

# Building the Creative Economy for Minnesota's Artists and Communities

by Ann Markusen



Photo courtesy of Ann Markusen

**By providing rehearsal space, grant and fellowship opportunities, and interaction with other artists, the Playwright's Center has enhanced the creativity and distinctiveness of the Twin Cities' theater scene.**

In 2003, I published a study (with David King) titled *The Artistic Dividend: The Arts' Hidden Contributions to Regional Development*, which documented how artistic activity contributes to a region's economic vitality. I soon began receiving calls from readers asking why second-tier metropolitan areas such as Minneapolis–St. Paul, Seattle, Boston, and Portland are able to generate, attract, and retain high concentrations of artists when other larger and faster-growing regions are not. One important factor is the creation of dedicated

artists' centers where artists can learn, network, give and receive feedback, exhibit, perform, and share space and equipment. These spaces, I argue, serve artists while contributing to economic and community development in their respective neighborhoods and regions. This article reports on a new study, *Artists' Centers: Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies*, that explores this hypothesis.

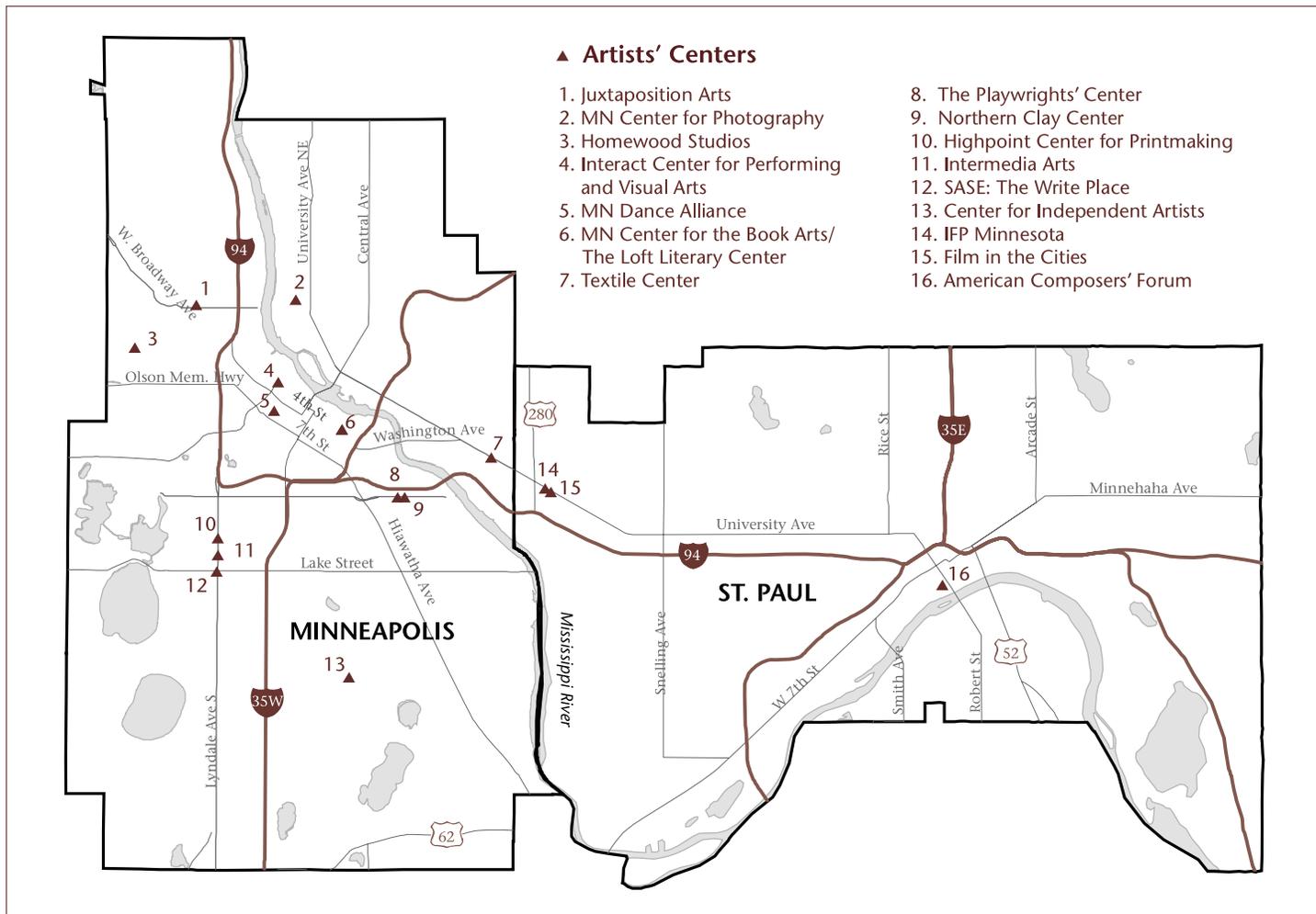
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## Artists' Centers in Minnesota

No other state or nation supports the number and range of artists' centers that Minnesota does. Two essential features distinguish artists' centers from other artist-serving organizations and training institutions: (1) a dedicated space for

**Figure 1. Location of Artists' Centers in Minneapolis and St. Paul**



gatherings, shared equipment, personal or group work, and exhibitions or performances; and (2) an open door, in the sense that anyone who expresses an interest may become a member; have access to events and services at an affordable price; and apply for merit-based mentorships, funding, and exhibitions. Artists' centers are distinct from other arts organizations and spaces that contribute to artistic development and livelihoods, such as educational institutions and teaching studios; presenting and producing organizations (theaters, museums, galleries, clubs); art fairs and crawls; artists' retreats; artists' service organizations without dedicated space; artists' live/work and studio buildings; and arts incubators.

