engaged in the community. Having ongoing projects renders the building more porous to the community through activity, allowing for community input in the project.

THE PROPOSAL : STREETPRESS

There are no plans for the redevelopment of the cross streets in Downtown Cincinnati's Gateway District. It is necessary to change the perception of the cross streets from an unsafe place to a vibrant area in order to stabilize the community.

Streetpress proposes to bring together an assortment of existing community players to activate one of the cross streets, 12th, by appropriating it as a canvas for public art. The vision is to provide a framework for all members of the community to speak their minds on a variety of topics and write these messages on the street using stencils and semi-permanent spray chalk paint.

The Players:

THE ART ACADEMY

Encouraged by the Art Academy's desire to be more actively engaged in the community I proposed this project and they wanted to start immediately. Galan Crawford offered space for storing materials, he volunteered students to make stencils for the messages, and suggested that their vacant building's street fronts could potentially play a role.

THE HOMELESS COALITION

Located at the corner of Clay and 12th, this coalition publishes *Streetvibes*, a bi-weekly newspaper that empowers the homeless and the community. This group has agreed to publish what gets written in *Streetpress*.

THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

The members of the community are keen to support local events and activities that will attract people to the neighborhood and aid in influencing perceptions of the Gateway District as a destination spot in Cincinnati.

THE CONTINUATION : THE IMMEDIATE STEPS THAT ARE BEING TAKEN TO MOVE FORWARD



THE COALITION'S ON BOARD

I spoke with Justin Jeffre, *Streetvibes* Editor, about the project and he was on board with the concept. *Streetvibes* is actively involved in the community and supports community betterment projects. *Streetpress* will receive it's own column in the paper if it gains enough traction in the community.

COLLABORATING WITH KATIE

Katie Dobson is a student of the Art Academy; she is in illustration and design and has done graphic projects for the community in the past. She is very passionate about *Streetpress* and has been in contact with entities in the community who are willing to fund it.

Potential Players:

BASERMATTER

ARTSWAVE / ARTWORKS

ORIGINAL MAKERS CLUB



BASERMATTER : FABRICATION

Jeff Welch, part owner of Basermatter, is a digital fabrication studio in the Cincinnati area. We discussed the feasibility of laser cutting the stencils. He suggested using masonite to make the stencils, because it is a cheap and durable material and you could make an alphabet set, that consisted of 12" letters, for \$120 - material included. Each alphabet set would be a one time investment. New sets could be added as the project grows.



ARTWORKS : FUNDING

Artworks, just a block south from the Art Academy, funds public art work projects, believing that art can aid in strengthening community. *Streetpress* is in line with their mission, which is why my partners and I believe they would be willing to fund a pilot project. Grants given can be up to \$10,000.



ORIGINAL MAKERS CLUB : SUPPORT

If *Streetpress* becomes a sustainable project it could attract the attention of entities like the Original Makers Club, who might act as regional supporters of the project.

STREETPRESS : PHASING OF 12TH ST. COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

PHASE 5 DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLISHING

Streetvibes documents and publishes the messages. Streetpress is the name of the columns in the paper.

STREETVIBES!
ADVOCATING JUSTICE. BUILDING COMMUNITY.

PHASE 2 DESIGNING THE MESSAGES

The Art Academy's graphic design majors turn the messages into blocks of text. The text blocks serve as guidelines for stencils.



PHASE 3 FABRICATING THE STENCILS

A local fabricator laser cuts a variety of alphabets in different fonts out of sheets of monocote, a cheap and durable material. These alphabets become the stencil sheet.



PHASE 1 GATHERING PUBLIC OPINION

The painted chalkboard facade of the Art Academy's vacant building provide the community with a public place to express their opinions on the area. The messages are then documented to be used on 12th.



PHASE 4 STENCILING THE MESSAGES

The messages are applied at a community event coinciding with Final Friday, which is a monthly open gallery event. All these messages bring communal activity to 12th.

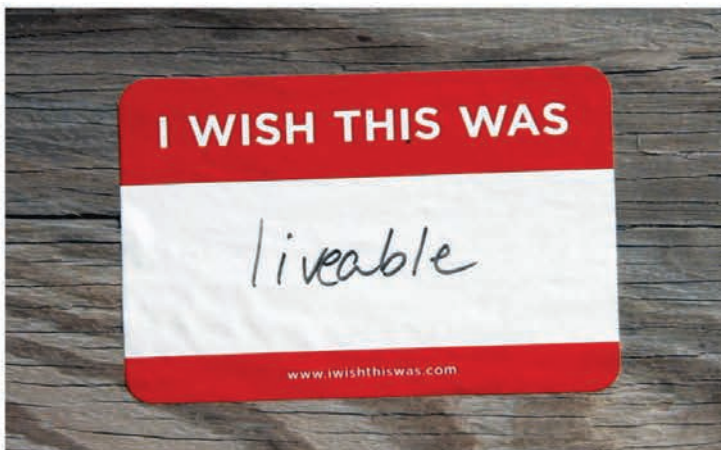


PHASE 6 DISTRIBUTION

Streetvibes vendors distribute the paper to the larger audience of the Greater Cincinnati area.



NEW ORLEANS : 'THE LAND OF CANDY CHANG'



TRAVEL PLAN

Candy Chang is a contemporary artist whose work has activated the public spaces of cities from New Orleans to New York and even abroad. The overarching themes of her various public works are: utilizing public space as a forum, involving the community and aiding encounters between people in the community.

New Orleans is the site of a majority of Candy Chang's most successful installations. I plan on traveling to New Orleans to see her ongoing projects to understand what makes these works sustainable. The more notable pieces are 'Before I die...' and 'I Wish This Was' that has evolved to be 'I want ___'.

'Before I die...' began in New Orleans with Candy Chang painting a boarded up façade with chalkboard paint, on which she stenciled in clean rows the prompt, Before I die... This transformed the public space into a shared space of reflection. 'Before I die...' has become so popular that it has been done in a variety of other places with the aid of a kit created by Candy and her partners.

'I want ___' is another project that began in New Orleans and has evolved from its humble beginnings of 'I Wish This Was.' In this project, an individual is prompted by a 'Hello my name is' sticker on a vacant building to share what they believe the building should be. All of the notes have been interesting and most of them describe viable suggestions. This piece has had a direct impact on the development of many areas in New Orleans.

The most important reason for going to New Orleans is to meet Candy Chang in person. I would like to present my Lyceum booklet to her and get her input as to how to go about effectively advertising and getting funding for public art projects. I particularly want to understand what it takes for a project to gain traction in the space it intends to activate. Streetpress will not have much of an impact if it doesn't find a way to perpetuate itself.