

THE HAPPENING: A COMMUNITY-BASED,  
INTERACTIVE CREATIVE SPACE

by

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THE HAPPENING: A COMMUNITY-BASED,  
INTERACTIVE CREATIVE SPACE

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## ABSTRACT

This project involved the marketing and branding of a community-based, interactive creative space. This was accomplished through extensive research into similar businesses and competition, design and marketing, and relevant target markets. The final result included brand identity, collateral design, advertising design, web and social media design, and environmental design.

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the city of Fort Worth's tagline being "Cowboys and Culture," there has been a long-standing tradition of Fort Worth being a hub for the arts. Along with a well-known cultural district that is home to several outstanding museums, Fort Worth also houses several art galleries, and more recently a public art program. While in the past, the art scene in Fort Worth has been viewed as elitist and exclusive, there is currently somewhat of a renaissance happening within the arts community (Ratcliff). This bright future for the arts in Fort Worth provides the perfect opportunity to grow a more community-based and interactive art scene.

Current projects focus on supporting local artists and their art; for instance, the Amon Carter recently announced the creation of their Community Artists program (Ratcliff). This program selects local artists to lead programs in the museum, in the community, and online. While this approach supports local artists and has the potential to engage the community, it lacks a community-based and interactive element. Fort Worth needs a space for all people to enjoy and participate in the arts.

Imagine a community-based, interactive creative space that focused on bringing out the artist in every individual, no matter of age, sex, income, identity, or talent level, and featured ways to interact with different art mediums including graffiti, photography, performance art, and others, along with a gallery and workshop space for local artists and community members.

## **THESIS STATEMENT**

This project involved the marketing and branding of a community-based, interactive creative space. This was accomplished through extensive research into similar businesses and competition, design and marketing, and relevant target markets. The final result included brand identity, collateral design, advertising design, web and social media design, and environmental design.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To gather information for this project, a descriptive research approach was employed. Rather than focusing on the how, when, or why about public art, this research focused on what the characteristics of the public art scene are, including history and background, target market, competition, marketing, and design.

## *Literature Review*

An article published in *D Magazine* titled *In Fort Worth, A Burgeoning Arts Scene Begins to Change the City* provided information on the past and current state of the arts in Fort Worth. Written by Darryl Ratcliff, this article explains the importance of the arts in Fort Worth and in North Texas, which is relevant to a project including the creation of and marketing for a public arts space. This article made it clear that there is a need and a want for a project like this in Fort Worth. Author of numerous articles about the arts for *D Magazine*, Ratcliff is knowledgeable about the subject and provides a detailed background based on research and personal experience.

Further information on the topic of the arts in Fort Worth, as well as information about the target market, was found in the *Fort Worth Public Art Master Plan*. Written by Barbara Goldstein and Associates with Cusick Consulting, this document provides research from surveys, focus groups, interviews, and public meetings. Because of its findings on the preferences of the citizens of Fort Worth on arts-related topics, this public art master plan provided crucial information to form the target market for this project. The authors consulted with the Art Commission, City leadership, and the Arts Council, ensuring that this document reflects the current state of the arts in Fort Worth.

Other public art programs that were reviewed to assess design and marketing considerations were the *City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan*, the *City of Suwanee Public Art Master Plan*, the *City of Perry Public Arts Master Plan*, and the *Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016*. Consulting public art master plans of different cities across the country was relevant to developing this project because knowing what has been successful in other places and what research has been found about how to reach this success will help mold a successful program here in Fort Worth. Particularly, gaining knowledge about design and marketing considerations will help the program more effectively reach its target audience and develop a cohesive brand.

The *City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan* gathered its data from interviews and focus groups, and submitted numerous drafts of the plan to planning participants for feedback. The *City of Suwanee Public Art Master Plan* developed its plan through interviews, city tours, consulting with a public art consultant and urban designer, meetings with advisory committees, and reviewing background documents. The *City of Perry Public Arts Master Plan* began its research by looking at other successful public art programs, which included site visits, online research, and outlining of other public art master plans. The *Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016* developed its plan by examining the community culture of the city, cataloging existing public artworks, and researching other art organizations in the city.