The Twin Cities hosts a number of centers organized along disciplinary lines, including The Loft Literary Center, The Playwrights' Center, SASE: The Write Place, American Composers Forum, Textile Center, Northern Clay Center, Minnesota Center for Photography, Independent Film Project, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and Highpoint

Center for Printmaking. It also hosts community-based centers whose purpose includes nurturing neighborhood artists and/or helping to solve community and affinity group problems through art and performance. Examples include Homewood Studios, which serves a northside working-class African American neighborhood; Juxtaposition Arts, in the same neighborhood and dedicated to young muralists and spoken-word artists; Intermedia Arts and the Center for Independent Artists, both serving a south Minneapolis mixed ethnic neighborhood; and Interact, which serves artists with disabilities through performance and visual art opportunities. These centers are dispersed among Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhoods (Figure 1).

Centers serving artists are found throughout Minnesota, including in larger cities such as Duluth; in Twin Cities suburbs such as Fridley and Minnetonka; and in smaller cities such as Northfield, Grand Marais, and New York Mills. In these communities, centers often strive to serve all of the artistic disciplines. Northfield

Arts Guild, for instance, supports a community theater and music performance space, an art gallery with space for visual artists to work, and meeting space for poets and writers. Artists in residence in tiny New York Mills include world-class jazz musicians whose live music fills a space hung with portraits by local landscape artists.

### Research Method

Based on previous work and discussions with key arts observers in Minnesota, I initially identified more than two dozen artists' centers as possible candidates for this study. To be eligible, each had to meet the two fundamental criteria outlined above: possession of dedicated space and open membership at affordable prices.<sup>1</sup> Initially my team and I interviewed directors to determine if their organizations fit the criteria and

<sup>1</sup> I stretched these criteria slightly in two or three cases because either the constituency involved (e.g., composers) is too small to afford a space or because the center is informally open to all but does not have memberships.

if they were willing to be included in the study. For those who were, we did further in-depth interviews on the evolution and operations of each organization; toured its space; identified up to one dozen artists at different career stages who might be interviewed; and submitted a first draft of our results for comment. In the case of longer-lived or defunct centers, we interviewed founders and former managers.

In structuring and analyzing the interview data, we relied on key-informant techniques. We read newsletters, annual reports, and publications of the centers, along with studies done by third parties such as foundations. We collected data on finances and governance from the organizations themselves and from funders.

Many artists we interviewed referred us to other artists, particularly people whose experiences might differ from their own. We used a loose version of what Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), call “theoretical sampling,” in which researchers choose additional interviewees by how well they fit the overall dimensions of

the population in question. When we felt we lacked coverage of a particular medium, experience level, or type of artist, we worked to find willing subjects. For each center, we interviewed at least 6 and as many as 20 artists.

Ultimately we analyzed the 22 artists’ centers listed in Table 1, which roughly correspond in location to the distribution of artists across the state (Figure 2). We interviewed more than 200 artists, artists’ center directors, founders, funders, and key arts ecology watchers in Minnesota about the impact of artists’ centers. We also surveyed 1,200 participants from The Loft Literary Center. All interviews were confidential; any artist profiled or quoted in this article gave us permission to use the material.

### Case Studies

Each artists’ center is unique with respect to its origins, evolution, and impacts. I have chosen three that represent the range of artists’ centers in Minnesota to discuss in this article: The Playwrights’ Center, Homewood Studios, and the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center.

**The Playwrights’ Center.** Since 1971, The Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis has been helping playwrights develop their work, build reputations, and foster relationships with producers. Located in a former church on Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis’ Seward neighborhood, the center hosts a beautifully renovated lobby/meeting space where weekly readings take place, the 120-seat Waring Jones Theatre, offices, and a basement rehearsal room. It provides playwrights opportunities to compete for fellowships and grants, space and staffing for staged readings, and an annual PlayLabs festival. The center also collaborates with area theaters to produce new plays.

