

Appendix C

Evolution of Arts Uses in the Arts Overlay Zone **A short (and incomplete) history of the arts on 14th and U Streets**

While there has been a significant amount of research and writing about the “Black Broadway” of U Street during the early part of the 20th century, less information is available about the renaissance of arts and arts institutions in the neighborhood since the riots of 1968, and why the neighborhood can claim as many arts institutions as it does.

This is a first attempt to put together a history of the theatric, visual, and musical arts as these institutions appear at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, and is not meant to serve as a comprehensive review. A more thorough study of the history of arts in the community needs to be undertaken in order to capture a complete picture. In addition, much of the history is due to the initiative and accomplishments of a few key individuals, and those people each deserve to tell their story in their own words. As the arts district continues to develop, it will be important to return to this document and expand upon it to better appreciate why arts institutions are among us, how they have been able to sustain, and what can be done to encourage their longevity and growth in the decades to come.

Theatres and theatrical groups

The riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King left 14th and U Streets largely intact, but scarred. Merchants used metal grates and sliding garage-style barriers to close their businesses at the end of the day. Families that lived in the neighborhood moved away, with residential buildings being acquired by real estate investors, who then broke interiors into apartments for rent. Vacant property was not unusual. 14th Street became the District’s red light zone, in particular on the southern end near Thomas Circle. Street prostitution was so heavy in the area that by the mid-late 1970s, police were barricading parts of Logan Circle to divert traffic away from residential streets. One small supermarket existed on P Street between 14th and 15th, but the area was bereft of retail beyond liquor stores, convenience stores, and a smattering of fast food and take-out.

But it was in this period, the late 1970s, that two institutions took root that would become prominent in the neighborhood – The Studio Theater and The Source Theatre.

The Studio Theater
<http://www.studiotheatre.org>

The Studio Theatre was founded in 1978 by Joy Zinoman, Russell Metheny, and Virginia Crawford. At its inception, Studio operated from shared space at 1443 Rhode Island Avenue NW, in a building whose subsequent demolition contributed to community mobilization to establish the Greater 14th Street Historic District. At that time, Studio shared space with the Zenith Gallery and The Dance Place. As artistic director, Ms. Zinoman began establishing The Studio as a theatre company that would premiere new works, stage innovative revivals as well as offer performance art. Mr. Metheny served as resident set designer.

The success of Studio from its inception drove the company to find bigger space. In 1980, Studio rented 1401 Church Street, a warehouse that had been used to store hot dog vendor carts. In that space, Studio built a 110-seat theater that was later used by the Woolly Mammoth theatre company (a company that has since relocated out of the neighborhood) and briefly as Studio Theater Secondstage (2000-2001).

Seven years later, in October of 1987, The Studio Theatre moved again to a new rental location at the corner of 14th Street and P Streets. This former automobile showroom and repair shop was converted into the 200-seat Mead Theatre. Offices and classrooms were built on the 3rd floor. The main entrance to the building was from the P Street side. In 1993, following a successful capital campaign, the theatre purchased the building.

The theatre continued to prosper and successfully attracted donors willing to contribute toward its expansion. In March 1997, Studio completed a \$5.5 million renovation, adding the 200-seat Milton Theatre. In October 2001, Studio purchased the two adjacent buildings on 14th Street (1507 and 1509), and initiated a \$11 million capital campaign to integrate those structures into its growing theatrical complex. Two additional theatres were added, as well as the new glass atrium entrance on 14th Street.

While most associate The Studio with critically-acclaimed theatrical productions of national importance, the institution is multifaceted. It offers an acting conservatory for professional training, and has served as the host for other theatre festivals, such as the Black Women Playwright's Festival. Its "Art Motivating Youth" programs provide scholarships to young actors, apprenticeships to college students and, under the Passport to the Imagination program, free performances for classrooms and teachers including a discussion of the performance.

The Source Theatre
<http://www.sourcedc.org>

About the same time as The Studio Theatre opened for business on Rhode Island Ave NW, The Source Theatre Company began operating at 1835 14th Street NW in 1977.

Source produced five plays a season, but its impact on the theatrical community was broader. Source initiated the annual Washington Theatre Festival, which has developed

more than 700 plays since 1981. For 20 years, a 10-Minute Play Competition was part of the event. According to the Washington Post: "From its earliest days, Source did theater with a capital T: gay Holocaust dramas, Strindberg, Shakespeare. Plays put together on a shoestring budget, performed in a theater with a curtain and a set of mismatched folding chairs — and not much else. It had some commercial successes, but also a few flops."

The company bought the building in 1987, using \$365,000 in money borrowed from the city. The city gave the group an additional \$500,000 for renovations in the late 1990s. The performance space included a 140-seat theatre. But by 2006, the city's mortgage had been in arrears for 10 years, according to the Washington Post. The Source also sought and received grants from the Commission on Arts and Humanities. In 2004, the Commission gave the theater a \$25,000 grant for roof repairs, which were apparently never undertaken, and from 1999-2002, gave another \$112,550 for various projects.

