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## The Art of Placemaking Conference focuses on impacts

Placemakers, artists, urban planners, community developers and researchers meeting to discuss impacts of using art to build and transform community.

Providence, RI (October 1, 2013) — WaterFire Providence announces The Art of Placemaking Conference will take place November 7 and 8 at the Omni Hotel in Providence, RI.

Leading practitioners and experts in the field of creative placemaking will meet for two days of exploration and dialogue about measuring, evaluating and communicating the impact of using art to build and transform community. Following the conference, on Saturday, November 9, WaterFire's Salute to Rhode Island Veterans will offer conference participants behind the scenes experiences with a major public art event that has helped transform a city.

The Art of Placemaking presenters include Anne Gadwa Nicodemus and Ann Markusen, co-authors of the 2010 National Endowment for the Arts whitepaper on Creative Placemaking. Anne Gadwa Nicodemus said:

“One of the greatest challenges facing the burgeoning field of creative placemaking is limited opportunities for learning exchange. *The Art of Placemaking* conference will bring leading practitioners, researchers and funders, from across the country and region together for an intensive three days of discussion and hands-on learning. We'll give particular focus to a question many are wrestling with—How does one measure and substantiate the impact of creative placemaking initiatives?”

Other presenters include Maria Rosario Jackson, The Kresge Foundation; Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts; Kip Bergstrom, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development; Barnaby Evans, WaterFire creator; Bert Crenca, AS220 co-founder; Clay Rockefeller, The Steel Yard co-founder; Lynne McCormack, City of Providence, Director of Art, Culture + Tourism; Erin Williams, City of Worcester, Cultural Development Officer; Randall Rosenbaum, Rhode Island State Council for the Arts executive director; Professor Steven Lubar, Brown University; Professor Mark Motte, Rhode Island

College; Marshal Sponder, WebMetricsGuru INC, ceo; Jed Pearsall, Performance Research president and others to be announced.

United States Senator Sheldon Whitehouse is scheduled to give the closing keynote.

“We have some of the leading thinkers and practitioners joining us in Providence to continue the important dialogue about how can we effectively measure and communicate the important impacts of what we do as creative placemakers,” said Peter A. Mello, managing director, WaterFire Providence. “We connected this important convening on placemaking to a WaterFire to give participants the opportunity to have a unique, inside experience with a large scale public art event that has had a tremendous impact on the City of Providence over the past 20 years.”

For more detailed information on and to register for The Art of Placemaking Conference, please visit <http://conference.placemakers.us>. Organizers strongly advise attendees to book their room at the Omni Providence as soon as possible as hotel rooms in the Providence area will be in short supply due to the popularity of WaterFire’s Salute to Rhode Island Veterans. Reservations can be made by calling 800-843-6664 and ask for the 2013 Creative Placemaking Conference rate (Code: 1106132013CREAT) or by visiting <http://waterfi.re/artofplacemakinghotel>.

The Art of Placemaking Conference is a Creative Placemaking Learning Lab initiative launched by WaterFire Providence as part their 2012 ArtPlace grant.

ArtPlace, a national collaboration of 11 major national and regional foundations, six of the nation’s largest banks, and eight federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts, works to accelerate creative placemaking across the U.S. To date, ArtPlace America has awarded 134 grants to 124 organizations in more than 79 communities across the U.S. for a total of \$42.1 million. For more information about ArtPlace, please visit <http://artplaceamerica.org>.

WaterFire Providence is a 501(c)3 independent, non-profit arts organization whose mission is to inspire Providence and its visitors by revitalizing the urban experience, fostering community engagement and creatively transforming the city by presenting WaterFire for all to enjoy. Created in 1994 by the artist Barnaby Evans, each year approximately one million visitors come to Providence to experience WaterFire making it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the State of Rhode Island. For more information about WaterFire Providence, please visit <http://waterfire.org> and <http://igniteprovidence.com>.

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