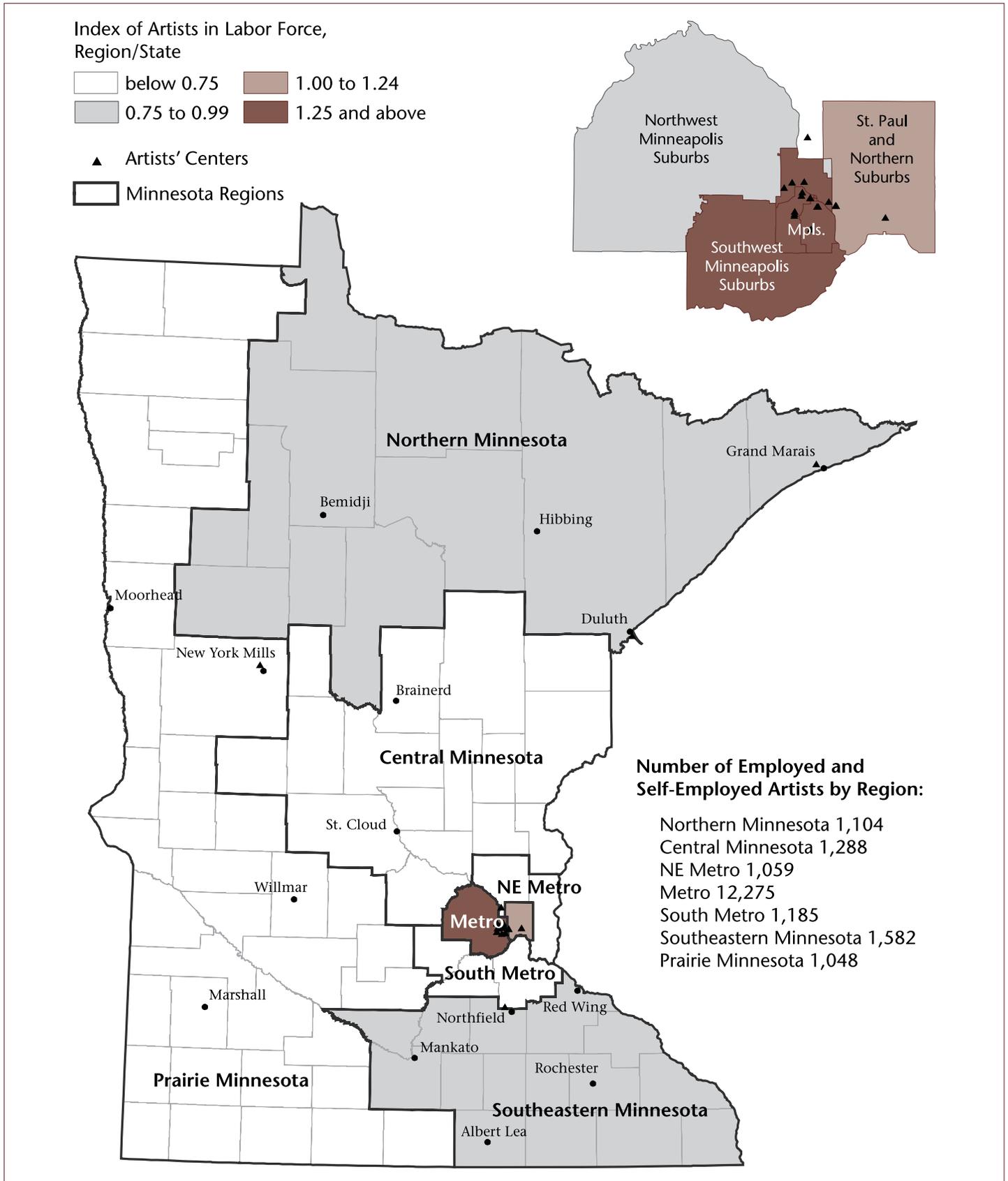
The Playwrights’ Center’s grants have fostered many careers. Lisa D’Amour, who recently won an Obie, says her first Jerome Fellowship helped launch her career out of graduate school by allowing her to continue writing. Talented writers and theater artists brought to Minnesota by The Playwrights’ Center have built enduring relationships that raise the level of work here and tie Minnesotans into the national theater network.

**Table 1. Minnesota Artists’ Centers: Location, Start-Up Date, Budget, and Membership, 2004–2005**

Artists’ Center	Location	Year Started	Annual Budget (\$)	Members
American Composers Forum (MN)	St. Paul	1973	2,300,000	700
Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts	Fridley	1979	100,000	200
Center for Independent Artists	Minneapolis	2001	87,000	50
Duluth Art Institute	Duluth	1896	350,000	550
Film in the Cities	St. Paul	1970	defunct	defunct
Grand Marais Art Colony	Grand Marais	1947	107,000	300
Highpoint Center for Printmaking	Minneapolis	2000	305,000	325
Homewood Studios	Minneapolis	1999	30,000	none
IFP Minnesota Center for Media Arts	St. Paul	1987	800,000	500
Interact Center for Performing and Visual Arts	Minneapolis	1995	1,400,000	100
Intermedia Arts	Minneapolis	1973	1,000,000	200
Juxtaposition Arts	Minneapolis	1995	150,000	none
The Loft Literary Center	Minneapolis	1974	1,800,000	2,700
Minnesota Center for Book Arts	Minneapolis	1983	850,000	700
Minnesota Center for Photography	Minneapolis	1989	350,000	600
Minnesota Dance Alliance	Minneapolis	1978	defunct	defunct
New York Mills Regional Cultural Center	New York Mills	1992	133,700	400
Northern Clay Center	Minneapolis	1990	1,235,800	600
Northfield Arts Guild	Northfield	1959	650,000	600
The Playwrights’ Center	Minneapolis	1971	700,000	550
SASE: The Write Place	Minneapolis	1993	300,000	100
Textile Center	Minneapolis	1994	500,000	800

Source: Ann Markusen and Amanda Johnson. *Artists’ Centers: Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies*. Minneapolis: Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2006. Data from interviews, websites, and annual reports.

**Figure 2. Concentration of Artists in the Labor Force and Location of Artists' Centers in Minnesota**



Source: Ann Markusen and Amanda Johnson. *Artists' Centers: Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies*. Minneapolis: Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2006. Data from Steven Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0*. Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 2003.

Note: *The artist concentration index* measures the presence of artists in the area workforce with respect to their presence nationally. A concentration index score of 1.00 means that artists' share of the local workforce is the same as their share nationally.

Minnesota playwrights benefit from the center's presence because as members they have access to its performance and reading spaces during posted downtimes, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Not only can they hear their own work read by actors that the center hires, but they also see other playwrights at all stages struggling to advance their work, an exposure available in few other cities. Nationally, The Playwrights' Center has been important in defining playwrights as a distinct group and working with them to create a greater sense of community.