Information from the Project for Public Spaces, *Public Art Promotes Drive for Human Creativity*, *Designing for Interactive Environments and Smart Spaces*, and *The Importance of Having the Right Logo* provided more information about marketing

considerations. An article entitled *Using PR to Build a Public Art Program* from the Project for Public Spaces provided relevant information about the best way to market as a public art space. An article from Steelcase entitled *Public Art Promotes Drive for Human Creativity* provided information about the brand of public art spaces with different examples, which helped develop how this project will be branded. An article by UX art director Jamie Teresuk entitled *Designing for Interactive Environments and Smart Spaces* provided relevant information about ways to make public spaces engaging and interactive, which is necessary for this project considering it aims to create an interactive space unlike any other in Fort Worth. Finally, an article published in *Forbes* entitled *The Importance of Having the Right Logo* contributed to considerations specifically concerning the logo of this project.

To obtain information about the background and relevance of public art, multiple sources were consulted including the following: *How Art Economically Benefits Cities*, *The Financial Case for Public Art*, *Public Art as Public Health*, and *Five Reasons why Public Art Matters*. An article from the Project for Public Spaces entitled *How Art Economically Benefits Cities* gives data from multiple different cities explaining how public art benefits them, which is relevant in showing how public art can also continue to benefit Fort Worth with this project. Published in CityLab, *The Financial Case for Public Art* gives two examples from Los Angeles of successful and economically viable public art programs, which continues to prove that this program would be beneficial to Fort Worth. A Ph.D. student at the Boston University School of Social Work, Maggie Thomas wrote an article entitled *Public Art as Public Health* which explores through various examples the benefits of public art to physical and mental health; this provides background to the advantages of public art and why this program could improve the quality of life in Fort Worth. *Five Reasons why Public Art Matters*, published by Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the arts, explains economic, social, and cultural benefits to public art, further emphasizing the advantages that this project could bring to Fort Worth.

### ***Observations***

Observation was conducted at Arts Goggle, an annual Fort Worth festival of local arts, on the afternoon of October 19, 2019. This observation provided research about the target market and competition. Founded in 2002, Arts Goggle is a free to the public, family-friendly arts event that hosts hundreds of visual artists, musical performances, and artistic displays, along with food and drinks. Arts Goggle takes place in the Near Southside neighborhood along Magnolia Avenue, with booths that stretch over a mile in length, and attracts over 60,000 people each year. Observing this event was relevant to this project considering it targets the same audience, engages the community at large with the arts, and offers interactive aspects.

Additionally, observation of other public art programs' design and marketing was conducted through online research observation. This included the public art plans of the cities previously described, including the *City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan*, the *City of Suwanee Public Art Master Plan*, the *City of Perry Public Arts Master Plan*, and the *Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016*. Furthermore, logo considerations were observed from multiple public art programs including those of the following cities: Ottawa, Walnut Creek, Palo Alto, Salem, Des Moines, Irving, Lubbock, Truckee, and Montreal.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the research led to valuable information about the background of public art and public art programs, the specific target market for this business model, advertising and promotion commonly used in the industry, and design considerations for creating a brand, collateral, and advertising.

### *Background Information*

With “arguably the best museum district in north Texas,” Fort Worth residents have long shown their support for the arts; however, the Fort Worth art scene hasn't traditionally embraced outsiders and has maintained a somewhat elitist feel (Ratcliff). This all seems to be changing, though, as Fort Worth experiences a “creative boom led by DIY spaces” (Ratcliff). The lack of contemporary gallery spaces in Fort Worth has led to the creation of collective and alternative art spaces (Ratcliff). Part of this blooming arts scene is Fort Worth Public Art, which has “commissioned, purchased, or received 111 public artworks with a total value of well over \$14.5 million” since its inception in 2001 (Barbara Goldstein and Associates with Cusick Consulting).

Public art programs in cities across the country have created countless benefits, including increased economic growth, increased sense of community belonging, increased cultural understanding, and increased general public health (Walsh). On top of these benefits, public art provides the more obvious advantages of aesthetic beauty, opportunities for education and inspiration, and general improvement of the urban environment (Rosenfeld).

In Los Angeles, a relatively modest investment in a mural-focused public art project led to extensive media coverage and publicity opportunities, with the murals becoming a popular backdrop for photoshoots, television spots, and press events (Rosenfeld). In New York City, nonprofit and commercial arts activity generates \$17.7 billion annually for the city (How Art Economically Benefits Cities). In Philadelphia and Detroit, participatory public art programs like the Mural Arts Porch Light Program and

Power House Productions “intentionally engage community members with differences” and “increase community members’ sense of identity and belonging” (Thomas). Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Porch Light Program “actively includes people with behavioral health challenges in community groups creating public mural art” (Thomas). In post-evaluation studies of this program, multiple benefits were found including improved neighborhood safety, decreased stigma around mental health issues, and increased innovation in designing substance abuse treatment programs (Thomas).

