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2022

## **Mapping Seattle's Cultural Assets: Using Data from the Arts Ecosystem Research Project to Inform Future Arts Leaders**

Stefanie Fatooh

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**Mapping Seattle's Cultural Assets:**

**Using Data from the Arts Ecosystem Research Project to Inform Future Arts Leaders**

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Summary Project

June 11, 2022

The mapping of cultural assets has emerged as an evolution in the field of mapping. The resulting inventories of these assets can be valuable tools in planning efforts. This research paper examines how a variety of influences such as planning trends and philanthropic efforts have affected the formation and physical placement of cultural assets in Seattle from 1962 to the present; and the growth and resilience of the Seattle arts ecosystem in general.

**Abstract**

The mapping of cultural assets has emerged as an evolution in mapping, bringing together “both qualitative and quantitative mapping of cultures” in order to create a cultural inventory that allows for multi-faceted planning efforts (Duxbury, et al., 2015, p. 7). By placing the Seattle area arts organizations documented by the Arts Ecosystem Research Project (AERP) onto a map organized by decade, arts researchers can gain a valuable tool to utilize in the practice of *Sankofa*, which can be simply defined as “learning from or building on the past” (Quarcoo, 1972, as cited in Temple, 2010, p. 127). Examining this map can teach us many things about the past, but this project will address the following questions: What can data derived from AERP research tell us about how arts and cultural activity in Seattle has changed since the 1960s? Specifically, how has the geographic density of arts and culture activity within Seattle shifted over time? And what does analyzing this data through a series of micro versus macro level comparisons reveal about the Seattle arts sector? Through this analysis, we can better understand how a variety of influences such as cultural planning trends and local philanthropic efforts can affect the formation and physical placement of cultural assets in an urban area such as Seattle. This type of analysis can also give us valuable insights about not just the growth and resilience of the Seattle arts ecosystem, but the nature of arts ecosystems in general.

### **Mapping Seattle's Cultural Assets:**

#### **Using Data from the Arts Ecosystem Research Project to Inform Future Arts Leaders**

The Akan people of Ghana have a concept called *Sankofa* which refers to the active practice of learning from or building on the past (Quarcoo, 1972, as cited in Temple, 2010). As Temple (2010) describes, Sankofa has a variety of translations, which include: “go back and fetch it,” “return to your past,” and “it is not taboo to go back and retrieve what you have forgotten or lost” (p. 127). This practice has come up repeatedly in the context of my work at Seattle University with the Arts Ecosystem Research Project (AERP). The AERP methodology provides students and researchers the opportunity to engage in the practice of Sankofa by returning to the past through the use of qualitative methods such as interviews and surveys. Information gleaned from that process is placed on a timeline which gives a comprehensive overview of the Seattle arts sector from the 1962 World's Fair up to the modern day. The timeline is publicly available on the AERP website (see Appendix B). The lived experiences of arts leaders combined with other primary source research have been distilled into timeline entries: articles that document significant events, locations, and organizations in the Seattle arts sector. The timeline is intended to document the Seattle arts ecosystem as a whole. By tracking the development of the local arts sector, it demonstrates the ways in which the organizations, people, and events within that sector are all interconnected.

This mapping project is one example of the way the AERP archive can be leveraged by examining quantitative data that has been derived from the timeline entries. This paper seeks to address the following questions:

What can this data derived from AERP research tell us about how arts and cultural activity in Seattle has changed since the 1960s?

How has the geographic density of arts and culture activity in Seattle shifted over time?

What will this deductive approach reveal about the Seattle arts sector?

The products of the first stage of this mapping project include this paper and an interactive map that can be placed on the AERP website as a tool for future arts leaders, researchers, policy makers, urban and cultural planners, and the general public. This paper concludes with recommendations for future research that could be conducted based on this initial mapping project.

### **Literature Review**

An understanding of the history of cultural mapping and its relationship to cultural planning provides context for this project. It is helpful to understand why cultural maps are created; how this specific project is an exercise in cultural mapping; and how the results can have value within multiple contexts outside of academic research.

### **Cultural Mapping**

The act of mapping itself has evolved over time with available technology and today's maps have broader social and cultural functions (Roberts, 2012). Examining the idea of maps and mapping in a broader context has opened the practice up to criticism for its ties to colonialism, as well as issues that have arisen from the bias of cartographers and how that bias affects the representation that maps have traditionally provided (Currie & Correa, 2022; Duxbury, et al., 2015).

As Duxbury et al. (2015) describe, cultural mapping has offered a way for mapping to evolve in response to these criticisms. The beginnings of cultural mapping can be traced to the 1970s, when indigenous communities started to create "counter-maps" that challenged colonial geographies by documenting the indigenous practices, resources, and other intangible cultural

elements of their regions (Currie & Correa, 2022; Duxbury, et al., 2015). By incorporating alternative research methods and community-based knowledge, these indigenous communities created what would become the practice of cultural mapping as we know it, bringing together “both qualitative and quantitative mapping of cultures” in order to create a cultural inventory that allows for multi-faceted planning efforts (Duxbury, et al., 2015, p. 7). Ultimately, this opened the door for cultural maps to be used for “academic and public inquiry, cultural advocacy, and knowledge mobilization” especially as urban planning and cultural infrastructure have become greater concerns for cities and their communities (Duxbury, et al., 2015, p. 3; Lee & Gilmore, 2012).