The Playwrights' Center has been a visible part of the revitalization of East Franklin Avenue. Its activities put people on the streets day and evening, making the sidewalks safer. Along with its artistic neighbor, the Northern Clay Center, it is infusing modest amounts of consumer spending into the commercial strip on which it sits, strengthening local retail and service businesses and making the neighborhood a nicer place to live. Regionally, The Playwrights' Center has enhanced the creativity and distinctiveness of the Twin Cities' theater scene. Because the center has brought more playwrights to the region, theaters benefit from a greater talent pool. After nearly 30 years, it acts as a model for other artists' centers in the region.

Like most midsized arts organizations, The Playwrights' Center must continually seek funds while trying to maintain a meaningful relationship with its membership. Its biggest challenge is managing the tension between serving local playwrights and recasting itself as a national organization to achieve economies of scale in serving playwrights, expand its resource base, attract higher quality entrants to competitions, and increase the exposure of Minnesota playwriting and theater communities to top talent in the nation.

**Homewood Studios.** In lower-income, inner-city neighborhoods, artists are increasingly recognized as potential catalysts for change. Homewood Studios was created in 1999 by George and Beverly Roberts to provide studios and a gallery where neighborhood artists could make and show their work on Minneapolis' near north side. The Robertses envision it as a center where young people can use art to tackle community issues, including drug dealing, crime, and high resident turnover. They believe the visible presence of working artists in a

formerly run-down commercial strip can enhance the vitality, self-image, and connectedness of the community. In a renovated former corner grocery store on an old and architecturally distinctive commercial block, passersby can now see visual art and a meeting place through enormous windows. The nexus of individual workspace and community space enables artists and community members to interact.

Artists say Homewood Studios has greatly influenced their artistic work and livelihoods. Access to space to create is precious, as is the camaraderie and the opportunity to show their work. Homewood helps resident artists reach out to the community, too. "Homewood demystifies the idea that art is just for artists," photographer Bill Cottman says. Cottman's career has blossomed following a solo exhibit at Homewood that helped him win a McKnight Fellowship and earn money through his photography.

Homewood Studios works to change the atmosphere of its immediate neighborhood and offers children positive, creative opportunities. It has helped change local and external perceptions of the neighborhood. Homewood demonstrates, as Cottman says, "that violence isn't the only thing here." Drug lords have been displaced from the commercial block, and new arts organizations—Plymouth Avenue Art Studio

and Asian Media Access—are moving in. Homewood Studios' unique structure offers a viable model for smaller-scale artistic space in neighborhoods that might otherwise have nothing.

In a low-income community with relatively high crime and residential turnover, it is a challenge for Homewood to keep studio rents coming in, its chief source of income. Many artists live on the margin, especially in this neighborhood. And as hard as the Robertses work at it, it is still a challenge to keep neighborhood youth and residents walking in the door. In the longer run, Homewood Studios hopes to work with other community leaders to stabilize rents and prevent displacement of lower-income residents.

**New York Mills Regional Cultural Center.** The New York Mills Regional Cultural Center, the brainchild of John Davis, proves that a single person's vision can transform a community. In the late 1980s, visual artist Davis moved to an abandoned farmhouse outside of New York Mills, a declining Finnish farming community three-and-a-half hours northwest of the Twin Cities. He started an artists' retreat, believing that visiting artists would bring creative ideas into the region, while the idyllic rural atmosphere would enhance their work. Davis then sought out "the artist in every person in the county" in a campaign to convince community leaders, the city



Photo courtesy of Ann Markusen

**Homewood Studios works to change the atmosphere of its immediate neighborhood and offer positive, creative opportunities to local artists.**

council, and a local landowner to renovate an 1885 brick building on Main Street as the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center, which opened in 1992.

Today, the center hosts six to eight gallery exhibitions a year, some showcasing emerging local artists or historic community photos, and many performances. Visiting and area poets, authors, and storytellers share their work through readings and workshops. Traveling theater, music, and dance groups perform in the gallery. The center helps artists overcome the disadvantages of being far from a major city. A monthly artist forum series brings together artists from all over the area to network and critique each other's work. In addition, the center works with other organizations to educate artists about the business side of the arts. Visiting artists offer jazz improvisation workshops, build public sculptures with community members, and interact with community youth.

Artists applaud the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center for serving as the hub of a burgeoning regional artistic network in an area where opportunities are few and far between. Stephen Henning, a painter, says, "What is interesting about rural Minnesota is that artists stand out like a sore thumb, so you establish a network pretty easily. New York Mills is important because it is a place where these connections happen." Many artists find a sense of community and encouragement at the center. As a local musician says, "When you are a musician, you get dejected. You are isolated. You aren't respected, and you can't make money. You are viewed as a bum. Here, there are people just like me. You don't feel like an outcast."

The New York Mills Cultural Center now acts as a community and tourist hub. A tractor emblazoned on the New York Mills water tower heralds "cultivating the arts." By 2000, the tiny town's population had grown to 1,200, twice the pre-center projection. Between 1992 and 1997, 17 new businesses opened and employment increased by 40%. The downtown landscape has changed dramatically, with a new medical clinic and renovated storefronts replacing the abandoned buildings.

A wonderful but unlikely success story, New York Mills Regional Cultural Center continues to be strapped for funds. During the past few years, the state's funding environment has drastically changed. Previously, the center

received almost half of its funding from public sector grants, but budget cuts to the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota Humanities Board eliminated dollars for rural organizations and rural outreach. Maintaining the beautiful space, its programming, and its outreach to others is an ongoing challenge for the town, its artists, and supporters.