### *Target Market*

“There is a sense of smallness and camaraderie in the current art scene. In a few years, everyone might be too busy and specialized for this type of social leisure, but part of what gives a scene energy is that enough folks are creating art together, drinking and eating together, and partying together. All of that togetherness organically creates its own identity” (Ratcliff).

This article from *D Magazine* makes it clear that the feelings of leisure and camaraderie that are enhanced by gathering around the arts are what attracts people to these kinds of spaces. Creating a feeling of togetherness is crucial to draw in the target market. As mentioned above, this is done through more than just viewing art together, but also creating art together, drinking and eating together, and partying together. Building off this psychographic information, research done by Fort Worth Public Art provides insights into demographic information of the target market.

According to *ACT United’s Coming Home: Community Conversations on Public Art* research, 34% of people participating in community engagement in Fort Worth are between the ages of 30 and 49; 18% are between the ages of 19 and 29, and 17% are between the ages of 50 and 65. Results from the same research found that parks are the number one place that people want to see art in their neighborhoods in Fort Worth. As far as the types of art these people would like to see in public spaces in Fort Worth, the top five answers were local art, sculpture, street art, photography, and painting. The top six places that people are perceived to gather in Fort Worth are Downtown, the Stockyards, West 7th/Montgomery, Trinity Park, the Botanic Gardens, and the Museum District (Barbara Goldstein and Associates with Cusick Consulting).

In research done by Fort Worth Public Art, an online survey found that 54.12% of those asked would like to attend a workshop, class, or tour concerning public art. Overall, it was found that there is “high praise for Fort Worth’s public art” and there is “an appreciation for the value that public art brings to the design of public space and a desire to include public art in more City projects” (Barbara Goldstein and Associates with Cusick Consulting).

Furthermore, observations completed at Fort Worth Arts Goggle on the afternoon of October 19, 2019, provided more information on the target market. Many of the observations echoed previously mentioned research, with the general age of the crowd being between 30 and 49. While there were some families present, the majority of attendees were single adults. Additionally, both sexes were represented, with females being in the slight majority. There seemed to be no specific income bracket that was represented. Most attendees were there with a friend or small group, and few seemed to be alone. In terms of psychographics, it was clear that the food and drink, music, and activities at the event, in addition to the art on display, provided a sense of togetherness.

### *Marketing and Promotion*

#### *Branding*

“The right logo says everything without saying a word...It conveys a series of virtues and a set of values without pages of copy and a team of copywriters. It evokes a sense of connection between a brand and consumers. It establishes a bond between a company and its community of fans, friends, critics, allies and champions” (Westgarth).

Logos are crucial to creating a relationship between a brand and consumers, establishing recognizability, and clarifying a brand’s identity. Logo design is an essential first step in creating a brand identity for any business or organization, including a public art program. In both the cities of Perry, Georgia and Suwanee, Georgia, public art master plans were written in the process of planning their public art programs. These plans defined the need for a name and logo to be “used in print materials, on the website, in digital communication and on signage that identifies projects” (Bressi and McKinley). Using this name and logo across these platforms with continuity, “will help create unity among the many projects and initiatives of the public art program, make these projects recognizable throughout the community as part of the same program, and help people see the results of their efforts to support public art” (Bressi and McKinley).

Beyond the importance of creating an effective logo for a public art program, these programs must focus on what their brand says about what public art means to the community. “Public art at any scale...can contribute to a type of placemaking that will grow a creative element, attract investment, cultivate social unity, and enhance the quality of residents’ lives. New public art installations are drawing from their local communities and delivering meaning in vibrant, long-lasting ways” (Charbauski). Public art programs must communicate this relevance and importance through their brand identity, brand image, brand positioning, and brand personality.

### *Collateral*

While collateral can carry many connotations, this project defines the term collateral to include any promotional material including but not limited to pamphlets and brochures, websites and apps, podcasts and videos, stationery and business cards, and packaging and brand takeaways.

According to the public art master plan of Perry, Georgia, “Cities with successful public art programs have shown their use of website strategies vary. However, they are all consistent with creating a strong presence with their internet footprints” (City of Perry Public Arts Master Plan). This sentiment is echoed in the Breckenridge Public Art Program Master Plan, which defines its plan to “develop a modern, mobile-responsive website that offers easily navigable online access to the Public Art Program for locals, visitors, and future visitors” (Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016). This website would include an extensive inventory of the town’s public art collection featuring an interactive map, links to open calls to artists, an up-to-date calendar of events, and other relevant information about the public art program and its projects. The City of San Diego also plans to develop a marketing program “which includes greater utilization of the Internet, an expanded website, maps to the individual artworks, and a database of the City’s public art collection” (City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan).

