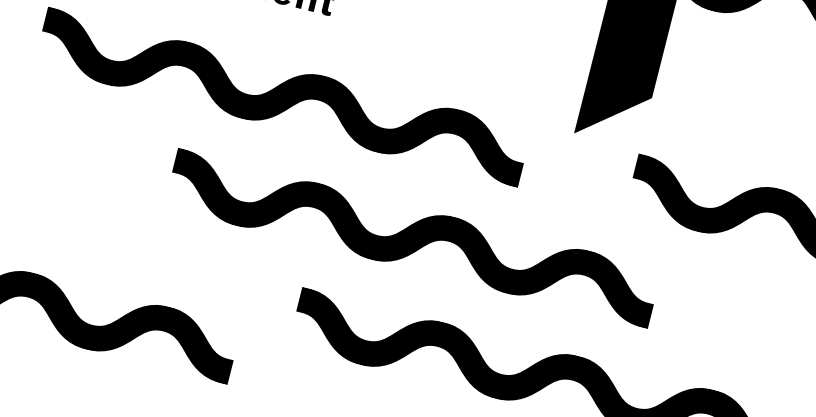


**The
Laundromat
Project**

**COMMUNITY +
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSET MAPPING**

**Process for Generating
Participatory Art
Engagement**



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WHAT IS COMMUNITY MAPPING?

COMMUNITY MAPPING is a participatory action research method used to leverage the collective brilliance of **NEIGHBORS, ARTISTS,** and **CULTURAL WORKERS.**

The process, rooted in **DEEP LISTENING** and **ASSET-BASED DESIGN**, results in community-responsive, creative tools, strategies, workshops, and interventions that support progressive change in neighborhoods.

Community mapping is central to The LP's pedagogical approach when entering any neighborhood or community. Please consider this exercise as just one strategy that you might use as you begin your work.

GOALS

BY THE END OF THIS ZINE, WE HOPE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND HOW TO:

1. Activate a mapping process in a community or neighborhood in which you plan to work.



2. Use these mapping techniques to build community and neighborhood specific arts experiences.



3. Generate a performative and/or visual representation that illustrates your findings.



COMMUNITY MAPPING FRAMEWORK

The overall aim of community mapping is to activate a multi-pronged community platform that cultivates and sustains mutually-beneficial relationships and resources for community partnerships. Determine how to incorporate the following aims into your project design.

IMAGINATION

If there were no boundaries or barriers to this process, what would you do? Imagine and build from this space. This is an important aspect of working in communities that are often encouraged to stunt their individual and collective dreaming.

INNOVATION

Be bold and risky. Try processes that have never been tried before or those that did not work well years ago that might work now. Place art and culture at the center of the mapping process.

INTEGRATION

Integration is a form of synthesis that supports the design process. It requires one to listen and be open to new ideas offered by collaborators. It is a critical popular education practice of honoring what we know and what we are learning in real time.

Integration requires collaboration, compromise, and careful curation of strategic actions.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation considers how and when the mapping framework will be engaged. Whether it is foundational to establishing a new partnership or determining the next steps of a cultural campaign, mapping must be an element of a larger collaborative and creative strategy.

IMPACT

Assessment of impact is essential to determine a project's viability and usability over an extended time period. The development of an assessment tool should consider a rubric for success and achievable benchmarks to determine success along the way.

COMMUNITY MAPPING + CULTURAL ORGANIZING PRIORITIES

- Learn the community, historically and present-day, to cultivate deeper connections
- Build a creative mapping methodology that understands local leadership, assets, needs, and resources
- Build strong partnerships and collaborations to co-create a community-based project



COMMUNITY MAPPING STRATEGY

PHASE 1:

Pre-Planning

PHASE 2:

Partner
Cultivation

PHASE 3:

Resource
Development

PHASE 4:

Collaborative
Design

PHASE 5:

Strategic
Implementation

PHASE 6:

Synthesis +
Analysis



PHASE 1: Pre-Planning

ACTION STEPS

- Determine your capacity to develop and sustain a long-term targeted cultural organizing focus.
- Draft a cultural organizing strategy and vision in alignment with the goals and aims you identified.
- Complete an environmental scan of your community / neighborhood. Determine who you already know and who you don't know. Create a strategy plan from this mapping process and share strategy with potential partners for critical feedback and to gauge interest.
- Refine the plan, seek and ask viable partners to collaborate on activating and implementing the plan. Evaluate interim success.