### **Impacts of Artists' Centers in Minnesota**

Overall, despite the challenges and even crises of maintaining a dedicated space, the centers have generated substantial benefits for the artists who use them, the neighborhoods in which they are located, and the larger regional economy.

**Impact on Artists.** Through our interviews and surveys, we found rich and compelling evidence that artists' centers further the quality of artists' work and enable more of them to make a living at it. Via "breadth experiences"—beginning and survey classes; newsletters; and first-time chances to publish, enter a piece in a show, hear one's work performed, or attend public exhibitions, performances, and readings—aspiring artists find precious encouragement and inspiration and deepen their knowledge of artistic conventions. Many artists may never publish, exhibit, or perform their work but continue to write, paint, dance, and make music for their own satisfaction or to share with their communities. Many will become lifelong patrons of the arts in the process.

From "depth experiences"—access to equipment, workspace, and technical assistance; mentorships; tutoring in the business of the arts; exposure to masters at work; and linking up with actors, dancers, and musicians who perform work in progress—emerging and accomplished artists receive the validation, critique, and insight that help them chart their own unique course and reach audiences and markets. At all levels, artists meet and interact with other artists, forming networks and informal working groups that persist throughout their careers, creating the weak ties that are so important to economic success in American society.

The impact of an artists' center on an artists' work varies by stage of career, which is not the same as by age. Indeed, Minnesota's artists' centers appear to augment the ranks of artists in the state by attracting people of all ages who are looking to change occupations. Centers offer older would-be artists an alternative to going back to college.

Raw encouragement is more important than feedback for beginning artists. Many artists tell terrible stories of youthful discouragement from teachers or parents who dismissed their talent or warned them away from the competitiveness, poverty, or social stigma associated with an artistic career. Such traumatic experiences sometimes delayed artistic careers for decades. A conversation with others, kind words from a teacher, or a first performance at a center generated the first "eureka!" moment for many. Encouragement may also come from listening to master artists recount the travails of their own careers.

Many aspiring artists emphasize the instruction and information available at artists' centers as important when getting started. Many report that center newsletters opened their eyes to the opportunities for exposure to great artists locally and to competition, publication, exhibition, or performance opportunities. For some, hanging their work in the annual member show or publishing a short piece in the bimonthly membership publication *A View from the Loft* provided the first, powerful shot in the arm they needed to make a commitment to an artistic career.

Whether they need video equipment, printing presses, kilns, or something else, artists at all stages benefit from access to equipment, libraries, and working and meeting space at modest fees. Center libraries provide access in one local place to written and recorded material in the various art forms.

Many of the centers in the study ably serve local, aspiring artists as well as established artists from the region and elsewhere. Everyone receives encouragement and benefits from the learning environment, while some will successfully compete for center funding, mentoring, and exhibitions of their work. Some centers subsidize mature artists by raising modest sums from large memberships of amateurs and art lovers and sales of art in gift shops, while others subsidize community access to meeting and exhibition space by renting studios or equipment to artists.

Minnesota's artists' centers encourage experimentation. They not only are inviting to newcomers who are uncertain about their talent but they also may help to generate work that is edgier than the region might otherwise tolerate. "Many people are looking for the real, the unfinished work in progress," says Robert Booker,

executive director of the Minnesota State Arts Board. “The centers are an entry point to participation as well as a laboratory for experimentation.”

**Impact on Neighborhoods.** Artists’ centers, operating in living neighborhoods and towns, serve as economic, social, and cultural assets. In smaller cities, centers may be tourist attractions and anchor tenants in commercial districts. In the Twin Cities, they are spread throughout neighborhoods (Figure 1), complementing and sometimes stimulating the creation of other artistic, commercial, and community venues. They form an outstanding twenty-first-century example of what Jane Jacobs celebrated about 1960s Manhattan with its SoHo, Chinatown, Little Italy, and Greenwich Village—a mosaic of unique cultural destinations that encourage residents to cross porous borders to visit distinctive neighborhoods. Most centers offer classes for neighborhood children and youth. Some of these young visitors will go on to become artists, and many will become art appreciators for the rest of their lives.

Twin Cities artists’ centers differ in the degree to which their directors and staff view the neighborhood as central to their mission. For some—such as the Loft, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, The Playwrights’ Center, Northern Clay, and the Textile Center—the search for their current physical home was driven by space requirements, cost, and centrality rather than the character of the neighborhood. In some cases, failing to be embedded in the surrounding neighborhood and low visibility to pedestrian traffic have turned out to be an unanticipated liability.

For others—such as Homewood Studios, the Minnesota Center for Photography, Intermedia Arts, and Juxtaposition Arts—the surrounding neighborhood has been important in committing to a site. Homewood’s founders, for instance, initiated the project as much to reverse commercial decline and drug use in their north side Minneapolis neighborhood and to serve as a focal point for young people and community residents as to support neighborhood artists.

Whether neighborhood concerns are a conscious priority or not, most centers contribute to the vitality and safety of their immediate neighborhoods. They bring in artists and audiences who spend money in nearby stores and restaurants, increasing foot traffic on the street. They occupy and beautify the façades

of formerly vacant buildings. The presence of two or more centers or other artist-serving buildings often produces an informal arts district. The Playwrights’ Center and Northern Clay Center in the Seward neighborhood have had this effect, as did Intermedia Arts, SASE, and pARTs Photographic Arts in the Lyn-Lake district near the Jungle Theater. Some center staff work actively with neighborhood associations and local business groups on larger planning initiatives to improve the immediate area.

