



## Year End Letter 2015

Dear friends and supporters,

Los Angeles Poverty Department's 30th year has also been it's busiest.

In March, we established the Skid Row History Museum and Archive at 440 S. Broadway, where Skid Row meets gentrification 2.0. In other words, a situation in which artists and others who have moved into downtown are now being threatened with displacement themselves a result of relentless up-scaling. As a result, commonality is emerging between the Skid Row neighborhood and new residents and the long time small businesses in the area: they are all threatened by the relentless up-scaling of downtown.

The Skid Row History Museum and Archive is dedicated to acknowledging and learning from the activist initiatives of the past 50 years that have saved Skid Row from being overrun and erased. With this central focus, the museum has thus far curated two well-received exhibitions, *Blue Book - Silver Book* and *General Dogon: Screaming Two Wheelers*. You can read reviews of the shows from KPCC, KCET, the Los Angeles Times, and others, and lots of other recent LAPD press, at the press page on our new website: [lapovertydept.org/wordpress/lapd-press-coverage](http://lapovertydept.org/wordpress/lapd-press-coverage).



Skid Row History Museum & Archive, Rent Party with John Fante biographer Stephen Cooper and the New Men Jazz trio (picture by Austin Hines)

Importantly, the museum is becoming a meeting place for Skid Row residents. We've produced numerous events focusing on issues and initiatives coming out of Skid Row, including the need for a Skid Row neighborhood council. We've shown films on gentrification in L.A. and Brooklyn, the underground classic film *The Exiles*, on Native Americans living in downtown's Bunker Hill, as well as a comparison of gentrification in LA and Johannesburg by a UCLA professor of African origin. The museum hosted "Fried Poetry", a Skid Row poetry contest which will likely turn into a yearly event.

LAPD's museum space is a unique stand-alone, dedicated cultural space for Skid Row and it is a site of cultural interaction between Skid Row and the rest of downtown. It's become our primary rehearsal space and the performance space for our most recent performance, *Chasing Monsters from under the Bed*. Significantly, it is a space that has fielded proposals from community members –unlike the typical situation on Skid Row, where facility use is strictly limited to program participants. When LAPD started in 1985, a guiding principle was inclusion – we found ways to work with and include people whose non-conforming behavior had resulted in their being thrown out of area missions and shelters. Now, in configuring our Skid Row History and Archive space, we've designed it for community accessibility.

Please think about supporting LAPD and its activities that are open to and involve the entire Skid Row community. These include:

- \* the annual Festival for All Skid Row Artists, where 100 artists perform & show their work
- \* biennial Walk the Talk parade honoring and telling stories of visionary people living and working in Skid Row
- \* our 150+ year-round, free performance workshops, open to all, and the performances developed out of them



Festival For All Skid Row Artists



Walk The Talk



Red Beard/Red Beard (picture by Matias Jaskari)

This year's performances include *Red Beard/Red Beard*, a meditation on how to transform hurt and suffering into something positive rather than reactively passing it on, by hurting others. We also performed *Chasing Monsters*, on the subject of recovery from mental illness, and will perform the upcoming *What Fuels Development?* on Skid Row's fight to not be overwhelmed by an alcohol fueled entertainment district. This performance will take place at Pasadena's Armory for the Arts in conjunction with the retrospective gallery exhibition on LAPD, (from January 2016 through May). The retrospective originated at New York's Queens Museum, where it received significant attention in 2014. This list doesn't even take into account all of the diverse, multidisciplinary programming at the museum, which embraces grassroots creativity and presents it utilizing sophisticated, outside--the-box technology.



Chasing Monsters From Under The Bed (picture by Michael Blaze)

At the same time, LAPD is active in a 130-organization, citywide coalition to encourage L.A. city and county government to greatly augment supportive housing and end the criminalization of homelessness. LAPD is a significant participant in Our Skid Row, a Skid Row grassroots design initiative, which is now gained the attention of the city's planning department, and LAPD is spearheading an effort to augment the availability of cultural space in Skid Row.

You can't go wrong by throwing your tax-deductible contributions our way.

Best,

John Malpede, For LAPD

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