Several theorists give examples of how cultural mapping can provide insight for communities by using data and examining the location of specific cultural assets in order to identify “cultural clusters” and inform cultural planning (Poon & Lai, 2008; Stern & Seifert, 2010). A cultural cluster “simply identifies a neighborhood that has spawned a density of assets—organizations, business, participants, and artists—that sets it apart from other neighborhoods” (Stern & Seifert, 2010, p. 262-263). There are many possible definitions of cultural assets. Cultural assets, also called cultural amenities, include private and public institutions that enable participation in aesthetic or cultural pursuits (Kloosterman, 2014). Taken more broadly, cultural assets can also refer to ephemeral cultural elements such as events, festivals, and the arts themselves – theater, dance, etc. (Throsby, 2012). While the latter is important, this project is concerned with the former, largely because the ability to place actual physical cultural assets on a map can allow that map to be used for further research.

### **Cultural Planning and Creative Placemaking**

As Lee and Gilmore (2012) point out, the practical uses of mapping for identification of geography and other landmarks has led it to be associated with planning. When we think of arts and culture, this translates into the use of mapping of cultural assets for the purpose of cultural planning and creative placemaking. Boston's Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (n.d.) offers a simple definition of cultural planning in their *Arts & Planning Toolkit*: "Cultural planning is a place-based planning process that generates a vision and action plan for strengthening and growing arts and culture assets" (para. 1). Similarly to cultural mapping, cultural planning straddles a few different disciplines. In the U.S., it is especially related to the practices of urban planning and creative placemaking (Evans & Foord, 2008). Creative placemaking is a form of cultural planning in which communities strategically shape themselves around arts and culture activities in a way that leads to economic and other benefits (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

Freestone and Gibson (2006) describe the evolution of urban planning paradigms in the U.S. by tracking the development of cultural planning through different stages:

1960s-1970s	Cultures of communities
1970s	Flagship facilities
1980s-1990s	Culture in development and regeneration
1990s-2000	Creative city <sup>1</sup>

We will revisit this historical planning perspective in the analysis section of this paper, but it can be argued that these paradigms have culminated in strategies such as cultural planning and creative placemaking that have been instrumental in shaping urban arts and culture.

### **Where This Project is Situated**

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<sup>1</sup> This list of paradigms offers a simplified version of the full table available in Appendix A.

While sources such as Evans and Foord (2008) detail many of the uses and descriptions of cultural planning, I am most interested in the intersectional commentary that has emerged from research in a variety of cultural planning-related disciplines. For example, cultural economists Grodach and Seman (2012) look at the effect of the early 2000s recession on major urban cultural economies. Markusen and Schrock (2006) examine the output of cultural economies on a larger scale and the positive effect of the arts on larger regions, as opposed to just urban centers. L'Heureux (2012) offers commentary on urban planning luminary Jane Jacobs, arguing that urban infrastructure is inherently racist and this bias in planning continues to affect neighborhoods today. These are just a few examples of research in adjacent disciplines that has influenced my frame of reference for the analysis within this project.

There are also a multitude of use cases and case studies that address cultural planning or mapping in urban centers. Currie and Correa (2012) document a cultural mapping project in Edinburgh, Scotland. Currie and Hsu (2019) describe the gathering of data by the City of Los Angeles for cultural planning. Duxbury et al. (2015) present a collection of articles that address cultural mapping projects both nationally and internationally. Specifically in Seattle, available resources about arts and culture in the city include a variety of data driven reports and case studies. The *Cultural Space Resources and Reports* by the City of Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture are one such example.<sup>2</sup>

However, this project addresses a gap between these specific case studies and the greater context provided by an interdisciplinary approach. My research proposes an analysis of the Seattle arts ecosystem using quantitative data that has been derived from the AERP archive, which has been created through a qualitative research approach. Specifically, I will use this

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.seattle.gov/arts/programs/cultural-space/cultural-space-resources-and-reports>



mixed method approach to examine the density of the Seattle arts and culture sector from the 1960s to the 2010s in order to gain a better understanding of how that geographic density has shifted over time, using a micro versus macro analysis to situate the results.

### **Methodology**

To contextualize this project, I will position myself in relation to the topic. I am a newer resident of Seattle, having relocated from California in 2019. I became involved with the Arts Ecosystem Research Project in the fall of 2020 when I started the graduate program in Arts Leadership at Seattle University. Since then, I have continued to work on the project as a research fellow, research assistant, and a contributor. I am also an early career cultural worker in Seattle and have worked professionally at several performing arts institutions, as well as Seattle University.

### **What is AERP?**

The methodology for this project is rooted in The Arts Ecosystem Project (AERP), which is an ongoing applied research project of Seattle University's Master of Fine Arts in Arts Leadership Program and Lemieux Library. The AERP is dedicated to researching, documenting, and sharing information on the Seattle region's dynamic arts and culture sector. As described earlier, AERP uses a specific methodology that is centered around qualitative research supplemented by historical archival analysis to document the arts organizations, businesses, and major events that have shaped the Seattle region. The AERP research period starts with the 1962 World's Fair, which is considered to be a threshold event in the cultural history of Seattle.