PHASE 2: Partner Cultivation

ACTION STEPS

- Determine one or more strategic partner(s) who are interested in a deeper and more expansive collaboration.
- Determine what is required for a mutually-beneficial mapping project. Through a series of collaborative work sessions, determine shared values, opportunities, and necessary processes for a successful, sustained, collaboration.
- Brainstorm and clarify plans for creative actions and interventions.
- Cultivate! Cultivate! Cultivate your partnerships. Develop a series of exchanges and the degree of sweat equity you will contribute to the community/neighborhood. Get involved in their projects.

PHASE 3:

Resource Development

ACTION STEPS

- Complete the community mapping process and the initial project design with partners.
- If applicable, determine which philanthropic institutions, art foundations, community-based organizations, and government agencies may be interested in the information collected through the mapping process and supporting the initial project design.
- If applicable, take into account non traditional and informal fundraising sources such as crowdsourcing, local business resource sharing, among others
- Compile potential funding sources and additional resources needed to see the project through across multiple scales.
- Introduce the collaborative to potential funding sources and strategic resource partnerships to gauge interest.
- Apply for funding and remain transparent with your collaborators around progress.

PHASE 4:

Collaborative Design

ACTION STEPS

- Before implementing the creative project, ensure that there is full buy-in and participation from neighborhood / community partners.
- Develop feedback and evaluative processes for each stage of the project production.
- Approach the project through the lens of popular education, where everyone involved is a valuable teacher and learner. This approach values the practices already present in a community and pushes everyone involved to be in the “now” of the development process and open to the magic that can occur when everyone can contribute and shape the project from a space of innovation and good will.
- Remain open and flexible during the project production.

PHASE 5: Strategic Implementation

ACTION STEPS

- Prepare for a soft launch.
- Evaluate and make any necessary tweaks. Experiment with adjustment to the project design as needed.
- Launch your project!
- Meet regularly with collaborators to check-in and assess how things are going. Ensure that the collaborative practice is generative for all involved.
- Complete the project and celebrate.

PHASE 6: Synthesis + Analysis

ACTION STEPS

- Develop approachable, accessible, and creative means to unpack the project's successes, challenges, and impact.
- Identify and categorize the ideas and themes that might emerge, including: experiences, perspectives, trends, needs, capacities, resources, and budgeting.



USE THESE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE YOU DURING THE MAPPING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

WAYS OF BEING

- **Center Trust**
- **Listen Deeply**
- **Spend (Unstructured) Time**
- **Be Collaborative by Design**
- **Be Consistent & Transparent**
- **Manifest Joy & Abundance!**



WAYS OF DOING

- **Center Art & Culture**
- **Meet People Where They Are**
- **Share Meals & Nourishment**
- **Map Community Assets**
- **Understand Power Dynamics**
- **Celebrate!**



WRITING PROMPT

Identify a community or neighborhood you want to work with and take a moment to respond to the prompts below. The writing can be creative, a list, a narrative, a poem, and/or graphic notation. Write as much as you can and feel free to grab an extra sheet of paper.

TO WORK IN THIS COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD, I NEED TO KNOW . . .

GENERATE

. . . four questions or prompts based on your free write that you will use when mapping this community or neighborhood. These prompts can be related to what may be urgent for the community with whom you might work, a goal or aspiration, or an important event or cultural practice.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE DETAILS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY'S RESOURCES + QUALITY OF LIFE CONCERNS.

1.

2.

3.

4.

MAP

Based on your free write and prompts, decide which organizations, neighbors, schools, cultural hubs, spiritual centers, or artistic venues might be able to provide answers to your questions. Jot them here:

ATTEND

. . . 2–3 neighborhood events you think might provide answers to your questions. Including community board meetings, art events, cultural festivals, family gatherings, religious services, block association meetings, sporting events, neighborhood potlucks, etc.

EVENT NAME	DATE	LOCATION

GATHER

. . . information while there. Listen and look for responses to your questions. Some of the answers may be verbal responses, while some may be visual. Here are a few ways to do this:

- Meet with / introduce yourself to community members
- Record an interview (with permission)
- Take pictures (with permission)
- Keep a list of community members, local sites, concepts, and ideas
- Collect a series of quick sketches
- Write responses to your questions

Remember to attend these events as an ACTIVE LISTENER and LEARNER. Consider your relationship to the community, especially if it's not your own.