Peggy O'Brien, chairman of the company's board from 2000-2006, said the group's dire financial situation forced the sale of the building. She told the Washington Post that "[t]he building had to be sold. The debts continued to mount and we could not find a way out. We have been actively trying for a number of years to reverse this downward spiral. We just had to admit we just couldn't do it. There is a real considerable level of debt." In addition to the city, creditors apparently included the IRS and Actors Equity.

Though Source has had several co-productions in recent years, O'Brien told the Post she considered the theater's final production to be the Amiri Baraka play "Dutchmen," presented in 2002. From that point, the theatre was available for rent to other groups in need of a place to rehearse and perform.

In 2004, the Meyer Foundation gave the Source a \$10,000 grant for management assistance to develop a financial plan. According to the Post, the Foundation never received a financial plan. By 2006, the Source company owed more than \$600,000 to the Internal Revenue Service, utility companies and others and could no longer continue to operate.

In early 2006, the company announced the sale of its building to Bedrock Management, owner of Bedrock Billiards and Buffalo Billiards, which planned to turn it into a bar and grill. But city officials (including Councilman Jim Graham) and neighborhood activists wanted to see the building remain a theatre. Cultural Development Corp., a DC-based nonprofit that has an ambitious agenda in support of arts and artists, ultimately bought the building and began a \$3 million renovation.

By early 2008, the building began operating once again as a rental theatre space. The Cultural Development Corp. also announced the revival of the three-week Source festival. In 2008, it had received 900 submissions for the summer festival showcasing new works by actors, directors and playwrights. In addition, the second floor of the building now houses office space for the Constellation Theatre, the In Series theatre company, the Washington Improv company, and a part of the Commission on Arts and Humanities. In Series is the primary organizer of the use of the space. Cultural Development Corp. is in the final stages of a capital campaign to pay off the mortgage it assumed when it purchased the building in 2006.

Speakeasy DC

<http://www.speakeasydc.org>

Speakeasy DC was founded in 1990 as the Washington Storytellers' Theatre, and in 1997 became "Speakeasy DC." The organization, run by Executive Director Amy Saidman, promotes the art of autobiographical oral narrative, organizing and promoting "open mic" nights for aspiring storytellers. The organization regularly attracts crowds in excess of 200 people for its storytelling events. Participants are given seven minutes to tell a personal story around a theme selected for the night, and anyone can sign up to tell their story.

The open mic events have become so successful that the organization has repeatedly been faced with having to move in order to accommodate larger attendance. From its 1997 location inside the Black Cat, the organization moved to HR-57 in 2000, and in 2007 to Cada Vez nightclub (now Station 9). In September 2009, Speakeasy will move to a new location – the Town nightclub at 8th and U Streets near the 9:30 Club. The Town has ample seating and could easily host 300 Speakeasy fans. The organization charges about a \$10-\$15 cover fee, and in its new location, the local restaurant Nellies will provide food.

Ms. Saidman said that Speakeasy is firmly rooted in the U Street neighborhood. "It has the right vibe," she said. Among the attributes important to her, Saidman says that the location is a real neighborhood where people live, locally owned businesses where you can get to know the owner, there's a sense of history and arts history, and its racially diverse. She said that her customers are a mix of neighborhood residents and others, and that when they come to a show they patronize other eating and drinking establishments in the neighborhood. Storytellers participate for many reasons. They may want to get more comfortable in front of an audience, they are aspiring actors or comedians, or they just want to have fun in a creative activity.

In addition to its primary mission of offering storytelling, Speakeasy DC is also involved in classes to help people improve their storytelling skills, consulting for private industry, and in presenting rehearsed "ensemble" shows. The group's entries in the Capital Fringe Festival proved to be the top sellers for the festival.

Washington Improv

<http://www.washingtonimprovtheater.com/>

The Washington Improv is currently located at the Source Theatre since the renovation of that facility in 2008, and many of its performances are offered at that location.

Originally, when the group was formed in 1986 under the direction of Carole Douglass, the Improv performed at various locations around Washington. Improvisational theater is loosely organized around a group of actors, possibly with a preselected theme or genre (e.g., musical), but is improvised based on audience suggestion. The Washington Improv has a national reputation, and is often invited to perform at improv festivals around the country.

The company disbanded for a time in 1992, but by 1995, Douglass was again teaching improv at Universalist National Memorial Church at 16th and S, NW. By 1997-1998, the workshops have turned into performances. With the departure of Douglass to Europe, WIT then hires Second-City alum Catherine Weidner as interim artistic director. WIT presents performances at Logan Circle venues Metro Cafe, Diversite, and other clubs around the District. By 2000-2003, the theatre is gaining a national reputation and solidifying its local following. By now the group is performing both long and short form improv, and is beginning to organize into ensembles. In addition, at this time, the troupe launches an Improv Training Program of its own, led by Topher Bellavia.