The first phase of AERP research began in 2018. In the project's first year, participating MFA students collected data from the arts community, which they used to build a digital *Arts Ecosystem Timeline* (Appendix B) of organizations and events from 1962 to 2012. This time

frame has since been extended up to the current day for entities that have been in existence for at least five years. Each year, additional student research and related sources expand on selected timeline entries via a digital repository. The motivation for using qualitative research to form this archive is to collect information while many of the individuals who have firsthand involvement in or knowledge of the events and organizations on the timeline are able contribute to the project. This is the aspect of the project that ties it to the practice of *Sankofa*, as students gain understanding of the legacy and lineage of the still young and growing arts ecosystem of Seattle from those who experienced it. AERP also provides a foundation for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the sector and sets the stage for further research to inform the future of the arts sector here and elsewhere.

### **The Mapping Process**

For this project, I have utilized the resource created through the collection of qualitative data for the *AERP Timeline* to derive a quantitative data set from that information. This data set consists of the addresses of the physical locations of each organization and the time period that they were located at each address. I was able to use the AERP archive as a starting point because it includes the years that each organization began and/or ceased operating. In order for this data to serve as an added element of the AERP archive, I organized my work in a spreadsheet. I created a chronological list of the organizations, organized by their starting year, then began to research their addresses. For some organizations that are very large or that are still operating, this was easy. For others, this proved to be more challenging for several reasons.

These challenges led to certain decisions about what to include on the map for the purposes of this project. First, the *AERP Timeline* includes some keystone events that occurred in the Seattle arts sector and played an important role in its development. Since the map is more

concerned with physical locations of arts organizations, I decided not to include these events on the final map. However, this was the most straightforward challenge to the process; others were more complicated. For example, some organizations have moved many times throughout their histories. While this could be for a variety of reasons, it's probably safe to assume that this often happens when organizations have difficulties accessing affordable or permanent space.

Depending on how much documentation existed on the organization, all their previous addresses might not be known, which means that only their current address shows up on this map. This same issue extended to organizations that have been documented on the timeline, but which no longer exist, and whose past addresses I was unable to find. Yet another set of organizations only had an office address or a P.O. box, but not the address where the organization's actual mission delivery took place. Due to these complications and the time constraints for this first phase of mapping, I was unable to find all of the organizations' physical locations and they are therefore not shown on this map. The unintended consequence is that this map is more likely to show the locations of better resourced organizations that have higher visibility and/or mostly permanent locations.

Despite these challenges, I was able to identify multiple addresses for some organizations, tracking any moves they made across the city. In this case, I listed the organization on my spreadsheet again with the year that they moved to each address. In cases where organizations changed names, but not addresses, I simply combined the names on the entry to simplify the map. As of May 2022, the AERP *Timeline* has a total of 152 entries; this iteration of the map has 109 mapped organization locations. Additionally, I have a list of 67 entities that I either chose not to map (because they were events) or which need further research to find their exact locations.

The resulting map has been separated into different layers for each decade of the timeline (from the 1960s to the 2010s) so that this data can be examined with an eye towards the changes in Seattle and its arts ecosystem over this period of time<sup>3</sup>. Entering into this process with a deductive approach has allowed the map to inform my analysis. The analysis of this mapping process relies on historical archive analysis, alongside a methodology of micro versus macro analysis to help contextualize the results in relation to AERP and the local Seattle arts ecosystem.

### **Analysis**

There are many possible applications of micro versus macro analysis, but this lens is especially applicable for mapping projects, which by nature deal with spatial and geographic areas that can easily be examined on a micro level (e.g. a specific neighborhood or section of the city) versus a macro level (e.g. the entire city of Seattle). In analyzing the resulting map, I will be utilizing this micro versus macro approach within three different scales: the macro scale of Seattle as a whole; and the micro scales of a single neighborhood (Uptown) and a single organization (On the Boards). I'll be starting with the macro lens for this analysis, to create a context for the micro lenses before I discuss them in depth. However, I think it is important to state that this paper offers one of many possible interpretations of this map that could be made from a variety of spatial and geographic contexts.

#### **Macro Analysis: Seattle**

Examining the map on a macro level that includes all of Seattle demonstrates the exponential growth in the local arts sector from 1962 to today. One of the more detailed patterns that emerges when looking at the broader map is the existence of cultural clusters that have developed in various parts of the city. These cultural clusters illustrate the density of arts sector-

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for a link to view the complete map online.

