



Symbiotic Relationships:

Understanding Visionary Art Environments &
Their Impact on the Communities Around Them

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MFA Thesis – Museum Exhibition Planning and Design
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The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of
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Abstract

Visionary Art Environments are everywhere, but their importance is not recognized among the public, which threatens their survival. This thesis focuses on proving the impact of Visionary Art Environments in the communities around them, while also exploring ways to represent and involve them. It begins with the exploration of case studies and interviews with key members of these spaces and the community advocates. With their support and guidance, surveys were implemented to gather information directly from the neighborhood residents and businesses, culminating in interpretive materials that can have the potential to be used in broad ways and reach out to more people in the community. By working together to create nurtured symbiotic relationships, these spaces and their communities can produce a myriad of benefits and create an ecosystem of positive impact for everyone involved.

Personal Statement

While a student in undergrad, I would walk by Philadelphia's Magic Gardens almost every day and be transfixed by the tiles and art spilling out into the sidewalk. It was a unique place, something I had never seen before in my life. It attracted me like a magnet; by 2013 I was hired as a Garden Guide, giving tours and working the front lines. While there, I realized how precarious the survival of this space, and that of many others like it, was. Stories about the community saving the Gardens inspired me to continue looking at how other art environments had survived or perished, all depending on whether the people around them cared or not.

Artists make visionary Art Environments with an unapologetic and almost chaotic ferocity that creates structures that cannot be replicated. They are all over the world and have incredible stories of their conception, but more often than not, they are dismissed and misunderstood. After being around Philadelphia's Magic Gardens for four years, meeting Isaiah and Julia Zagar, as well as visiting other art environments, it fueled my desire to share their importance and attempt to build a bridge between them and those who can ensure they continue to exist: their communities.

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Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Introduction

Directly or indirectly, art has been a constant presence in people's lives since the beginning of time. Whether trained or not, from across all cultures and social constructs, human beings have expressed themselves and shared their personal histories through the creation of artwork. To make sense of these histories, art scholars have studied the strict aesthetic standards and subject matter of classical works and recently, the celebration of new ideas and uniqueness that defines modern art. However, as history has shown, the appreciation and success of most of these works tend to be linked to the patronage of a select few who are wealthy and well-educated and have been trained to view these works through a particular aesthetic lens. As Carl Magnuson states in his essay *Aesthetic and Grassroots Art: A Folklorist's Perspective*, "The process that distinguishes elite art converts the products of expression into special commodities, to be produced and possessed by a select few."¹

"Elite art" refers to artworks created by those artists most people would expect to see in a typical art museum. The focus on showcasing and understanding these specific works has set standards overlooking and even rejecting artists working outside the lines. Art created by marginalized communities, self-taught artists, those with mental illness and anyone else that did not fit these standards had been under appreciated and ignored until rather recently. In the past hundred years, several movements began emerging to bring to light these artists outside of that elite circle. However, the artworks, the artists who make them and the reasons behind their creation are so different, that it is impossible to group them in a single genre —

¹Carl Magnuson. "Aesthetics and Grassroots Art: A Folklorist's Perspective" from *Backyard Visionaries - Grassroots Art in the Midwest* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999), pg 2.

“As far as I’m concerned there ain’t no outsiders of anything. If you’re an artist, you’re an artist. If you’re a mechanic, you’re a mechanic... ain’t no outsider mechanics. That’s just something that someone’s got up to class things.”²

*– Reverend Howard Finster
Creator of Paradise Garden, GA*

because of this, discussing the subject with a broader audience is challenging and confusing.

There have been many titles given to these kinds of artworks in an attempt to define them – grassroots art, folk art, outsider art, visionary art, and more.³ Some of these terms have been challenged and rejected. Not only have the artists themselves rejected these words, but art historians have also found issues with the terminology. John Beardsley, author and art historian, argues “The term... reinforces hierarchies rather than subverting them, it incorrectly conveys the idea that people can be entirely innocent of a common culture. Most problematic, it reveals uneven power relationships.”⁴

The significance of these arts has not been recognized with the same regard as classical arts, even though they have been around for hundreds of years. They are important because they represent the communities that created them, their stories and culture. They are also the perfect example of humanity’s inherent need to create and express themselves using any materials available. On the surface, the artworks done by the artists in these art genres might be too unpolished for some people, but one must take a more in-depth look to connect, understand and appreciate them.

This thesis focuses on a specific movement of “Outsider” Art called Visionary Art Environments and explores the impact they have on the different communities around them, particularly in the United

²Gregg Blasdel. “Ed Root and Dave Woods: Grassroots Artists, Defined or Not” from *Backyard Visionaries - Grassroots Art in the Midwest* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999), pg 7

³See Glossary of Terms for specific definitions

⁴John Beardsley. “Imagining the Outsider” from *Vernacular Visionaries: International Outsider Art* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: The Museum of International Folk Art and Yale University, 2003), pg 15.