ORGANIZE

. . . your information after the event. Then write a one-page narrative that explains what you learned, and plan a way to creatively show and tell the findings of your mapping process with your collaborators.



POSSIBLE CREATIVE REPORT-BACK ACTIVITIES MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Create a series of graphic notation(s)
- Draw and label a community or neighborhood map
- Write a list poem that responds to the prompt, “My Community/Neighborhood Is . . .”
- Transform an interview into a monologue

YOUR PROJECT SHOULD...

- Involve a feasible entering, building, and exit / transition strategy
- Be shaped around shared leadership, power, and accountability across collaborators and partners
- Feature an element of skills exchange so the community can sustain parts of the project in your absence
- Be rigorous in creative/cultural aesthetics and collaborative processes
- Sprout from the collective brilliance and input from community members and collaborators
- Be more than event planning, digital art-making, or printed collateral works
- Be community-based throughout, both in collaboration and participation



ABOUT EBONY NOELLE GOLDEN

Ebony Golden is a performance artist, scholar, and culture strategist whose work consists of site-specific performance rituals and live art installations that explore relationships between creativity and liberation. She relies on transparent and equitable partnerships with community members, institutions, and creatives in pursuit of social justice. For the duration of her career, Golden has been committed to building performance and public rituals with folks to fight reductive ideas about race, class, sexuality, gender, ability, and more. She centers the brilliant voices of people invisibilized by white-normative power structures and is clear about the wealth of culture and art present in their families and communities. She aims to utilize performance to tell enlivening stories to cultivate meaningful community connections that are viable for collective action and instillation of self-determination.

For the last decade, she has collaboratively created site-specific public art performances grounded in authentic community storytelling. Each time, she has felt that those folks who joined herself and her collaborators on their creative journey had been enveloped into the project itself —no longer audience members, but co-conspirators or co-performers. This is the type of connection she strives for and is integral to why she works as a collaborative artist for progressive social transformation.

In 2020, Ebony will launch Jupiter Performance Studio which will serve as the hub for the study of performance and theatre technologies rooted in the African diaspora. The studio will inform the development of a five-part ritual performance cycle to be produced over the next three years with partners in Harlem, Brooklyn, Durham, and Ashfield, Massachusetts.

Additionally, Ebony works as the founding strategist and CEO at Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative. BDAC is a consultancy and arts accelerator that devises systems, strategies, solutions as well as arts, and engagement happenings for and with creative, education, public wellness, and culture sectors nationwide.

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BETTY'S DAUGHTERS ARTS COLLABORATIVE

**BETTY'S DAUGHTER ARTS COLLABORATIVE
IS A CULTURAL ARTS CONSULTANCY AND
ARTS ACCELERATOR BASED IN NYC.**

Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative (BDAC) is a cultural consultancy and arts accelerator that powers systems, strategies, and solutions for the arts and culture, social justice, wellness, community development, non-profit and education ecosystems in NYC and nation-wide. Led by artist-scholar-organizer Ebony Noelle Golden, BDAC bridges many worlds to provide holistic, results-oriented perspective makes us effective strategists, educators, coaches, and community organizers.

Since 2009, BDAC has been supporting leaders and administrators in progressive organizations on a mission to create real, sustained social impact. To date, BDAC has worked with more than fifty organizations. Our clients know where they want to go; we provide the how. Because we think in decades, not years, we know how to turn any program or plan into a sustainable force for impact and transformation.

THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT



WHO WE ARE

The Laundromat Project is an arts organization that advances artists and neighbors as change agents in their own communities.

WHAT WE SEE

We envision a world in which artists and neighbors in communities of color work together to unleash the power of creativity to transform lives.

WHAT WE DO

We make sustained investments in growing a community of multiracial, multigenerational, and multidisciplinary artists and neighbors committed to societal change by supporting their artmaking, community building, and leadership development.

THIS ZINE WAS ORGANIZED BY

The Laundromat Project with Ebony Noelle Golden, the founder of Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative, on the occasion of the Create Change Program.

The content was generated by Ebony Noelle Golden, Petrushka Bazin-Larsen, Yvette Ramírez, Hatuey Ramos-Fermín, Ladi'Sasha Jones, and Judy Pryor-Ramírez.

The Create Change program is made possible in part by our Catalyst Circle members; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation; Ford Foundation; Jerome Foundation; Lambent Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts; and the National Endowment for the Arts, Downtown Art with FABnyc; The New School



CREATE CHANGE 2020

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