The local dividend is perhaps easiest to see in smaller towns. New York Mills Regional Cultural Center, Grand Marais Art Colony, and Northfield Arts Guild continually bring artists and arts appreciators to their historic downtown areas. From these artists, modest amounts of income are generated for housing and local shops and restaurants, sometimes amplified by drawing tourists and visitors from surrounding areas or outside of the region. By investing in an artistic space, these organizations spruce up a neighborhood or commercial strip and help reverse small town, downtown, or inner-city decline. They bring energy and visual pleasure to the community, and they give residents a place other than bars and churches to socialize, play, and be challenged.

**Impact on the Regional Economy.** Artists’ centers make important contributions to regional economies by helping to “home grow” and retain more artists than the state would otherwise have. Artists, who are more than five times as likely to be self-employed than the average worker, make important contributions to the economy by exporting their work elsewhere, working on contract for non-arts businesses, and stimulating innovation on the part of their suppliers, none of which is counted in conventional arts impact assessments.

Artists’ centers develop Minnesota’s creative human capital by offering space where spillover among artists is maximized and where artists and arts lovers alike are embedded in participatory rather than arm’s-length relationships. By providing welcoming and perennial “clubhouses” for artists at many stages in their careers, the centers counter the risk of losing artists to other regions. Artists do move at different stages in their careers, but centers replenish their ranks by continually bringing new and emerging artists into the pipeline. Centers, through their exposure of artists to one another, help augment

the returns to the region from investments made in artists as individuals. For instance, a photographer, receiving a fellowship through a center rather than directly from a funder, is asked to share her ideas and work with others and the public by giving talks and hanging her photographs at the center during the course of the year.

Centers increase the probability that artistic learning and achievements of individuals are shared with others before artists retreat to their studios or leave for New York or San Francisco. The centers may draw émigrés back from major arts capitals as well. For instance, a young playwright whose work is nurtured at The Playwrights’ Center may leave for New York at a crucial stage in her career. Before leaving, her staged readings, local performances, and networking with others at the center may have improved her local colleagues’ writing and inspired others to try their hands. Later, she may decide to move back to the region, in part because the center and its convening powers are a draw. The Jerome Foundation’s Cynthia Gehrig, who has been supporting The Playwrights’ Center since the 1970s, concludes, “My own review suggests that the number of playwrights who remain in Minnesota for a period of time has increased. The center has helped in providing employment and production opportunities for them, and by making them better artists. Yes, younger aspiring playwrights may need to go to New York City, but many of them are coming back.”

We cannot directly measure the regional economic contribution of artists’ centers as distinct from other artistic institutions, spaces, and forces at play in building Minnesota’s artistic pool. But the high incidence of artists in the Twin Cities economy suggests that it is substantial. Metro area shares of artists in the workforce are 16% above the national average, outpacing many larger and faster-growing metro areas such as Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas (Table 2). Although Minnesota’s universities, colleges, and art schools produce many fine artists, the educational attainment of Minnesota artists is not appreciably above the national norm. This suggests that artists’ centers are providing an important training and work environment for artists who have completed their education or have not gone to college. The region’s pool of artists grew robustly in the

**Table 2. Artist Concentration Index\* for Selected U.S. Metropolitan Areas by Employment, 2000**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Performing Artists</b>	<b>Visual Artists</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Musicians</b>
Los Angeles, Calif.	2.99	5.44	2.34	2.71	1.95
New York, N.Y.-N.J.	2.52	3.71	2.01	2.99	1.85
San Francisco–Oakland, Calif.	1.82	1.85	1.83	2.51	1.12
Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W. Va.	1.36	1.51	1.01	2.27	1.08
Seattle, Wash.	1.33	1.15	1.48	1.48	1.06
Boston, Mass-N.H.	1.27	1.24	1.02	2.00	1.15
Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minn.-Wis.	1.16	1.12	1.10	1.33	1.16
San Diego, Calif.	1.15	0.90	1.27	1.10	1.25
Miami, Fla.	1.15	1.48	1.05	0.82	1.28
Portland, Ore.-Wash.	1.09	1.12	0.99	1.50	0.87
Atlanta, Ga.	1.08	1.05	1.11	0.97	1.15
Chicago, Ill.	1.04	0.83	1.14	1.27	0.84
<b>U.S. AVERAGE</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Dallas, Tex.	0.99	1.08	1.11	0.73	0.87
Philadelphia, Penn.-N.J.	0.96	0.90	1.04	0.94	0.88
Phoenix, Ariz.	0.96	0.70	1.13	0.88	0.94
Denver, Colo.	0.90	1.08	0.82	0.98	0.79
San Jose, Calif.	0.84	0.75	0.95	0.95	0.61
Cleveland, Ohio	0.79	0.61	0.79	0.74	1.05
Pittsburgh, Penn.	0.76	0.63	0.74	0.79	0.91
Houston, Tex.	0.74	0.65	0.75	0.66	0.91
Detroit, Mich.	0.74	0.61	0.82	0.73	0.74
St. Louis, Mo.-Ill.	0.71	0.52	0.79	0.67	0.80

\* An index of each metropolitan area's artists (including self-employed artists) as a share of all employment over the national share.

Source: Ann Markusen, Greg Schrock, and Martina Cameron. *The Artistic Dividend Revisited*. Minneapolis: Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2004. Data from Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0. Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 2003.

1980s and 1990s, despite the heavy hit to the arts sector from the implosion of National Endowment for the Arts funding and comparable state and local cuts. Among the top arts-rich cities, the Twin Cities was the only midsized metropolitan area to join the three arts super-cities of Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco in outstripping the relatively slow national growth rate of artists in the 1990s (Table 3).