The City of Breckenridge expands on other pieces of collateral as part of their public art master plan including “digital media such as podcasts, educational videos, blogs, listservs, and e-newsletters to create public education materials” (Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016). Furthermore, they include plans to release a quarterly online magazine, promote the public art program’s events and installations in local mailings, and to create a digital and print pamphlet that can be used when visitors are viewing installations (Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016).

### *Advertising*

Because of the nature of public art, public relations campaigns and nontraditional forms of marketing are likely to be the most effective approach to raising awareness and engagement. For instance, in the City of San Diego, “the key to practically marketing San Diego’s Public Art Program is to first en-gender a grassroots publicity campaign, relying on pro bono or sponsoring media support” (City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan). One way to accomplish this is through earned media, which the Project for Public Spaces suggests as a tool to fundraise and raise awareness through support among the press. “Local newspapers could educate and inform the public about the many different types of public art, the successful art projects in other parts of the region, and the wealth

and ability of the local arts community” which would increase support for the local public art project (Using PR to Build a Public Art Program).

Another suggestion that the Project for Public spaces provides is to “involve local artists and gallery owners who already have expressed an interest in being involved in, and in communicating news of, art events to the public” (Using PR to Build a Public Art Program). This could also mean creating events centered around arts-related activities like artist markets, tours of existing public art, and temporary art exhibits and installations to “help build support for public art and reinforce the positive role it can play in urban revitalization” (Using PR to Build a Public Art Program).

With the knowledge that “a public art program depends on the input of the public for its success,” one must consider the value of the Internet as an “extremely effective mode of communication, with the benefit of being a vehicle that allows for the delivery and receipt of information and comment” (City of San Diego Public Art Master Plan). Furthermore, utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to build awareness about public art programs and installations and to drive visitors to the website is an effective marketing tool (Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016).

### *Environmental Design*

The public art master plan of the City of Breckenridge offers suggestions as to the elements of environmental design required for public art projects. First and foremost, the design must be uniform across different locations and themes. Environmental design may include the actual collection as well as signage, postcards, mobile app tours, and other informational pieces for temporary installations. The goal of the environmental design should be to “educate viewers about project themes, social relevance, and other aspects of public art installations” (Breckenridge Public Art Program Mater Plan + Policy 2016).

According to the article *Designing for Interactive Environments and Smart Spaces*, the design should not be driven by technology fads and should not use technology simply for the sake of using it. It is important to be able to design with empathy and encourage people to think outside of themselves; “Then, visitors can be moved to either action or reaction by not only by visual imagery but the overall feeling of the space or event” (Teresuk). There should always be some sort of takeaway from an interactive experience, whether it is knowledge, and emotional response, or improved brand awareness. Also, interactive experiences can have far-reaching and long-lasting value by ensuring that the interactive experience is sharable to increase social media presence and brand awareness.

### *Design Considerations*

Through observation of the design elements of other public art programs across the country, it was found that many logos convey meaning through color and shape. Bright, contrasting colors are often used in logos for public art programs. For example, Walnut Creek Public Art's logo features an ambiguous shape with bright orange and pink alongside each other. The logo of the Arts Council of Montreal features a rainbow of colors in parallel rays. Not only does this capture the target audience's attention it relates directly to the concept of the brand behind the logo; considering public art programs are focused on the arts, it makes sense for a logo to reference this directly or indirectly.

Another way that logos for public art programs make this reference to the arts is through shape. Simplistic and geometric shapes are often used in logos for public art programs, often referring to types of artwork, local landmarks, or shapes of letterforms. For example, Salem Public Art's logo features a curved river shaped into an "S." Palo Alto Public Art also uses shape to form letters, with a simplistic "P" and "A." Truckee Public Arts Commission's logo fills the letter "A" in the acronym TPAC with colorful geometric shapes. Lubbock Public Art's logo uses solely shape rather than color and features a geometric art piece. While the shapes in Irving Public Art's logo are not very geometric, this logo features simplistic shapes of art-related objects and the outlines of people forming the counter space of the word "art" in the logo.