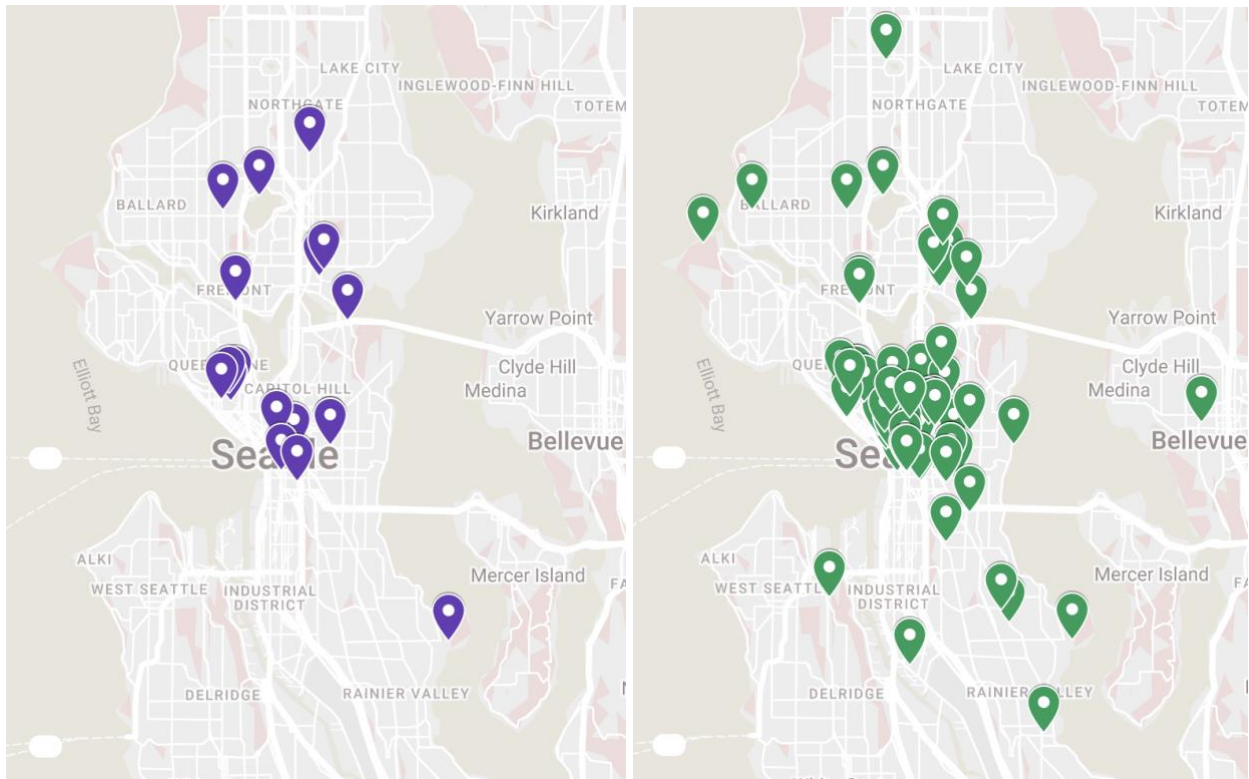
related activities. While the densest cluster is present in Uptown, there are also smaller clusters in neighborhoods like Pioneer Square, Capitol Hill and the Central District. The idea of cultural clusters is a key factor within the concept of creative placemaking. Simply put, whether these clusters are developed organically or planned, they not only grow naturally once established, but they also foster economic and community benefits that help contribute to their sustainability (Goldberg-Miller & Heimlich, 2017; Stern & Seifert, 2010).

Stern and Seifert (2010) posit that planners can help sustain these clusters further by “allowing concentrations of existing resources to reinforce one another” (p. 263). This same concept is reinforced by other creative placemaking frameworks such as the *Power of 10*: the concept that a neighborhood can reach a cultural critical mass by having at least ten things to do as a way to attract residents and tourists. This concept can be expanded to the city level as well, by creating a goal of having at least ten neighborhoods that have achieved this critical mass (Project for Public Spaces, 2009).

Florida (2002) discusses this same theory in relation to individual creatives. As he describes, the presence of creative unconventional people or “bohemians” in a region attracts not only other bohemians, but also highly skilled and creative individuals. He suggests that a concentration of bohemians in an area signals its receptivity to innovation and therefore its attractiveness to high tech industries (Florida, 2002). This can be seen in Seattle, where creative clusters reside adjacent to neighborhoods which house big tech, i.e., Uptown’s proximity to South Lake Union.

**Figure 1**

*Macro Level View of AERP Map, 1960s (Left) Compared to 2000s (Right)*



While the effects of gentrification and other demographic changes in relation to these cultural clusters are worth examining more in depth, it is important to at least note that, in Seattle, the areas that attract highly skilled and creative individuals are the same areas that have been gentrifying since 1990 (Luberoff, 2019)<sup>4</sup>. Florida's (2002) theory also proves to be true when examining population statistics that report a growing number of artistic occupations in Seattle between the 1980s and 2000s. Seattle saw a 52 percent increase in the number of artists on the census between 1980 and 1990. This huge growth spurt was followed by a nine percent increase between 1990 and 2000 (Markusen & Schrock, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C for a map showing recent Seattle gentrification.

Another possible macro analysis of this map can be derived from the work of urban planning scholars Freestone and Gibson (2006) who interpret cultural activities in relation to historic trends of urban planning. Freestone and Gibson (2006) outline this history by naming planning paradigms and giving examples of the type of cultural activity and place that corresponds to them. The following is an excerpt of one of their charts, with local examples that I have added alongside the original descriptors from Freestone and Gibson (2006):<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1**

*Table Showing Cultural Planning Paradigms and Examples*

<u>Period</u>	<u>Paradigms</u>	<u>Places, Plans and Exemplars</u>
1960s-1970s	Flagship Facilities	Example: Seattle Center and its use for the arts
1960s-1970s	Cultures of communities	Community arts facilities; heritage movement; community cultural development; social planning. Examples: Wing Luke Museum, Black Arts/West, El Centro de la Raza
1980s-1990s	Culture in urban development	Cultural regeneration and cultural industries strategies; festival marketplaces; local economic development. Examples: Adaptive reuse projects such as the remodeling of the former ACT location to create the current location of On the Boards, Earshot Jazz, Artist Trust
1990s-2000s	The creative city	Arts and cultural planning strategies; urban design; cultural precincts; cultural tourism.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A for the original table from Freestone and Gibson (2006).