That program today teaches improv to some 200 students per year. The group continues to evolve on- and off-stage, performing at the DC Arts Center and Source Theatre Company, then in the Source building where WIT is headquartered today. Under the artistic direction of Katie Carson, WIT fine-tunes its unique brand of freeform improvisation and further builds its national reputation. By 2004, WIT hires its first full time artistic director, Mark Chalfant, a former student. WIT at this time is resident at Flashpoint, a downtown arts incubator run by the Cultural Development Corp., and its productions continue to expand in popularity.

By 2009, the WIT's Fighting Improv Smackdown Tournament was featuring over 120 improvisers vying for the championship. In addition to its training programs, the group now also offers workplace training to corporate clients.

Constellation Theatre

<http://www.constellationtheatre.org/>

Founded in 2007, Constellation Theatre is one of the new arrivals to the 14th Street theater scene, further cementing the corridor as a center of visual and performing arts in the District.

The independent theater company staged their first performance, a production of Isben's "A Dream Play," in summer 2007 at the The Source theater on 14th Street. Shortly thereafter, they temporarily moved to the Clark Street Playhouse in Crystal City while The Source underwent a complete renovation, returning to The Source upon its reopening in 2008. DC Metromix remarked that Constellation has attracted "positive attention for its innovative design, outstanding ensemble work and brilliant ideas."

The Theater's mission is to create "epic, ensemble theater to reveal the vast range of the human experience" and to "awaken [their] audience with powerful visual imagery, original music, elevated language and heightened movement." In April 2009, Constellation received the 2009 John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company at the Helen Hayes Awards ceremony.

In-Series

<http://www.inseries.org/>

Independent theater company In Series is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to presenting DC artists in an inspiring and eclectic blend of opera, cabaret, theater, dance, chamber music, poetry, and Latino heritage productions. It started life in 1982-83 as The Concert Series at Mount Vernon College, and has been staging critically acclaimed productions ever since. The In Series name was adopted in 1988-89, inspired by the frequent use of the words “intimate” and “innovative” by music and dance critics. In the late 1990s, In Series was spun-off as an independent arts organization, which is its organizational structure today.

The In Series specializes in presenting DC artists in an inspiring and eclectic blend of productions, and has developed a self-proclaimed special niche within the cultural life of the DC region with its trademark cabaret and experimental chamber opera productions. Joseph McLellan of The Washington Post has described In Series’ performances as “bright, innovative productions, unlike anything else available in the Washington area.” In Series stages productions at the Source Arts Center, in addition to other locations throughout the District.

Living Stage Theatre Company

In 1966, Robert A. Alexander founded what would become “the preeminent theatre for social change” in the space currently inhabited by the Source Theatre on 14th Street. Alexander served as artistic director for the improvisational Living Stage Theater Company until 1995. The theater served as the outreach arm for Arena Stage, and dissolved in 2002.

Living Stage’s mission was “to transform individuals and communities through creative empowerment,” and they were bound by a philosophy that “every one is born an artist and the act of creation is the ultimate act of self-affirmation.” A typical performance consisted of many creative forms and broken into three basic sections. Yet, since the artwork was improvisational the structure could change at any time based on the demand of the participants/audience. The first part of each workshop focused on a scenario in which the main character was always the same age as the participants and faced a dilemma. At a crucial moment, the scene froze, and the group improvised how the scenario could be resolved. During the second part of the workshop, the participants worked on theater exercises to develop skills in communicating emotions and creating characters, on building sets and more. Then, each group worked together to create an improvisational performance of its own.

Lincoln Theatre

<http://www.thelincoltheatre.org/>

The Lincoln Theatre, otherwise known as “the Jewel on U,” first opened in 1922 and served as the center of a cultural renaissance along “Washington’s Black Broadway” from the 1920s through the 1950s. Despite a rather pedestrian exterior, the interior boasted a tremendous lobby whose ceiling is coated with gold, with a stage 27 feet high

and 38 feet wide bordered by elaborate Corinthian columns. The Lincoln was personalized by plaster ornamentation and busts of President Lincoln.

When it opened, it became one of the few theaters in Washington where black audiences could view recently released movies, and immediately became one of bustling U Street's most popular establishments. During this time, the Lincoln also was known for hosting an assortment of vaudeville and variety acts.

In 1927, upon its purchase by Abe Lichtman, the theater was expanded to include a cabaret, a hot nightclub, and a dance hall called the Lincoln Colonnade. Washington natives Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey were joined by nationally acclaimed artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holliday, Nat King Cole, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and Sarah Vaughn who performed regularly on the Lincoln's stage. Even FDR had his birthday parties at the Lincoln Colonnade--which would, in 1940, also host a presidential ball.

