

To Infinity & Beyond: How Art Placement Amplifies Community

I'VE RECENTLY FOUND myself marveling at the name of our organization. The Art Connection. It's short, sweet, and straightforward. But it is also one of those things that in practice can take many forms. The more I've observed as I step into the role of Program Manager, the more I have found that a lovely byproduct of connecting people and art has been amplifying a sense of community. The Art Placement Process is wonderfully unique and does this threefold:



The good cheer continues to be spread by a community member and staff in front of Susan Heidman's *Pond*.

Community Amongst Agency Staff and Clients

What I love about the selection process is that we encourage a recipient agency to assemble a committee that has a spectrum of representation of anyone who could spend time in the space. This creates a collision of different perspectives. Suddenly there's a room filled with a doctor, a patient, a board member, and a facilities person

collaborating to make decisions about what artworks would bring the most enrichment. Community is amplified here by giving everyone's voice equal weight and generating a sense of ownership of the artwork before it even hangs on a wall.

Community Between Artist & Agency

Through choosing the artwork, by default, the recipient agency has also chosen artists to form a bond with. We aid in that by providing contact information to allow artists and agencies to coordinate the pick up of artwork. Community is amplified here by setting up an open exchange for communication between both parties to explore. Visiting the studio and talking to the artist whose work has just been acquired is a common occurrence here rather than a rarity.

Community Amongst Agency, Clients & Artists

After all of the fun collaborating to choose art, pick up art, and install art, it's time for a party! I had the pleasure of seeing community amplified firsthand when attending an art reception at Harbor Health Elder Service Plan in Mattapan. The joy that radiated from



I had a great time mingling among Faith Hyde's work with Harbor Health Elder Service Plan's community at its recent reception.

the staff, the pride felt by the artists who met some of the people touched by their creations, and the positive energy generated by having their space brightened by the artwork was truly inspiring.

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THE MASTHEAD features "Magenta Birches" by Estelle Disch. This giclee print on canvas, a gift from the artist, was selected by Massachusetts Law Reform Institute in Boston. Working with low income individuals, families and communities, MLRI addresses issues surrounding housing, domestic violence, health, disability, and language access barriers and more.

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The Art Connection is a nonprofit organization that expands public access to visual art by placing the work of donor artists and collectors on the walls of community service organizations. Since its inception in 1995, this unique gifting program has supported over 400 agencies in their personal selection of over 7,400 pieces by more than 440 artists and collectors. Within these healing environments, the original works of art provide welcome opportunities for reflection, inspiration, comfort, and hope. Copyright © 2016 by The Art Connection, Inc. We welcome your contributions and comments.

This program is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boston Cultural Council, and several generous foundations and individuals.



Increasing Access to Art

ON THE SAME DAY this month, I wrote about how The Art Connection increases access to art for the Boston Cultural Council's grant application and reviewed a dozen reports and applications for funding at our expansion committee meeting where we advise on funding through The Boston Foundation (TBF). From describing how we are the heart and soul of the Boston Creates Cultural Plan, working in concert with its plan goals (<http://plan.bostoncreates.org/plan>) it was also heartening that the funding we recommend through The Fay Slover Fund at TBF makes possible increased access to art in low income communities around the country.

IN CHICAGO THE PROGRAM for which funding was approved promotes civic engagement and strives to cultivate creative, environmental and community-based youth activists. Path with Art, a program funded in Seattle, transforms the lives of people recovering from homelessness, addiction, and other trauma by harnessing the power of art as a bridge to community and a path to stability. The Fay Slover Fund grant helps install clients' original artworks in the halls of social service agencies. New programs approved for funding range from artists permanently placing work in public service facilities in Lexington, KY to supporting the permanent placement of photography created by middle and high school students in human service organizations in Roch-



Michael Rousseau, chair; Susan Bradley, vice chair; Andrew Hartness, new member; Rebecca Clower, clerk.



Susan Collings, Chanel Thervil, and Sarah Shallbetter in front of Chanel's sculpture *Emergence* on the BCA Plaza.

ester, NY. This exciting range of how Fay Chandler's vision and The Art Connection's mission is being interpreted and then implemented in community focused settings nationwide is indeed inspirational.