Example: Arts Corps, City of Seattle  
Office of Film + Music, Olympic  
Sculpture Park

While these planning trends are not the only influence on the development of the Seattle arts ecosystem, there are clear correlations between these trends and the AERP data set. I find the flagship facilities trend of the 1960s-1970s especially relevant to this project, since the AERP's timeline starts with the 1962 World's Fair as a watershed moment for the history of the Seattle arts ecosystem. Whether they are situated in original buildings or in more recently renovated buildings, many of the flagship facilities of our city's arts organizations are located on the Seattle Center campus, which we'll return to examining as a part of my micro analysis.

Additionally, it is arguable that the 1980s-2000s movements of culture in urban development and the creative city drove growth around Seattle's flagship facilities. During these decades, the Uptown cultural cluster grew and spread around established organizations like Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Seattle Children's Theatre. In 1998, On the Boards moved into a renovated building that had previously housed ACT Theatre. The Experience Music Project – now known as the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP) – opened in 2000. Smaller organizations like the Vera Project moved into Seattle Center in 2007. Only a half-mile to the southwest, the Olympic Sculpture Park also opened in 2007.

Downtown Seattle also became more established during the 1980s-2000s as an arts cluster that reinforced the idea of Seattle as a “creative city”. This is the same time period in which many cities saw renewed interest – and funds – focused on revitalizing their downtown areas (Poon & Lai, 2008). Seattle Art Museum's downtown location opened in 1991 and launched a new mini cultural cluster. A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) moved into the restored



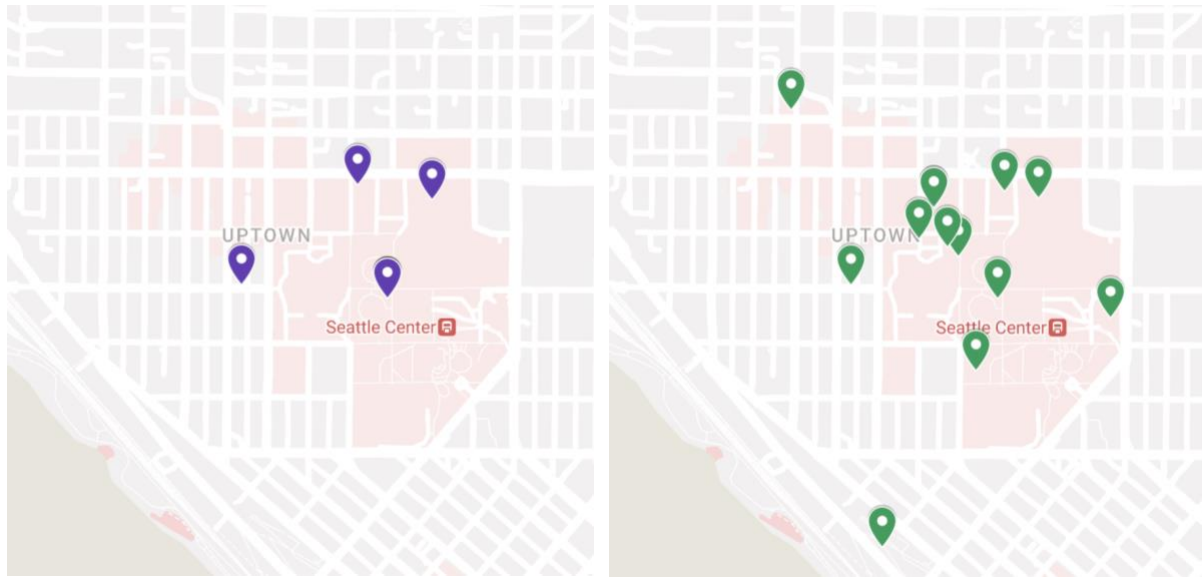
and renamed Kreielsheimer Place – already a notable historic and cultural asset as Eagles Auditorium – in 1996. Benaroya Hall opened across the street from the Art Museum in 1998. Growth patterns like these not only align with Freestone and Gibson's (2006) historical paradigms, they also demonstrate how planned cultural facilities can reinforce and sustain one another within cultural clusters (Stern and Seifert, 2010).

### **Micro Analysis: Uptown**

For the first micro analysis, I examined the cultural cluster around Seattle Center, in Uptown. In the past, this area was referred to as Lower Queen Anne, but it earned an Arts & Cultural District designation as Uptown in 2017. I selected this area because of its significance to AERP, as well as its pronounced density; while this cultural cluster is visible on the map in the 1960s, it has grown in each subsequent decade. Although Uptown officially became Seattle's third Arts & Cultural District in 2017, Seattle Center has been a planned cultural hub since the World's Fair (City of Seattle, n.d.a). Although the choice of that location was based on many factors, including the availability of space on the World's Fair campus and the City reclaiming ownership of the grounds after the Fair concluded, this cluster's continued growth was also encouraged by the choices that local philanthropists have made in the intervening years (Watson, 2012).