Over the years, the theatre has been through numerous iterations: a silent film house and vaudeville stage, a movie house, a performance space, a ballroom, and a split-screen movie theater. In 1952, a television projection system was installed, and the theatre would host such events as viewing of popular sports contests. Like the Howard Theatre, the Lincoln also suffered financially after the onset of desegregation. Although the theater was damaged in the 1968 riots, it remained in operation until the early 80s, when it was boarded up--and remained that way until 1993.

In 1993, the theater was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and redeveloped by the District, who had acquired the property from bankrupt developer Jeffrey Cohen. The theatre officially reopened on February 4, 1994 with a performance of Barry Scott's "Ain't Got Long to Stay Here," about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. Since that time, the refurbished 1,250 seat theatre has played host to numerous concerts, theatrical performances, film screenings and political events.

The theatre is now enjoying a self-described "second renaissance" and "remains committed to entertain, educate and inspire by offering and preserving an historical community treasure." Significant funding for the theatre's operations is received each year from the District, totaling approximately \$500,000.

Howard Theatre

<http://www.howardtheatre.org>

The Howard Theater opened in 1910 and, in its heyday, hosted most of the major African-American performers of the time--serving as what has been called the epicenter of black Washington's culture and artistic hub of Shaw. A lavishly decorated theater, the Howard served as home for two local theater companies: the Howard University Players, and the Lafayette Players.

The Howard served as a crucial venue for the cultivation of a then-relatively obscure musical form known as jazz. It's early success served notice to other establishments up and down the east coast that venues targeting black audiences could thrive, and was the catalyst for the development of such venues as the Apollo in Harlem and the Uptown in Philadelphia.

During the Great Depression, the theater was briefly converted into a church, before being rechristened as an entertainment venue by new owner Shep Allen. Allen possessed a remarkable talent for uncovering young jazz talent, and the Howard quickly became known for showcasing cutting-edge jazz performers. For the next two decades, the theatre hosted such performers as Billy Eckstine, Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. Franklin Delano Roosevelt attended balls at the theater held during the 1940s, when its exterior facade was stripped of its ornamentation in favor of the popular 1940s-era "streamline" style (which remains evident today).

In spite of the fact that the Howard was located in an overwhelmingly black neighborhood, and showcased only black performers, it's worth noting that its clientele was less homogenous--in fact, over 25% of the Howard's patrons were white.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Howard lost some of its prestige as desegregation opened up previously off-limits performance venues around the city to black performers--and patrons. Virginia Ali, wife of Ben's Chili Bowl owner Ben Ali, said "This was like black Chinatown. This was a segregated city...but once we became integrated, the professionals and businesses moved out and it (integration) brought in a different kind of people."

The theater was converted into a performance venue for rock and r&b acts with some success, hosting such performers as Sammy Davis, Jr., and James Brown. However, the 1968 riots and subsequent deterioration of the U Street area eventually led to its closing.

In 1974, the Howard Theater Foundation was organized to rebuild the theater. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, and in 1975 hosted the first performance since its renovation, which featured Redd Foxx and Melba Moore. The theater closed a second time in 1980, while it was the oldest venue in operation in the country hosting black artists.

As of 2009, the theatre remains closed; however, work is underway to restore the theatre, with an anticipated reopening in 2010.

Visual arts

While there had been a number of visual artists living and working on the neighborhood for decades, the development of the neighborhood as a location for numerous arts galleries began much later than the theatres, around the beginning of the 21st century.

The development of 14th and U streets as a haven for visual artists may be relatively recent, but should not be surprising. Until fairly recently, artist space along 14th and U streets was plentiful and affordable. The large buildings which formerly housed car showrooms were an ideal fit for galleries and artist space.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the 14th Street corridor hosted one of the District's highest concentrations of commercial galleries and had become the center for contemporary visual art in Washington. Galleries such as the Transformer, Irvine Contemporary, Plan b and others were hosting noteworthy shows and attracting crowds that extended into the thousands.

As the first decade of the 21st century draws to a close, 14th street's status as a center for contemporary art in the District is in jeopardy. Spikes in real property assessments, commercial lease rates and the recent economic turmoil have conspired to threaten the survival of many of the establishments--and have led to the closure of at least one. Whether the artists and galleries will be able to remain depends upon focused and sustained action on the part of the District government to ensure their viability along the corridor.

Mid City Artists (2000-)

<http://www.midcityartists.com/default.asp>

Mid City Artists is a group of about 40 professional visual artists who live and work in the Dupont Circle and Logan Circle neighborhoods. The group formed about 2000-2001 at the time the neighborhood was initially experiencing significant development and the residential real estate market was first exploding. Its purpose was both to form a group with common interest around the visual arts, and to better take advantage of the changes in the neighborhood. Membership is open to professional artists who live and maintain a studio within a defined boundary. Supporting business members pay an annual fee and are listed on the group's website.

Mid City Artists offers studio tours several times a year, and have been extremely successful, with up to 200 visitors per studio. While a few artists have exhibited at galleries within the arts overlay zone, most exhibit outside the neighborhood, and some have standing relationships with galleries outside the area. The group's website lists

current shows and galleries where their work can be seen. A number of the artists in this group are area homeowners, and a majority have their studios in their homes. Mid City Artists reports very little turnover in membership, although a few artists have moved to less expensive areas of the city, and therefore have left the group.