NOW, BACK TO BOSTON, where we directly seek to better serve and engage diverse audiences through our art placement program by providing opportunities to experience art in neighborhood settings. Our effort to put art in agencies that provide services for a wide range of populations confirms our belief that art provides both therapeutic and learning engagement through all stages of life. Finally, in the language of Boston Creates Plan, The Art Connection collaborates across sectors to generate excitement about art. We have an enthusiastic new program manager excited to combine art, education, and community by engaging with artists and organizations that use art to enrich and inspire the public. Her warmth and passion for spreading the joys of art will be a great addition to The Art Connection team. Please help us welcome Chanel Thervil! Also, please welcome our new board officers and members, named in accompanying photograph, along with donating photographer Henry Olds, not pictured. See <http://www.theartconnection.org/about/board-of-directors>

Susan Collings
Executive Director

Sharing My Art

I'VE BEEN VERY HAPPY with how my donated artwork has been cared for and how I've been treated. Through The Art Connection my work has found good homes because its staff has carefully worked with the recipient agencies to place my work. My art is often exhibited in waiting rooms where people in crisis wait for help. My art can be healing and uplifting and make people feel better.

AS AN ART DONOR, I've met many clients that these recipient agencies serve.



Maria Termini, *Wave Flower*, silkscreen, placed at Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (Memorial Drive) in Cambridge.

I've been very touched by their thanks and appreciation of my work. Often they see things in my work that I could

never imagine. So it's an enriching process for artists to donate. To me it's important to share my work, and The Art Connection lets me do this. Not being able to get my art into the world can be painful and frustrating because I want it to be seen.

AS AN ARTIST I have much unsold artwork. It's very hard to sell my artwork. My work isn't complicated. It's essentially about the joy of colors. However, the art world is very competitive, and I haven't been able to get my work into a commercial gallery nor get an agent. Yet, I do believe strongly in the value of my creative work. Like many of my artist friends, I have serious storage issues. I stay awake at night wondering how to safely store all this artwork and where will it all go. Through The Art Connection some of my work is out there doing its thing in many non-profits. I'm not famous nor a household word. I still have the problem of surviving into hopefully a long productive old age. I still dream of supporting myself



Maria Termini, *Big Rainbow Tree*, silkscreen, placed at The Community Group in Lawrence.

on the sale of my work, but at least by donating my work, it has a good home and is appreciated.

Maria Termini
Artist

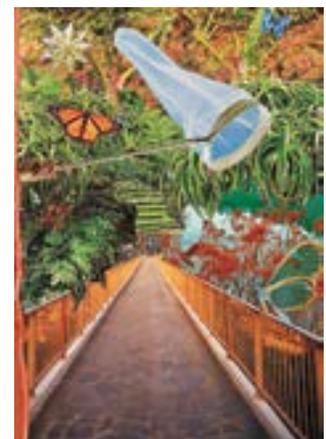
Recent Art Selections . . .



Reba Stewart (donated by McMillan-Stewart Foundation), *After Mayaguez Beach*, colored pen on paper, placed at STRIVE Boston. STRIVE's mission is to help chronically unemployed men and women realize their potential to find and keep jobs that promise sustainable livelihoods and personal growth.



Deborah Clearman, *Trailers in a Snowstorm*, silkscreen, placed at Father Bill's & MainSpring in Brockton. Their mission is ending and preventing homelessness in Southern Massachusetts with programs that provide emergency and permanent housing and help people obtain skills, jobs, housing, and services.



Anne Kirchheimer, *Floating Bridges* — *Inspired by the poem by Federico Garcia Lorca*, collage, selected by Operation Bootstrap in Lynn. Operation Bootstrap is the longest running adult education provider on the North Shore and is celebrating 40 years of serving adults with education services.



Judith Silverstein,
*Vinyl, acrylic, placed
at STRIVE Boston.*

Bringing Art to Life

Work by New Art Donors!



Mayuko Fujino, *Hort.ex #5*, paper cutout & magazine pages collage, placed at The Community Group in Lawrence.



Katherine Slusarz, *Media City*, mixed media: paper mache and oil paint, placed at Massachusetts Law Reform Institute in Boston.

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In addition to having the artwork act as a catalyst for togetherness, creativity is supported. Michael Bacon, Director of Nutritional Services at Boston Living Center reflects on the impact of their art placement by saying, "By having it [the artwork] on the walls, it has inspired some folks to want to do artwork and to place theirs on the wall with it. We now rotate our members' artwork on our dining room walls and we offer a number of art classes."

Moving forward, I'm excited to discover even more forms community can take through connecting open hearts with art.

Chanel Thervil
Program Manager

**The Art Connection relies
on individual donations.**

*Donations can be made as a
one-time gift or recurring donation
at theartconnection.org.*