**Figure 2**

*Micro Level View of AERP Map, 1960s (Left) Compared to 2000s (Right)*



While there are few sources that give a comprehensive view of the history of philanthropy in Seattle, a 2017 article by arts journalist Marcie Sillman discussed the impact of Bagley and Virginia Wright's philanthropy in Seattle following the 1962 World's Fair, incorporating insights from an interview with Bagley Wright himself. Wright was a real estate developer, part of the group that built the Space Needle, and felt that it was his job "to find some way of using the buildings that were left" after the Fair ended (Sillman, 2017, para. 9). Much of the Wrights' arts philanthropy revolved around the Seattle Center campus and its resident organizations. The Wrights had previously lived in New York and felt a lack of culture in the Pacific Northwest by comparison. They used their influence and resources to strengthen established arts organizations as a way of shaping Seattle's future as a major metropolis (Sillman, 2017). Subsequently, the Wrights became involved with PONCHO (Patrons of Northwest Civic, Cultural and Charitable Organizations) and were instrumental in raising money

for the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Seattle Symphony and the Seattle Opera, all of which were at one time located on the Seattle Center campus (Sillman, 2017; Watson, 2012)<sup>6</sup>. The Wrights' philanthropy – and the philanthropy of others that they encouraged in Seattle – was part of the movement toward private arts funding that was growing in other American cities at the time (Lawrence, 2018).

The arts philanthropy of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen provides a more recent example of funding that has affected the Uptown cultural cluster. While the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and Allen's real estate development company Vulcan would play important roles in the arts sector across the entire Pacific Northwest region, Allen's philanthropy had an outsized impact on the Seattle arts sector, with the funding of many art collections and arts and culture facilities across the city (Bryan, et al., 2018; Graves, 2015). The Allen Foundation supported a number organizations that are still based in Uptown, including On the Boards, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Opera, Seattle Repertory Theatre, KEXP radio, and the Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF) (Bryan, et al., 2018). Allen's most visible contribution to Uptown is the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP) – founded in 2000 as the Experience Music Project – which occupies a distinctive building by architect Frank O. Gehry on the east edge of the Seattle Center campus (Crowley, 2003). The loss of Allen's philanthropy has also had a major impact on the Seattle arts sector. In 2015, the Allen Foundation shifted its funding priorities away from arts organizations in the Pacific Northwest. Allen's death in 2018 led to more changes in his philanthropic and business empire, culminating in the 2020 closure of Vulcan's Arts + Entertainment division (Graves, 2015; Macdonald, 2020).

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<sup>6</sup> Seattle Symphony performed at Seattle Center from 1962-1998 when it moved to its new location in Benaroya Hall.

Markusen and Schrock (2006) note that both public and private funders' support of the arts sector directly contribute to the positive effects that the arts have on urban neighborhoods. While they were not the only arts philanthropists active in Seattle during the timeframe of the AERP, Allen and the Wrights clearly influenced the development of the arts landscape in Seattle, and especially in the micro area of Uptown. In relation to Freestone and Gibson's (2006) planning paradigms, the Wrights' philanthropy seems directly connected to the development of flagship facilities in Seattle in the 1960s and 1970s, while Allen's philanthropy relates more to the 1980s-1990s trend of culture in urban development and the 1990s-2000s creative city trend.

Allen's arts philanthropy in Seattle mirrored national patterns. The 1980s saw big growth across all sectors of the arts and culture funding community. In the 1990s, incredible growth in personal wealth translated into higher levels of individual support for the arts (Lawrence, 2018). While this personal philanthropy played a huge role in sustaining many Seattle arts organizations through the 1990s and 2000s, the effects of the contraction of this type of funding after 2010 – as seen in the Allen Foundation and its changing priorities – have yet to be fully researched or understood.

### **Micro Analysis: On the Boards**

One of the best ways to understand how this project can impact future arts leaders is to look at a single organization and how its history and other factors have affected its presence on the map. For this micro analysis, I examined the contemporary performing arts organization On the Boards. Founded in 1978, On the Boards was initially located in the landmark Washington Hall on First Hill, which was managed by a community group called the Sons of Haiti (Arts Ecosystem Research Project [AERP], n.d.). In 1998, On the Boards relocated to the historic and newly renovated Queen Anne Hall in lower Queen Anne/Uptown, which had previously housed

ACT Theatre (On the Boards [OtB], n.d.; Kershner, 2012). The building was renamed the Behnke Center for Contemporary Performance; its 300-seat theater dubbed the Merrill Theatre, in honor of donor Merrill Wright (OtB, n.d.). This new location was funded by a capital campaign that included many of the prominent corporations, individuals and foundations active in Seattle arts philanthropy: Boeing, Microsoft, the Allen Foundation, the Bagley Wright Fund, the NEA, and the Behnke family (Dorpat, 2006).