Irvine Contemporary (2003 -)

<http://irvinecontemporary.com>

Founded in 2003 by Georgetown University professor Dr. Martin Irvine, Irvine Contemporary specializes in contemporary art by early and mid-career artists with growing national and international reputations. It also features works by a select group of major, established artists for collectors interested in building collections with art works in every category of interest. Irvine prides itself on being a full-service gallery that focuses on the needs of collectors at any level of experience. Prior to opening the gallery, Dr. Irvine had been an art collector for 20 years and a private art dealer.

Transformer, 1404 P St NW (2002 -)

<http://www.transformergallery.org>

Transformer is more than a gallery; it is a 501(c)(3) entity whose purpose is to build a broad network of support for emerging artists, their ideas and work, and educate audiences about emergent expression in contemporary visual art. Connecting and promoting emerging visual artists within regional, national and international contexts, Transformer partners with artists, curators, arts spaces, as well as commercial galleries, museums, and other cultural institutions in the development and presentation of exhibitions and programs. For example, artists are never charged fees to submit work for consideration or to present their work; on the contrary, artists are provided honoraria for exhibiting with Transformer, receive 70% of sales, and are provided with travel, material and marketing support. Moreover, Transformer presents art at locations other than its P Street location, such as a recent exhibition of DC-based artists in Mexico City. More than 500 artists have exhibited their work in 60 Transformer exhibitions and projects. In addition to our exhibitions, Transformer has supported over 1500 local, regional, national and international artists through studio visits, artist talks, panels, and other specialized programs. Audience participation has been recorded as over 10,000 plus attendees to exhibitions and program since inception.

The P Street location stems from the familiarity Co-Founder and Executive/Artistic Director Victoria Reis had with 14th Street, as well as the encouragement of former Fusebox Directors Sarah Finaly and Patrick Murcia (currently Irvine Contemporary Arts). Transformer's co-founder is Jayme McLellan. Transformer was the second visual arts entity to establish itself in the neighborhood.

Transformer's activities are supported by a host of foundations (large and small) as well as individual contributors and the Commission on Arts and Humanities. Its primary fundraising activity is an annual auction. Transformer presents and supports contemporary artists from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds working in a variety of media such as: painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, printmaking, book art,

video and installation-based work. Artists are selected for exhibitions and participation in programs through an open, competitive application process, overseen by Transformer's Executive Director and Advisory Council throughout the year.

Transformer, like other galleries, faces challenges. In the words of Ms. Reis: "Transformer works lean and mean. We try to be fiscally conservative and are working to diversify our sources of income as much as possible to continue to sustain the organization for the long term. We keep our overhead as low as possible to direct the majority of our income into direct support of artists and programs for artists/community." Among the issues currently facing the organization is the downturn in funding available from foundations due to the economic recession, which has required devoting more resources to fundraising.

Galleries at 1515 14th Street

Developer Giorgio Furioso developed the building based on a famous gallery building in New York City, 420 West Broad St. in SOHO. The New York building contained four of the major galleries from upper east side near the Whitney and Guggenheim Museums. At the time, SOHO was an emerging neighborhood, like 14th Street used to be, but the gallery owners decided that there would be synergies in locating together, and their decision proved to be correct.

Furioso reported that when he bought 1515 in 2003, he wanted to bring the 3 or 4 high quality galleries to the building. Originally, he had hoped to place galleries on the first floor, but the discounted rental required to make the galleries work from a commercial perspective prevented him from doing so. The first floor became a restaurant. In developing the gallery spaces, Furioso provided all the build-out funding and acted as the general contractor gratis. The galleries therefore benefited in several ways – no build out costs, free contractor support, and discounted rent. As of 2009, the building needed to be refinanced. With commercial lending at its tightest point in recent memory due to the lengthy and deep economic recession, Furioso is reporting that banks are balking at financing a building where some tenants are paying below-market rates. With the refinancing pending, the future of the current rent structure, and the galleries' ability to meet a new rent structure, remains an open question. One gallery has closed due to the economic recession and the prospect of higher rent costs.

Hemphill Fine Arts (2004-)

<http://www.hemphillfinearts.com>

George Hemphill initially opened a gallery in Georgetown in 1993, and moved the gallery to 14th Street in 2004. Hemphill reports that his move was prompted by the neighborhood's promise and space conducive to gallery architecture. Hemphill Fine Arts is located at 1515 14th St. NW. The gallery hosts several events per show with shows scheduled to last two months each. Joint opening receptions coordinated with other neighborhood galleries have attracted

attendance between 250-1000, with as many as 2500 in some cases. The gallery also hosts private events by invitation only, for around 40.