In terms of typography in logos for public art programs, sans serif fonts are used more often than any other style, and varying orientations in the baseline of the type is common. The Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation's logo features solely type rather than an icon and applies the same sans serif typeface throughout the logo with varying sizes and orientations of the type. Ottawa Public Art's logo features a geometric shape with the type aligned at an angle with the icon in a sans serif typeface.

### **ACTIONS TAKEN**

Based on the results of the research, several branding and marketing projects were executed including brand identity, collateral design, advertising design, web and social media design, and environmental design.

#### ***Brand Identity***

The name chosen for the project was meant to represent a sense of community and a place where anyone and everyone can be involved. Therefore, the name The Happening was chosen. For those not familiar with art history, this name may simply

imply a place to gather where things are always “happening.” However, the true root of the name comes from “Happening” art events that began in the 50s. These events were art events, often performance-based, that usually somehow included the active involvement of the artist along with the audience. Each event was unique, and Happenings were meant to bring art into the realm of everyday life. With all of this in mind, The Happening was chosen as the name for this community-based, interactive creative space.

The logo was designed to reflect this community-based, interactive intention, with the letters of the logo breaking standard configurations and extending to connect and relate to one another. The logo has a hand-drawn, artistic quality that is inspired by the art and culture of the 50s and 60s, but this era does not define the brand’s identity. The typography chosen for headlines, sub-headlines, and body copy continues this artistic feel while remaining legible, professional, and modern.

For the colors to support the brand identity, the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow were chosen because of their association with art. However, rather than using the more typical, widely used shades of these colors, different shades were used to emphasize that this is not a typical art space, but a creative space meant for everyone. A red with more orange, a blue with more green, and a yellow with more orange are used. The imagery and general layout style of the brand are meant to emphasize both diversity and connectedness. Diversity should be shown in terms of demographic and psychographic characteristics, as well as the type of creative endeavors.

### *Collateral Design*

Collateral was designed with a diverse target audience in mind. With an age range of 19-49 that includes both males and females and all racial and ethnic backgrounds, the collateral must be widely approachable and usable. Therefore, the decision was made to design a branded sticker, tote bag, and t-shirt. It was also decided to design and brand a sketchbook to emphasize the creative nature of The Happening. Furthermore, a publication piece was designed as a piece of collateral to serve as a takeaway and a guide to understanding the purpose and layout of the space.

### *Advertising Design*

In the case of public art, advertising campaigns are well supported by public relations efforts as well. To capitalize on the benefit of earned media, it was decided to write and design a magazine article for The Happening announcing the new space and its features and events. This article would be published in a magazine like *Fort Worth Magazine*. This article would be the foundation of an advertising campaign that would also include social media ads and guerrilla marketing.

### *Web and Social Media Design*

Because a significant internet footprint is crucial to the success of a public art program, the decision was made to design a mobile-responsive website along with three social media platforms. The website would feature information such as current events, location and maps, a photo and video gallery, and general descriptive information. The social media platforms that were chosen include Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. These platforms are the most conducive to sharing photo and video content and encouraging feedback and participation from the audience. An Instagram profile and post, a Facebook profile and Live video, and Snapchat filters and stickers were designed. All of these platforms contribute to ensuring that the experience of the space is sharable.

### *Environmental Design*

To promote understanding of the space and the project as a whole, a map was designed to show the details and features of The Happening, as well as its location within Fort Worth. Trinity Park was chosen to house the space because of how it is perceived by the people of Fort Worth as a place where a lot of people gather. Also, signage and wayfinding was designed for the space itself to create identifiable brand moments while moving through the space and to make the space navigable without a map.

## CONCLUSION

This project has been full of ups and downs and did not end the way I anticipated it to when I began a year ago. Then, my concept for this project was entirely different, and after a series of happenstances, I came to the idea for what eventually became The Happening. As someone who tends to stick to the first good idea I have, one of the most valuable things I learned throughout this process is that more good ideas are likely to come along somewhere down the road, sometimes even better than the last. Being willing to be open-minded and flexible when I had that “this is it” gut feeling led me to create the project I have today. Continuing to practice this idea of evolution as I completed my project led me to go back to my research, reassess what I was doing, and execute my project in a way that was true to the facts.

Often in design, it is easy to forget the target audience or the objective or whatever you are designing for and simply design something so that it looks pretty. This project reinforced the value of research and making design decisions based on this research. Every time I changed something or added something to my project, I had to

go back to my research and make sure that what I was doing was supported by it. Overall, this process was crucial to my development as a designer and more importantly as a thinker. Being able to complete this project is one of the most valuable parts of my college career.

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