

Los Angeles, where community vibrancy matters

mcs.smu.edu/artsresearch2014/LosAngeles-AVI17

Jun, 21 2017 / In

[cultural assets](#), [art desert](#), [festivals](#), [neighborhoods](#), [pop-up](#), [funding](#), [artists](#), [public art](#), [innovation](#), [arts vibrancy index](#), [Los Angeles](#), [culture](#)

/ by jaarmstrong



Seedling Reallocation Workshop led by artist Devon Tsuno, *CURRENT:LA Water*, July, 2016

Guest post by Wendy F. Hsu, Digital Strategist, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

The Los Angeles region is vast and multilayered. Arts vibrancy in this region is beyond what it's shown on the screen. With a population of over 4 million, Los Angeles is a site of creative crossings and dynamic cultural change. Catalyzing dialogs and social discourse, arts and culture give life and community vibrancy to the region.

At the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, we are celebrating a year of artistic innovation and critical dialogs. Our first installment of the Public Art Biennial *CURRENT:LA Water* brought over 33,000 local and international visitors. With 15 sites of temporary public art installations and programming along the city's waterways, the biennial generated community dialogue and civic discourse on the issue of water and related topics such as infrastructure, drought, ecology, and conservation specific to our region.

Our communities thrive on public support from the City and County of Los Angeles. Each year DCA allocates over 300 grants, funded by the City's hotel tax, to support nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. Among DCA's four grant programs is the [Arts Activations Fund](#). This new program supports creative projects with the goal to engage and activate communities throughout the City. These projects range from a clean energy festival and pop-up cultural celebrations at Metro stations, to a mobile storytelling and recording studio in eastside Los Angeles. In the inaugural season, projects funded by this program served 56,700 individuals and supported 473 local artists.

Los Angeles is a cosmopolitan metropolis -- a constellation of many diverse neighborhoods. With a history of being a cultural frontier, LA continues to transform itself among, and across, a multitude of communities. Our [arts centers](#) are community cornerstones, offering arts education, performances, gallery exhibitions, festivals, and historic preservation tours. Embedded within LA's many communities, these art centers provide culturally specific programming such as a black doll exhibition and Son Jarocho classes for young people, serving residents across LA including those living in areas away from the city's traditional arts hubs. These DCA facilities produce or host over 7,000 events leading to over 220,000 attendance occurrences each year.

The Los Angeles region has a complex geography. While the NCAR Index provides a glimpse of our creative landscape relative to our peers, we are working to ensure that community vibrancy spreads across the City. DCA is currently developing the Neighborhood Arts Profile, a research tool that assesses arts vibrancy in each of the City's 200+ neighborhoods. With this tool, we can identify "arts deserts," locating areas of concentration and scarcity of infrastructural support for cultural assets and activities, alongside community wellbeing indicators. Disaggregating data can help us discern areas of geographical disparity and doing so within the context of community wellbeing can shed light on the role of arts and culture within each neighborhood. This pursuit of neighborhood-level insights will inform our place-based strategy toward city-wide community vibrancy.

External Link:

<http://bit.ly/NCARartsvibrancy>