Hemphill usually has two such private events per show -- a preview for serious collectors and the other for the benefit of a non-profit. Occasionally we host a lecture or panel discussion. This is in addition to regular traffic to view shows. Like other galleries, Hemphill reports that the economic downturn has negatively affected art collecting. Hemphill believes the city needs to do more with its tax policies, zoning policies and tourism promotion to ensure that galleries remain a vibrant part of the city.

Curator's Office

<http://www.curatorsoffice.com/aboutgallery>

Curator's Office, created and owned by Andrea Pollan, is a business offering exhibition services, art consulting and collections management services. For example, CO will organize solo or group exhibitions of contemporary and modern art for museums, university galleries, non-profit galleries, commercial galleries, corporations and other institutions. CO develops educational publications and programs to complement these exhibitions. In its consulting and collections management, CO will work with clients to define and focus their goals, and to purchase art through reputable channels. CO will arrange for framing, lighting, installation and conservation.

At its location at 1515 14th St, Curator's Office (CO) periodically invites a curator (museum curator, critic, artist, collector, educator, promising student, gallerist) to display a tightly focused presentation of an artist or art collective's work. The invited curator provides an explanation for the selection and defines the cultural significance of that particular artist to contemporary art practice. From time to time, artists are invited to interpret the "office/micro-gallery space."

Ms. Pollan has worked for over twenty-three years in the visual fine arts. Trained as an art historian at Yale University, she has organized over 125 exhibitions of contemporary art for museums and galleries regionally and nationally. She has written numerous catalogs and exhibition brochures. Pollan has juried scores of art exhibitions and art fairs in the region including an exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Pollan received an Arts Administration Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1994. She has served on numerous boards and recently served on the board of the D.C. Chapter of ArtTable, a national association of women arts administrators.

Adamson Gallery (2005-)

<http://adamsongallery.jimdo.com/>

This gallery had its origins in a lithography studio opened by David Adamson in 1979 elsewhere in the city. By 1993, Adamson had become one of the first digital ateliers in the world, and his studio grew and expanded, as he worked with scores

of artists creating prints of fine art. In 2005, Adamson moved the gallery part of his business to 1515 14th St., attracted by the space and favorable cost structure, as well as the presence of multiple galleries. His studio is at 11th and N Streets. Up to 200 people regularly attend events at the Adamson Gallery

G Fine Art (2004-2009)

G Fine Art moved from Georgetown when the founder, Ann Gawlak, entered a partnership with local developer Georgio Furioso, who was hoping to lease space to art galleries in a building he was developing just north of the Studio Theatre. The gallery's operations were funded by art sales and consulting fees. G Fine Art attracted hundreds of visitors to its opening, and continued successfully for several years thereafter. Although successful, G Fine Art saw its costs mounting, including utilities.

In 2009, when Furioso had to refinance his building, the below-market rents negotiated with galleries, including G Fine Arts, was proving to be a problem for commercial lenders. Facing the prospect of market-based rents, G Fine Arts closed in August 2009.

Gallery plan b

1530 14th Street

<http://www.galleryplanb.com>

Gallery plan b, located in the exciting Fourteenth Street arts corridor, provides a casual, hip space for a dynamic group of both established and emerging local artists to show and sell their art. Plan b presents both group and solo shows for paintings, photography, drawings, prints and sculpture.

Project 4 (2006 -)

1353 U St NW

Gregory Kearley

<http://www.project4gallery.com>

Owner Gregory Kearley is an architect whose firm, Inscape Studio, designed the addition and renovation of the building in which the gallery is located. Kearley reports that he started Project 4 with three friends. The gallery, originally located at 903 U Street, opened in February of 2006 and moved to its current location in November 2008. According to Kearley, the group started Project 4 because of our strong interest in the arts and because they felt DC was emerging as a center for the arts. The gallery has been successful, attracting 150 guests to openings and 25-50 people for artists' talks.

By the time the gallery opened, Kearley said that he believed 14th Street had become the center of the contemporary art world in DC. “ We would have liked to have located somewhere on 14th Street between P and U Streets; however, we did not have the resources to do so.” Kearley reports that “an obstacle” to developing business is the gallery’s location on the third floor of a building. Kearley estimates that the Hamiltonian Gallery, located in the same building but on the street level, typically gets two or three times the attendance of Project 4. The group would prefer a ground floor location, but to date, that is not economic.

Project 4 is facing issues similar to those of other galleries in the current economic downturn. Kearley is now the sole owner of the gallery, and must sustain the business based on sale of art. “Our primary challenge is financial. There are not many people buying art with the current economic situation. Since we are a commercial gallery we don’t have the ability to receive grants as would a non-profit.” Kearley notes that tax incentives for arts directed businesses could help galleries like his stay in business, as well as zoning mechanisms that would incentivize developers to offer low cost space to galleries.

Hamiltonian Gallery (2007 -) Hamiltonian Artists

<http://www.hamiltonianartists.org/program.html>

Hamiltonian Artists is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing professional development opportunities for creative artists in their early careers. The program offers a competitive two-year fellowship program for new innovative visual artists in all media, which are awarded through an annual competition.

