



December 12, 2019

Dear Friends of Los Angeles Poverty Department,

In 2019 LAPD's energies have continued to focus on the preservation of the Skid Row neighborhood and building an understanding of the community that exists in Skid Row.

And I'm happy to report, that in Skid Row LA, collaboration is the name of the game. Our Skid Row History Museum & Archive space has become the de facto art center for Skid Row and has welcomed numerous events cooked up individual Skid Row artists and arts groups including: O.G.'s in Service, Sir Oliver, Creative I, Nick Paul, and Urban Voices Choir. Our 1st and 3rd Friday night film series has been frequented by a number of filmmakers who have come to show their films and dialog with the community. Our work in community coalitions has strengthened not only neighborhood cohesion but neighborhood preservation. Important achievements in 2019:

Our work with **Skid Row Now & 2040**, in ongoing dialogue with the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning – to this point – has led to the establishment of a new zone in which affordable housing – and no other housing can be built. (The area is within the traditional boundaries of Skid Row, but until now it was zoned industrial and only old hotels, grandfathered in, could be utilized for housing.) Now, new low-income housing will be able to be built. However, this should be extended throughout the boundaries of Skid Row. So our work continues.

* Our work with the **Skid Row Arts Alliance**, a banding together of arts organizations in Skid Row that, importantly, are open to everyone in the area, has produced and disseminated 5000 Skid Row Arts Maps, so that anyone in the neighborhood can find out where to go, to be welcomed, and appreciated for their creativity.

Being respected, natural person-to-person connections are made and opportunities (for arts, recovery, housing, and civic engagement) materialize. Disconnected individuals become community members.



* In April, we performed “I Fly—or How to Keep the Devil Down in the Hole” at REDCAT. The using our Festival for All Skid Row Artists as the frame for the performance illustrated and embodied the grass roots power of community generated safety practices.



In her LA Times review headlined: “PUBLIC SAFETY WAS THE THEME. LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT MADE THIS SHOW SO MUCH MORE.” Margaret Gray wrote: “...audience members may have felt, at least initially, like strangers at a gathering of old and dear friends who make no effort to explain inside jokes. But then, miraculously, we somehow felt like part of a family.”

* This year’s **10th Festival for All Skid Row Artists** was the culmination of The Goethe Institut’s **Worlds of Homelessness** conference, a full week of activities, (at our Skid Row History Museum & Archive space, Sci Arc and Navel) that featured Skid Row artists and activists in dialog with academics, activists, un-housed and housed artists and architects from South America, Africa and Europe.

* In 2019 our **Museum exhibitions**, showcased work by some extraordinary Skid Row Artists, that put them in dialog with MFA trained artists and addressed social issues. Our “Dogs in the House” exhibition brought together artists from inside and outside Skid Row and activists and housing lawyers working to house people and their pets.

Commenting on our show “Bridging the Divide” and the work of Scott Taylor and Manuel Compito, Edward Goldman of KCRW’s ArtTalk said,

“Shown side by side, the paintings of these two artists are not competing with each other but help us to understand and observe homelessness from two distinct points of view. Hooray to both artists who make homelessness the subject of their challenging art ... highlighting one of the biggest humanitarian problems in our country.”



* Our **Skid Row History Archive** at the Museum charged forward. Media specialist, Henry Apodaca, joined our archivists and this winter we have 3 archive interns (from UCLA and Bennington College), as well. Our archive, of LAPD and Skid Row history, is used by community members and other researchers: journalists, academics and filmmakers, activists. We use it for LAPD projects and we augment it with project research done in making performances and exhibitions that then become part of the archive. We’re preparing to make it accessible online and we are generating software that will make it extraordinary elegant and intuitive. In addition, U-C Riverside historian, Cathy Gudis, is scholar in residence at the Museum for the next year. She is researching a book on the history of Skid Row.

* Our **2020 Walk the Talk** performance / parade is on the horizon. We’re in the midst of our community nomination process for next May’s, Walk the Talk, that will acknowledge and celebrate transformative work being done by people who live and work in Skid Row. The Walk the Talk parade, like our Festival, is an event that reaches the unconnected people in Skid Row and in an informal and joyous manner brings them into the social matrix of the neighborhood.

The whole city, the state and country is talking about the homelessness and housing crisis. Skid Row is a neighborhood that wants more extremely affordable housing, so that no one is displaced and all Skid Row community residents who are currently un-housed can get housing in the neighborhood.

LAPD’s recent and upcoming projects directly address creating this housing as well as the schizophrenic NIMBY-ism that votes for the creation of housing but doesn’t want it anywhere near them.

* Upcoming in 2020, are two exhibitions and performance and publication projects. Opening in February, **“How to House 7,000 People in Skid Row”** is a collaboration with artist Rosten Woo and urban planner Anna Kobara, that takes the goals of: “No displacement of current Skid Row residents” and visualizes how income capturing mechanisms can create 7,000 permanent residences for people now un-housed in Skid Row and elsewhere. Later in the year we’ll be making a performance, exhibition, and

publications in collaboration with Robby Herbst, in the project, **“Compassion and Self Deception”** that looks at, NIMBY-ism and how to transform it and get beyond it.



Yesterday as I was crossing 3rd Street on my way to the Skid Row History Museum, I met a UPS deliveryman. He was beaming and I was too. We knew one another from a series of workshops we did with people, in transitional housing, who were coming out of too many years of incarceration. “How’s UPS treating you?” “Real good, real good. And how bout you and the other teachers?” “We’re good. This is our spot across the street.” “I got to come by.” “We’d love that.”

We hope to see you at one or, even better, at 50 of our events in 2020. We’d love that.

Meantime, your individual donation to LA Poverty Department is both needed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Malpede Director, Los Angeles Poverty Department

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Los Angeles Poverty Department, POB 26190, Los Angeles CA 90026

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