While On the Boards' original location in the community-oriented Washington Hall could be viewed as part of Freestone and Gibson's (2006) cultures of communities paradigm, the organization's move to a creative reuse of another former community hall in Uptown in 1998 bridges the dual paradigms of culture in community development and the creative city. In moving to Uptown, On the Boards became part of a growth spurt of the Uptown cultural cluster and has presumably benefitted from its proximity to other major Seattle arts institutions while contributing to the cultural critical mass of the area (Project for Public Spaces, 2009). Known for its avant garde programming, On the Boards plays a unique role in Uptown by providing a counterpoint to the more traditional arts programming that can be found down the street at Seattle Center (Dorpat, 2006).

Looking at the history of an organization like On the Boards is the type of micro analysis that could be done for any organization on the AERP timeline. The historical analysis of one organization is enhanced by the map and by the AERP archive which offer a greater understanding of how each organization is situated within the context of the Seattle arts ecosystem historically, physically, and sociologically. This gives new, more holistic meaning to the idea of institutional knowledge. In this way, not only is *Sankofa* practiced in the creation of

the archive, but the availability of the archive and its resources to the public allows anyone who encounters them to benefit from it as an extension of the practice.

### **Conclusion**

*“Pick up the gems of the past...as the forward march proceeds, the gems must be picked up from behind and carried forward on the march.”*

*(Quarcoo, 1972, p. 17, as cited in Temple, 2010)*

In closing, it is necessary to acknowledge what does not appear on this map. As this map is based on the AERP archive, an absence of information can indicate a topic or area that is not yet represented in the archive and which requires additional research. The second possibility is that it is an area where arts organizations have not had a sustained presence. Outside of the city's core, which includes Uptown, Downtown, the International District, the Central District, and Capitol Hill – all places where there is a high density of development and a pronounced concentration of arts organizations – there are many sections of the city that do not have as many arts organizations: southwestern Seattle from West Seattle down through Delridge and White Center; south Seattle including the Rainier Valley, Beacon Hill, and SoDo; Magnolia and Interbay; and north Seattle including Crown Hill, Northgate, Wedgwood and Ravenna.

A variety of assumptions can be made about this. These neighborhoods largely consist of industrial areas (SoDo and Interbay), recently gentrified areas (Rainier Valley and Delridge), or areas that are largely suburban (West Seattle, Magnolia, Ravenna). However, Seattle has had staggering population growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Between 2010 and 2020, the city's population grew by 21 percent, making it the biggest decade of growth for Seattle since the 1940's (Balk,

2021). It is safe to assume that with a growing population, there will be a growing demand for better cultural planning to improve access to cultural assets in the future.

### **Recommendations**

There are several possible next steps for this project. The first is to integrate it with the AERP timeline by making the current iteration of the map available online, allowing others to access this research as a part of the AERP archive. The 67 entities that were not mapped could be the subject of future research. Viewing the map analytically can provide guidance for future efforts to expand the timeline by identifying neighborhoods which are not currently represented in the archive. There is also potential for deeper analysis based on this initial research. Potential topics for further research include: population and demographic changes; the history of redlining and segregation in Seattle<sup>7</sup>; and local arts philanthropy trends and history. Examining these new dimensions could add new layers to the map that would help viewers relate patterns of cultural activity to demographic changes in the city, or sort arts organizations by different criteria. One possible example would be the addition of a layer that maps BIPOC-led arts organizations.

### **The Gems of the Past**

When re-examining the initial research question of this project, there is still a simple conclusion: the density of cultural assets in Seattle has exponentially grown since the 1960s. While that growth is concentrated in certain areas of the city, there is no denying that our arts sector has experienced – and sustained – significant growth. The larger “gem” from this conclusion is that this has been achieved despite the many obstacles that arts organizations encounter on a regular basis. If this type of growth is possible despite cuts in funding, rapidly

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<sup>7</sup> Comprehensive history on segregation and redlining already exists and would make for a useful comparison: [https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregation\\_maps.htm](https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregation_maps.htm)

growing costs, and real estate shortages, what might be possible in the future if we consciously create opportunities for sustainable cultural assets? By understanding our history and the complexities of the issues that affect an exercise like mapping, we as future arts leaders can be better prepared to move forward while still honoring the past, thus fully embracing the practice of *Sankofa*.

**Method Note:** This research was conducted and documented by Stefanie M. Fatooh, MFA 2022 as a thesis project for Seattle University's MFA in Arts Leadership during Winter and Spring Quarters, 2022. Susan Kunimatsu provided editing.



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**Appendix A**

**“Physical-Economic-Cultural Planning Paradigms” from Freestone and Gibson (2006)**

Period	Paradigms	Theorists and practitioners	Places, Plans and Exemplars
1900s– 1910s	City as a work of art	Daniel Burnham	The models of Paris and Vienna; city beautiful movement; Plan of Chicago; Plan for Canberra
1910s– 1950s	Cultural zonation	Harland Bartholomew Patrick Abercrombie	Civic-cultural centers; neighborhood civic facilities; city functional and post WW2 master plans
1960s– 1970s	Flagship facilities	Robert Moses	Lincoln Centre; JFK Centre; Sydney Opera House
1960s– 1970s	Cultures of communities	Jane Jacobs	Community arts facilities; heritage movement; community cultural development; social planning
1980s– 1990s	Culture in urban development	Progressive city administrations Pasqual Maragall Sharon Zukin	Cultural regeneration and cultural industries strategies; festival marketplaces; local economic development; European Capital of Culture; Barcelona; Bilbao; Baltimore; Glasgow; Manchester
1990s– 2000s	The creative city	Charles Landry Richard Florida Allen Scott	Arts and cultural planning strategies; urban design; cultural precincts; cultural tourism; Huddersfield; Helsinki; Berlin

*Source: Freestone & Gibson, 2006, p. 23*

## Appendix B

### Supplemental Links

1. *Arts Ecosystem Timeline* – <https://www.seattleu.edu/artsecosystem>

The *Arts Ecosystem Timeline* can be browsed online in two ways: the first is as a visual timeline, where you can see each *Timeline Entry* organized chronologically; and the second is by browsing the *Timeline Entries* on their own individual pages, which include both the text of the entry itself, along with links to a variety of related resources for the event/organization.