The "So Hamiltonian Fellows Program" will function as a creative incubator for artists who have finished their academic training and may still be exploring their artistic directions in alternative art spaces, but have not yet transitioned into a career path as an exhibiting artist. The program hopes to ensure that artists represented by the gallery will learn some of the basic entrepreneurial skills necessary to achieve success as an exhibiting artist while they continue to grow artistically. Participating artists will also gain valuable experience in the administration of both a non-profit art space and a commercial gallery.

The Hamiltonian Gallery is a dynamic space in the heart of the growing Washington DC contemporary art district. The gallery focuses on innovative works by emerging and mid-career artists. In conjunction with Hamiltonian Artists, the gallery will promote new artists, aiding in their further development. Through our dynamic exhibitions and gallery programs, we seek to broaden the cultural dialogue within our modern community.

The gallery has more than 2,000 square feet of exhibition space with a prominent storefront on U Street NW, between 13th and 14th Streets. The gallery is one of the first green contemporary art exhibition spaces in DC, balancing eco-conscientious design and the requirements of a professional exhibition space for artists working in a variety of

media including painting, sculpture, photograph, video, audio, digital, and site-specific installation.

Ganymede Arts (2003 -)

<http://www.ganymedearts.org>

Located in the back of Miss Pixie's Furnishings store on 14th Street, Ganymede Arts bills itself as "DC's GLBT Arts Company." Ganymede is dedicated to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) experience, and lists its mission as "to provide high-quality, professional theatre and art that fosters social and cultural awareness of and for the GLBT community."

Founded in 2003, Ganymede produces and promotes theatrical performances and other performing arts events featuring GLBT artists. Productions are staged at their own theater in the back of Miss Pixie's, or at various other locations throughout the District (including the Church Street Theatre). Every year, Ganymede organizes a "Fall Arts Festival," a multi-day event featuring performances by dozens of artists.

Pinkline Project (2003 -)

<http://www.pinklineproject.com>

Philippa Hughes came to D.C. as a lawyer, but discovered rather quickly that her passion was with the arts. Thus, in 2003, she founded the Pinkline Project, a private organization dedicated to promoting the local arts scene and providing a venue for emerging artists to develop a network of contacts and involve themselves in the artistic community.

In addition to operating a website which functions as a space to advertise upcoming arts-related events of interest to local artists, Pinkline arranges and promotes gatherings for local artists. One in particular, hosted in 2007 in a space at 14th and Church, attracted several hundred artists and members of the community. Several other events have been held since that time. The events bring together artists from across various mediums--visual, musical, performance, etc.--in order to present a unique event that "pushes the boundary" of traditional art and arts events in the District.

Pinkline is funded almost entirely by Hughes herself, although her website is attracting some advertisers. The events which she coordinates, she says, typically pay for themselves, either via sponsorship dollars or a small entry fee.

Music and other performance spaces

Black Cat

<http://blackcatdc.com/>

In 1993, Dante Ferrando, at the time the owner of what he believes was “the only sit-down restaurant along 14th Street,” opened the Black Cat, a nationally known performance venue for indie rock bands and a mainstay along 14th Street ever since.

From the Black Cat’s website: “In the early 90s, DC suffered from a lack of good concert venues, especially spaces that catered to the areas underground music scene. Hoping to revive the tradition of independent music in Washington, a group of investors (most of them musicians) opened the Black Cat in September 1993. Since opening its doors, the Black Cat has been a home for local and national talent, thereby playing its own part in the explosion of indie rock that marked the last decade.”

Ferrando said that he had been looking for space along 14th Street for several reasons: close proximity to his restaurant, the number of large spaces available along the corridor, due to auto showrooms which at one time populated 14th Street, and the fact that the neighborhood was becoming a center for artists in the District, which he felt made a good fit for his rock club.

Since opening the Black Cat 16 years ago, Ferrando has seen the neighborhood change considerably, from an area largely populated with abandoned and derelict properties, to one of the most popular neighborhoods in the city. He worries, though, that the changing culture of the neighborhood threatens businesses who have been here a long time. “Artists are great pioneers,” he says “but it’s frequently difficult for them to stay.”

Ferrando mentioned that he has seen his costs rise rapidly in recent years; in addition to labor and food and drink costs, his real estate taxes run to approximately \$180 per day, part of a total annual tax burden of nearly \$250,000. He indicated that, if he wanted to, he could change the Black Cat’s business model and move it away from hosting live music to a venue for parties and special events, which would bring in more money. Yet no such plans are in the works.

“I’m driven by artistic motivations,” he said. “The Black Cat isn’t profit-driven, and so I have no plans to change the nature of the business. I like the crowds that attend our shows, and I like the type of music and bands that we attract.”