States. Through research, interviews, surveys, and prototyping, it highlights the value of nurturing a symbiotic relationship with all of these communities and the benefits and challenges of these complex partnerships. Understanding that these environments cannot stand alone, but instead, they depend on the support from the different communities around them is essential for their survival. Many Visionary Art Environments who have this backing also provide a safe space and unique opportunities for self-expression, exploration, and dialogue around complex topics, a great contribution to communities.



Nomenclature

Community Engagement - Working directly with the different communities to open up a dialogue for collaboration that ultimately benefits the institution and the community.

Folk Art - Handmade art, usually reflecting shared traditions or cultural aesthetics passed down through generations formally or informally. May be used for decoration or be utilitarian.

Impact - The positive or negative influence Visionary Art Environments have on their immediate, visiting and civic communities. The benefits, challenges and contributions created by the relationships between these communities and Visionary Art Environments.

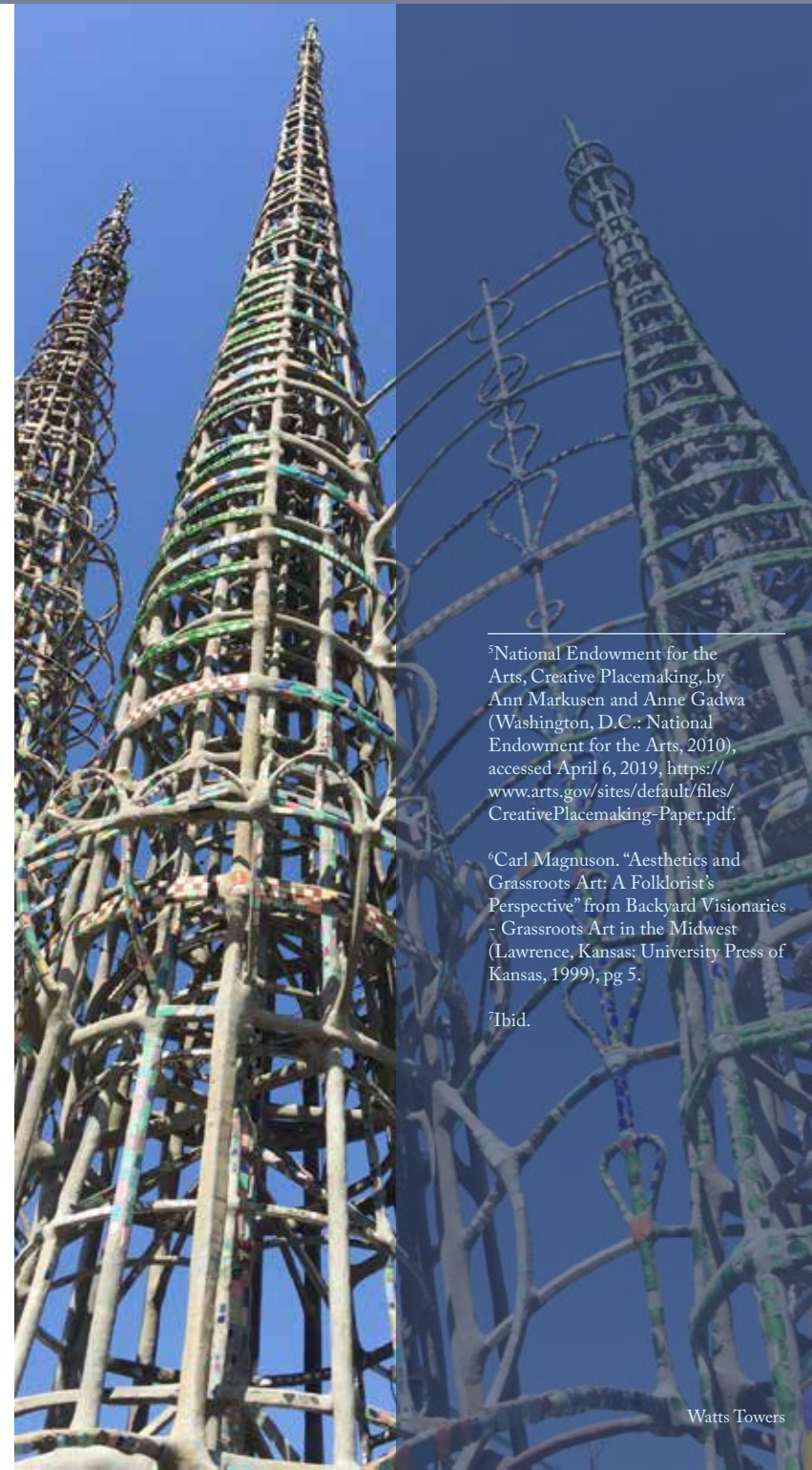
Symbiotic Relationship - Entities that interact together for their mutual benefit.