One remarkable feature of Minnesota's artistic workforce is the extent to which it appears to be "homegrown." In the latter half of the 1990s, the Twin Cities was not a net gainer of artists through migration: slightly more artists left than arrived. Newcomers are a somewhat smaller share of all artists (16%) when compared with Los Angeles, Portland, New York, Atlanta, or San Francisco (20–28%). Because the ranks of artists grew relatively rapidly in the Twin Cities during the decade, we can infer that this was accounted for chiefly by local people entering artistic occupations. This homegrown

**Table 3. Number of Employed Artists in 2000 and Growth Rates of Employed Artists, 1980–2000, in Selected Metropolitan Areas**

	<b>Pct. Change 1980–1990</b>	<b>Pct. Change 1990–2000</b>	<b>Number in 2000</b>
Atlanta, Ga.	64	53	14,808
San Francisco–Oakland, Calif.	39	20	25,263
Los Angeles–Long Beach, Calif.	52	20	79,781
Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minn.	63	13	12,155
Portland, Ore.	66	10	6,630
Seattle, Wash.	52	9	11,030
Cleveland, Ohio	28	7	5,667
San Diego, Calif.	73	4	10,330
New York–Northeastern N.J.	33	4	77,216
Miami, Fla.	42	3	7,033
Boston, Mass.	73	2	16,884
Chicago, Ill.	50	1	26,901
Orange County, Calif.	87	-5	10,656
Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va.	70	-6	22,925
<b>United States</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>881,841</b>

Source: Computations by Ann Markusen and Greg Schrock, Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Data from Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0. Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 2003.

phenomenon may be credited in part to the state's artists' centers, because the vast majority of artists they serve are existing Minnesota residents. The centers help to retain area artists by continuing to serve their evolving needs as their careers unfold.

### Conclusions

The economic case for supporting artists and artistic activity is straightforward and similar to time-honored arguments for supporting the training and work of teachers, scientists, engineers, and health researchers. They produce spillover benefits for the larger society. If we did not invest in them publicly—through education, training, and research funding—they would be undersupplied and maldistributed. Our society would be more ignorant, less productive, poorer, less healthy, and, in the case of artists, less creative.

Of course, the tough question is how to make such investments in ways that maximize the spillover and distribute the fruits broadly. My research suggests

that embedding artists in dispersed physical spaces within their communities is an effective way of nurturing the creative economy and invigorating neighborhoods in the process.

In Minnesota, state and local governments have been very important contributors to the development and operation of artistic space, often without taking credit for it. Between 2002 and 2005, Minnesota's State Arts Board and its regional Arts Councils contributed almost \$2 million to artists' centers (Table 4). Among the artists' centers investigated, all those eligible received at least \$10,000 for projects and programs. Local governments have given centers historic buildings at token prices and helped to raise moneys for renovation and operations. Northfield Arts Guild was given its lovely downtown building for one dollar, and its renovation (raised by the guild's capital campaign) was a huge boost for the city's downtown. New York Mills' city council provided \$70,000 to renovate an 1885 brick mercantile building (donated

by its owner) into its Regional Cultural Center and continues to provide \$10,000 in annual operating costs.

Center directors and their host cities have been quite creative in tapping programs to fund artists' centers. From 1983 to 2005, a number of centers benefited from City of Minneapolis funding in the guise of grants and loans (Table 4). For instance, to help buy and rehab its new home on Lyndale Avenue, Intermedia Arts received loans totaling \$330,000 from City of Minneapolis programs. Northern Clay Center received \$270,000 from a blended participation loan between the city's Community Development Agency and a local bank.