As to the challenges facing small businesses owners and artists in the neighborhood, Ferrando admits that there are many. A lack of parking, the threat of higher rent-paying establishments such as bars and restaurants taking over the neighborhood, and a bureaucracy that makes it challenging for business owners to open and operate ventures in the neighborhood.

Ferrando indicated that he would like to see more daytime traffic and a focus on maintaining a mix of retail in the area, particularly focusing on businesses that stay open later into the evening to act as “transitions” between the daytime crowd and the nighttime crowd.

Twins Jazz Club

<http://www.twinsjazz.com/>

For nearly a decade, Twins Jazz has been contributing towards keeping the U Street jazz tradition alive by bringing some of the biggest performers in today’s jazz world to its stage on the second floor of a building at 14th and U streets.

The original Twins Lounge opened in 1986 at 5516 Colorado Avenue NW Washington DC as an Ethiopian restaurant twenty-three years ago in a space that previously featured jazz and blues music. Several musicians suggested showcasing live jazz performances. Local and jazz legends were soon booked to perform. “I fell in love with Jazz ever since,” says owner Kelly. Twins Lounge’s sister club, Twins Jazz, opened in 2001.

Twins indicates that it “strives to not only be a jazz venue, but a social and economic force in the local and regional community.” It not only features popular, staple jazz artists, but also offers opportunities for young, aspiring musical talents attending Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Georgetown University, Howard University, Catholic University, American University, University of Maryland College Park and Baltimore, George Washington University, and other surrounding area schools. Music students are encouraged to participate in oweekly jam sessions, to learn their craft from more experienced musicians.

The club strives to create an environment reminiscent of clubs during the Harlem Renaissance, where listeners come for the intimate setting and musicians remain after their performance to interact with patrons. In addition, they aim to bring greater appreciation and understanding of jazz from traditional to the contemporary, via festivals, forums and workshops.

Twins perpetuates and cultivates "authentic" straight-ahead traditional jazz while uniquely incorporating fine dining, attracting significant national media recognition.

HR57

<http://www.hr57.org/>

14th Street institution HR-57--the “Center for the Preservation of Jazz Blues”--is both a functioning jazz club as well as a self-proclaimed music cultural center. HR-57 takes its name from a House Resolution first passed by congress in 1987 that designated jazz as "a rare and valuable national American treasure." The non-profit center opened in 1993,

and seeks to “provide a place where aspiring musicians gather to learn the history and culture of the genres of jazz and blues.” As the only organization of its kind it provides a venue for the exchange of ideas and information between aspiring and professional musicians, students, and aficionados of the genres and the general public.

In addition to weekend performances featuring popular local and national jazz acts covering a diverse range of styles, HR-57 also hosts jazz jam sessions every Wednesday and Thursday evening. These jam sessions, where musicians and vocalists perform the tunes they enjoy, serve to help fund operational costs.

Education is an integral part of their operation. Music workshops and music classes are offered for beginners and advanced musicians. Lectures and seminars on the genres are also a part of programming. Professional educators, lecturers and musicians assist in all aspects of educational programming.

A portion of programming is geared toward those with little or no exposure to music history or appreciation classes, and the segment of the public with interest, but little or no background in the genres. Public schools students from around the country and the metropolitan area come to visit and to gain insight to the history of this music which embodies our democratic ideals. Their budding youth jazz orchestra consists of area students. Participants ranging in age from 10 to 21 learn and perform the music of the big bands.

Bohemian Caverns

<http://www.bohemiancaverns.com>

Jazz club Bohemian Caverns traces its history to 1926, when the club--then known as Club Caverns--opened in the basement of the Davis Drug Store located at 11th and U streets. Club Caverns soon became an integral part of Washington’s “Black Broadway,” luring such stars as Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington and attracting black Washington’s most influential citizens..

Club Caverns would continue to operate as until the 1950s, when it changed its name to Crystal Caverns and, eventually, Bohemian Caverns. It was during the late 1950s and early 1960s when Bohemian Caverns became arguably Washington’s most popular and most successful jazz club. Author Hollie L. West wrote that “In its time, the club became the place in Washington to hear the most contemporary development of Jazz.”

During this time, Bohemian Caverns routinely attracted the biggest names in jazz--John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Pearl Bailey, Dizzie Gillespie, Louis Armstrong and others were just some of the luminaries to grace its stage. Summing up this period in the Caverns’ history, musician George Botts noted that “it was one big jam session.”

Unfortunately, as with other noted establishments along the U Street area, the 1968 riots took a tremendous toll. Already faced with sagging attendance and financial hardship, the riots sealed the club's fate, and it closed in September 1968.

With U Street's resurgence in the late 1990s, interest in reopening the club was piqued. After conducting a faithful restoration of the club's interior--right down to the pseudo-cave decor--Bohemian Caverns reopened for business in 1999. Though no longer a destination for the biggest names in jazz, Bohemian Caverns continues to attract quality local and national musicians to performances throughout the week. A new restaurant--Mahogany--recently opened in the upstairs space above the Caverns.