Visionary Art Environment - Immersive art installation that captures the profound experiences of the artist in obsessive and unapologetic ways, using unconventional materials and spanning decades.

Relevance - The close connections created by an institution to engage people through new information and meaning

Visionary Art - Individualized art that is inspired by transcending the walls of the physical world, and instead focuses on mystical and spiritual ideals.

Elite Art - Art created for the few, following strict aesthetic standards and with the purpose of form over function.



⁵National Endowment for the Arts, Creative Placemaking, by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010), accessed April 6, 2019, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>.

⁶Carl Magnuson. "Aesthetics and Grassroots Art: A Folklorist's Perspective" from Backyard Visionaries - Grassroots Art in the Midwest (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999), pg 5.

⁷Ibid.

Creative Placemaking - The collaboration between the community, the non-profit, public and private sectors that "strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities."⁵

Grassroots Art - "the expression of individuals who do not satisfy the aesthetic standards of any clearly defined audience"⁶

Outsider Art - "is considered to be more idiosyncratic, even intense and obsessive, and is made by people who are unaware of, or indifferent to, normative artistic standards"⁷

Defining “Community”

In terms of defining community, similarly to Visionary Art Environments, there is no specific way to define it because it will vary depending on the experiences and cultures of people. Some communities are defined by our backgrounds and where we were born, while others are chosen by us. However, one thing is clear, “Members of a community have a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for each other. They have an individual and a collective sense that they can, as part of that community, influence their environments and each other.”⁸ For the purposes of this thesis, I will define the community as follows:

Visiting Community - Visitors attending these Visionary Art Environments. Research has shown that they tend to come from two groups in particular: Tourists and Art Enthusiasts.

Civic Community - The broader community within the city, including local organizations, cultural institutions, businesses, and schools.

Immediate Community - The neighbors living and working within a mile radius from these Visionary Art Environments.



⁸ Chavis, David M., and Kien Lee. "What Is Community Anyway?" (SSIR). Stanford Social Innovation Review: Informing and Inspiring Leaders of Social Change. Accessed November 06, 2018. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what_is_community_anyway.

What are Visionary Art Environments?

Visionary Art Environments can be found all over the world, from India to Cuba, South Africa to Italy and interestingly enough, but most research has been done around those found in France and the United States. However, understanding what they are, how they come about, why they exist and the artists that create them, has been a challenge for most that come across them. Disregarding the “rules” of composition, the lack of constraints in materials used to create these spaces, and the rejection of creating for the sake of selling, they have never been considered fine art. Their separation from tradition and celebration of individuality has distanced them from folk art; they are a peculiarly undefinable breed.

The term “Visionary Art Environments” itself is very difficult to characterize because there is not a single definition capable of encompassing the singularity and uniqueness of each of these spaces. Each one of these immersive environments is different. Even if the materials used in them are similar, the details and inspirations surrounding them make them one-of-a-kind. To better understand them one must look at their individual story, their creator and influences.

“Part architecture, part sculpture, part landscape, visionary environments seem insistently and purposefully to defy the usual categories of artistic practice.”

– John Beardsley

There are, however, certain attributes common in Visionary Art Environments that help connect them by their similarities:

- They tend to be done by a single artist over a period of many years, sometimes decades.
- These artists are usually self-taught and use unorthodox materials typically found onsite, such as glass bottles, mirrors, shells, what some would consider trash and more.
- There is an obsessive quality to them that portrays the constant need of the artist to create with their own hands and tell a story.
- The artwork encompasses the whole space and surrounds the visitor creating a very unique experience, yet they are not necessarily created solely for this purpose.
- The artists creating these environments sometimes build on land that does not belong to them, or their work does not “fit in” with the surrounding landscape. This may or may not create an unstable relationship with the immediate community.

A Debated Term

Similarly to Outsider Art, the term “Visionary” Art Environment has been much debated by those studying this kind of artwork. There have been many different other terms suggested, such as “Grassroots Art” and “Vernacular Art”, among others. Yet these terms can have a negative representation of these environments, “especially in the way they reiterate the marginal status of these creations.”⁹

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “Visionary” as “having or marked by foresight and imagination” – a perfect description of these art environments, as well as the artists behind them. For the purpose of this thesis, I have opted to continue using this term in order to differentiate these works from other types of immersive art environments. It also makes me wonder, is it time to reclaim it?