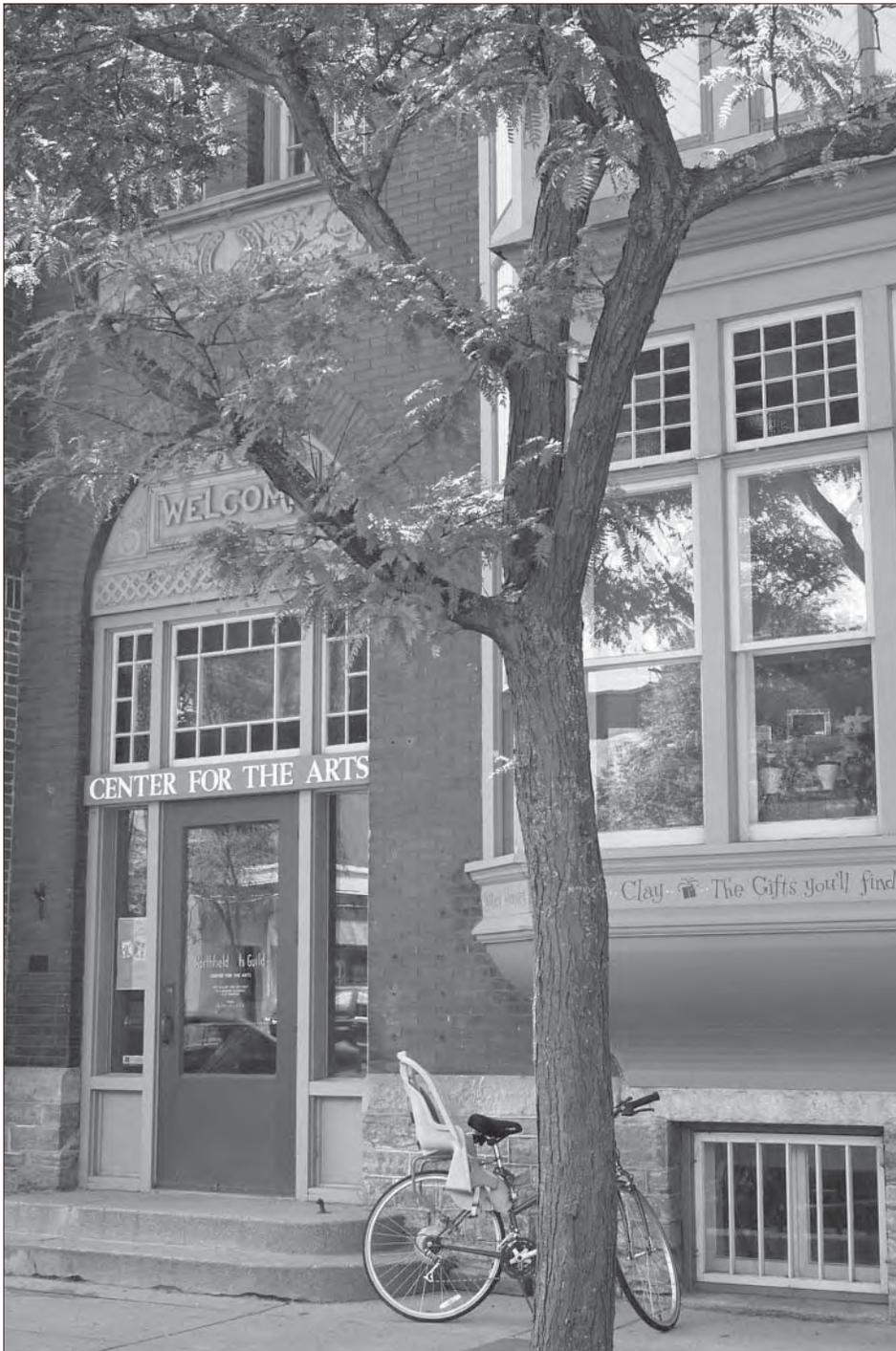
Our findings suggest that public and nonprofit policymakers responsible for economic development, urban planning, and cultural policy should acknowledge and support artists' service centers as good investments that pay cultural and economic dividends. The resources required to run this complex of centers in Minnesota are very modest in

**Table 4. Cumulative Awards from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Local Twin Cities Governments, and Regional Arts Councils**

	<b>Minnesota State Arts Board 2002–2005 (\$)</b>	<b>Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1983–2005 (\$)</b>	<b>Greater Minnesota City/County 1983–2005 (\$)</b>
American Composers Forum (MN)	352,044	75,000	
Intermedia Arts	230,396	330,000	
The Loft Literary Center	225,612		
Northern Clay Center	198,703	200,000	
Minnesota Center for Book Arts	133,867		
The Playwrights' Center	131,228	28,000	
Interact Center for Performing and Visual Arts	104,006		
SASE: The Write Place	98,339		
IFP Minnesota Center for Media Arts	97,749	47,500	
Northfield Arts Guild	80,313		
Duluth Art Institute	66,962		500,000
Minnesota Center for Photography	66,282		
Textile Center	49,252		
New York Mills Regional Cultural Center	32,649		64,000
Center for Independent Artists	25,761		
Grand Marais Arts Colony	17,318		
Juxtaposition Arts	17,081	200,000	
Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts	12,772		
Highpoint Center for Printmaking	11,200		
Homewood Studios	not eligible	80,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,951,534</b>	<b>960,500</b>	<b>564,000</b>

Note: State and local government totals are incomplete.

Source: Ann Markusen and Amanda Johnson. *Artists' Centers: Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies*. Minneapolis: Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2006. Data from Minnesota State Arts Board, 2005; Phil Lindsey, Minneapolis data through 2000; local government records; artists' centers.



***The Northfield Arts Guild brings artists and arts appreciators to the city's historic downtown area. By embedding artists in their communities, artists' centers help to nurture the creative economy and invigorate neighborhoods and small towns.***

comparison with what is spent on large arts organizations and on big economic development projects. As such, they should be considered candidates for brick-and-mortar support, operating funds, and technical assistance.

One barrier to such investment is the division of responsibility for cultural policy, economic development, and urban/regional planning into separate agencies at the state and local levels. In

the City of Minneapolis, for instance, land use and infrastructure decisions affecting artists' centers are made by the planning staff; disposition of buildings and rehabbing subsidies by the economic development staff; and public art and arts programming by the cultural affairs office. Yet other groups run federal pass-through programs or neighborhood revitalization programs that help individual centers.

The more that policymakers understand the synergy between the arts and economic development, the greater will be the effort to work across agencies and the more likely the collaboration. State and local governments should coordinate the many tools at their disposal to help create appropriate spaces for artists and embed such centers in their neighborhoods. In smaller towns, the synergy is more apparent, but many local leaders will not "get it" without concerted advocacy on the part of artists and art lovers and closer attention to models that are working elsewhere in the state.

Artists' centers are important intermediaries in the development of Minnesota's distinctive regional culture and the state's cultural economy. They provide an environment for learning, sharing, networking, and exposure not offered elsewhere in the regional arts ecology. Minnesota's remarkable ensemble of artists' centers have contributed to the state's continuing attractiveness as a place to live, to do business, and to innovate. In future work, I plan to study the impact of other forms of dedicated artist space—live/work and studio buildings and performing arts spaces—as complementary assets in Minnesota's creative economy.

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