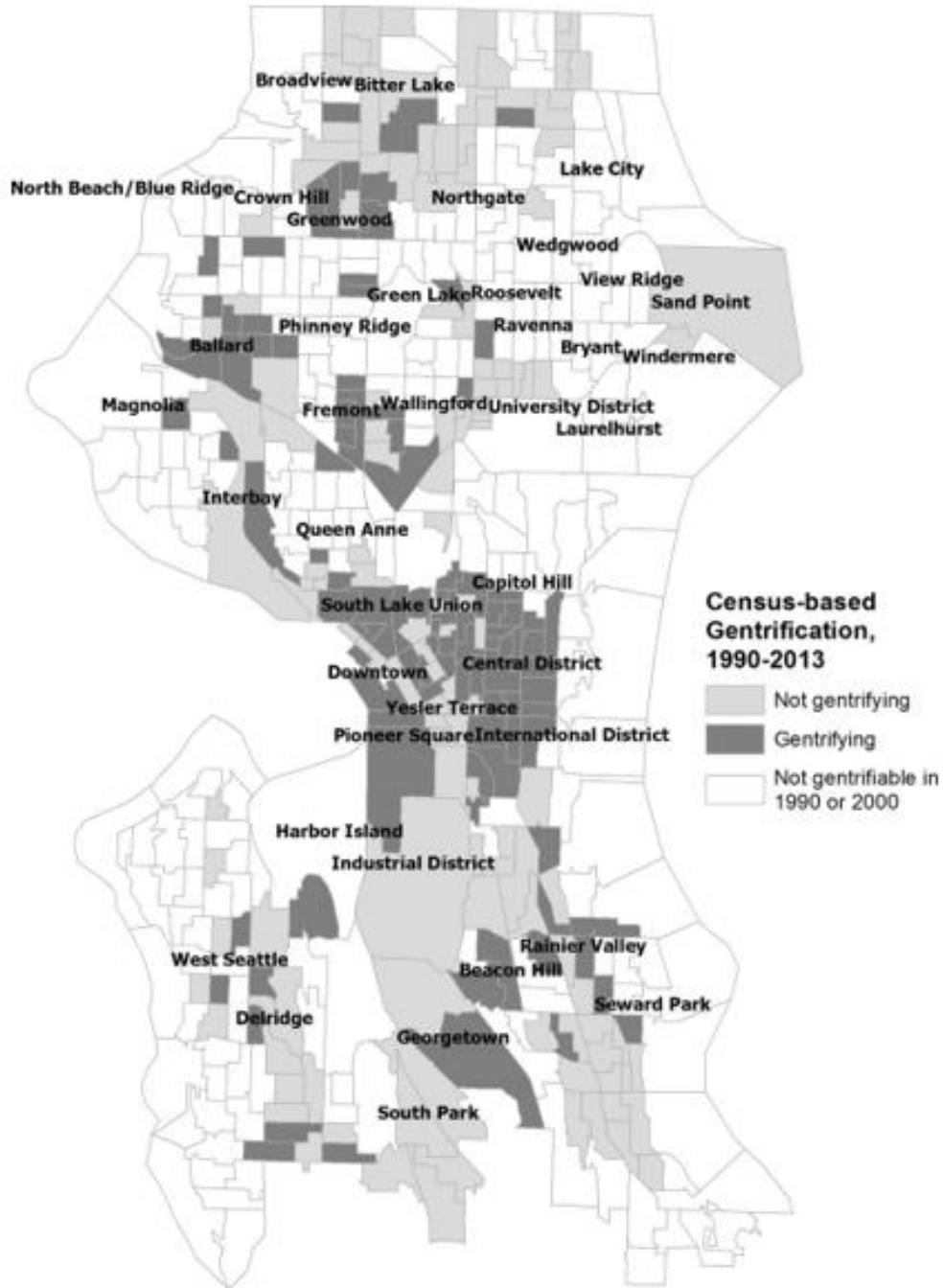
2. *AERP Timeline Entry Locations Map* -

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1H\\_mx1fkKFpdAblvzAl\\_6Mr0qAaeiasIJ&usp=sharing](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1H_mx1fkKFpdAblvzAl_6Mr0qAaeiasIJ&usp=sharing)

This map corresponds to the data set generated from the AERP archive. There is a layer for each decade, and the key to the left of the map lists the organizations on each layer, with the year that they were first located at the mapped address.

Appendix C

Map Showing Gentrification in Seattle 1990-2013



Source: US Census and American Community Survey, as cited in Luberoff, 2019.