



ALLIANCE FOR THE ARTS  
IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 15, 2019

Contact:  
Shannon Fitzsimons Moen, a2ru Associate Director  
[skfitz@umich.edu](mailto:skfitz@umich.edu)  
734.615.4861

### **a2ru AWARDED \$200,000 FROM ARTPLACE AMERICA TO EXPAND ONLINE HUB FOR CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Hub will go live on redesigned a2ru.org in 2020; part of ArtPlace America's \$2 million investment at seven institutions to support creative placemaking teaching, learning and research.*

**ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN**—a2ru has been awarded a \$200,000 contract by ArtPlace America to expand its Creative Placemaking in Higher Education Hub. Building on the organization's multi-year investigation into creative placemaking, a2ru will produce this comprehensive online knowledge base where all resource materials, including syllabi, journal articles, case studies, websites, white papers, origin documents, scholarly articles, landmark opinion pieces, toolkits, videos, and more will be available to the higher education community and the public. This new platform will launch on the redesigned a2ru.org in 2020.

"a2ru is thrilled to have this support to better surface the ongoing work and connect the knowledge of researchers and practitioners in creative placemaking in higher education and the communities they serve throughout the United States," says a2ru executive director **Maryrose Flanigan**.

The project started in 2017 with the a2ru conference centered on creative placemaking, *Arts in the Public Sphere: Civility, Advocacy, and Engagement*. There, in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's [Bolz Center for Art Administration](#) and [Blackbaud, Inc.](#), a2ru launched "The Hub for Creative Placemaking in Higher Education," and its attendant social media feeds.

This contract is part of a larger \$2,000,000 investment by ArtPlace America in programs at seven colleges and universities in the United States to advance their work in building the field of creative placemaking toward furthering healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities. In addition to a2ru, the recipients include:

Arizona State University  
Maryland Institute College of Art  
The New School  
University of Florida  
University of New Mexico  
University of Oregon

ArtPlace believes that the higher education sector is an important participant in building the creative placemaking field. To make the field stronger they believe that it is important to grow and sustain the **knowledge base** of creative placemaking and increase access to **teaching and learning** about creative placemaking for the next generation of changemakers.

Creative placemaking already shows up in a variety of higher education settings—including in arts and design schools, public policy schools, and in architecture and urban planning programs—and the work is called by many different names, including social and civic practice art, art and public action, and arts and communities. Current and next generation practitioners do and will hold a variety of degrees as they work toward equitable, sustainable, and healthy community outcomes using arts and culture strategies.

“Each of these institutions is working to bring traditionally siloed bodies of knowledge and ways of teaching together,” said ArtPlace Executive Director **Jamie Bennett**. “We are thrilled to support these institutions in a way that works for their educational philosophies to further the work of artists as allies in creating healthy, equitable and sustainable communities.”

“Developing the next generation of leaders and establishing a knowledge base is work that higher education institutions and their faculty are uniquely qualified to do,” added ArtPlace Managing Director **Sarah Calderon**. “We are excited to have partners working across the country to make this happen.”

Following a scan that revealed over 70 institutions of higher education who were offering creative placemaking programs—including those in public action, social practice, public art, community art, social change, and similar programs—an invitation to propose work that integrates creative placemaking into higher education was extended to programs at 24 institutions last spring. Each of the seven programs selected to receive funding have developed a different approach to building the field of creative placemaking.

Investments for this program were chosen following a rigorous review process, including a four-person team of non-ArtPlace advisors. In addition to a dedicated commitment to a vision of equitable, sustainable, and healthy communities, ArtPlace considered the leadership at each institution and their commitment to further embedding this work deeply within the organization. ArtPlace also committed to finding programs and institutions that would partner to strengthen the creative placemaking field, ethical engagement with their communities, struggling with the inherent inequities of education, arts, and community planning and development, an equitable approach to research and evaluation, and those who embraced education for all learners, at all stages of work and learning.

###

### **About a2ru**

[a2ru](#) (The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities) housed at the University of Michigan, is a partnership of over 40 institutions committed to ensuring the greatest possible institutional support for the full spectrum of arts and arts-integrative research, curricula, programs, and creative practice for the benefit of all students and faculty at research universities and the communities they serve.

### **About ArtPlace America**

[ArtPlace America](#) (ArtPlace) is a collaboration of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that exists to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development. ArtPlace works to enlist artists as allies in planning and developing equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities. Sign up for future announcements at the top of [ArtPlace's homepage](#).

In 2020, ArtPlace will celebrate 10 years of investing over \$100 million in 285 [projects](#) and [organizations](#) across communities of all sizes, including 45 states, the District of

Columbia, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. ArtPlace is also investing in [artists](#), [cross-sector initiatives](#), [local assemblies](#), [local governments](#), [state arts agencies](#), and now in [higher education](#).