⁹John Beardsley, Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists (New York: Abbeville Press, 2003), pg 8.



Dabls African Bead Museum



Paradise Garden

Visionary Art Environments are not...

At a time when experiences are now considered more valuable than objects, thanks in part to social media and the internet, immersive art environments have popped all over the country. It is easy to quickly place them in the “Visionary” Art Environment category. However, places like Meow Wolf in Santa Fe, New Mexico or installations like 29Rooms, coined an “Immersive World of Culture and Creativity” by Refinery29, are not a part of this genre of art. For starters, these types of spaces are carefully curated with the intent to attract visitors and sell tickets. They might be different than what people are used to, after all, that is part of their purpose, creating a unique experience to satisfy the needs of a customer. That is never the intention of Visionary Art Environments. Instead, they are unique because they are inherently rebellious and driven only by a distinct personal vision of their creator. They are a very honest representation of the artists that create them, and are often made without a specific intention or audience in mind.



29Rooms, NYC

Meow Wolf, NM

Reason for this study

This thesis shines a light on Visionary Art Environments and the complicated histories between the artists, the work, and the communities around them. It is important to understand that because the appreciation for these spaces has only grown in recent decades, not a lot of research has been done on the subject. There are also only a few examples of Visionary Art Environments in the United States that have become stable institutions and are leading the exploration of uncharted territories, in terms of finding productive ways to keep their doors open and engage with the public. Through the analysis of some of these examples and the impact they have on the community, whether it is positive or negative, one can gain a better understanding of how the different relationship dynamics work – What do they gain? What do they offer? – and develop a set of suggestions for these spaces to become active members of their community, while fulfilling their mission. In the long-term, these relationships will hopefully become stronger and those negative ones will turn into positive ones. Ensuring communities and Visionary Art Environments develop a stronger link will ultimately make a case to preserve and protect these spaces and their history, as well as create an entry point to look deeper and appreciate them in a different light.

At a time when being part of the bigger community and reaching out to diverse groups of people is extremely important in order to stay relevant, Visionary Art Environments have found other ways to bring the arts to the foreground of communities. From The Watts Towers in California to the Philadelphia Magic Gardens in Pennsylvania, they are working in innovative ways to ensure they are accessible to as many people as possible, as well as providing a safe space to engage in difficult conversations. By studying these spaces, one can gain further awareness of the impact of creating a sense of pride and community through various avenues. However, there are still communities that view these environments as negative and

work against them. Whether it is due to a lack of understanding, bad encounters with the artist, a changing community, or neglect, it can threaten the survival of these organizations. The Heidelberg Project, for example, was burned down twice by immediate members of the neighborhood. The Philadelphia Magic Gardens was in a zoning battle with their neighbors while trying to ensure they had the proper paperwork to host different events and has struggled to preserve the murals of its founding artist, Isaiah Zagar, around Philadelphia.

Actively working to improve relationships with the community, builds trust and allows institutions to become positive influential organizations, ultimately creating this symbiotic relationship. Mutual support between these and the community is necessary for the fulfillment and wellness of both entities. However, this can be a big challenge to many Visionary Art Environments because their original conception came from the personal experiences and vision of a single person.

What are the benefits, challenges, and contributions (impact) of the relationships between the community and Visionary Art Environments?

How can Visionary Art Environments nurture those relationships by creating opportunities for engagement through interpretation and actively involving community members in activities that matter to them?

This project will impact the communities surrounding those Visionary Art Environments who are willing to learn from those residing around them. It will address different ways to collaborate with community members while still holding true to the originality and uniqueness of the space. Visionary Art Environments themselves will also be impacted, some to make improvements to their current organizational structure, others to understand how the community around them influences their livelihood.

Additionally, this thesis will also help those interested in community change, public history, creative placemaking, and historic preservation since the study of Visionary Art Environments is a relatively new practice and affects all of these areas. Since communities are dynamic, as these spaces are constructed over a period of decades, they become embedded in the local history of the area, influencing to a certain extent the changes their neighbors experience. With their growth in popularity, outside visitors are increasingly exploring these environments creating the potential for economic advancement and cultural appreciation, making their preservation indispensable.

Understanding Visionary Art Environments and their motivations behind their preservation and inclusion of the community will allow other arts institutions to explore other ways to connect with audiences they have not been able to reach. Most Art Museums are considered inaccessible and intimidating for people who do not have an understanding of art history. However, community involvement in many Visionary Art Environments makes them an ideal study to learn about other ways to reach out to a broader community.





Hamtramck Disneyland

Methodology

Having had a personal connection with Philadelphia's Magic Gardens I began my research on Visionary Art Environments by visiting with some of their staff members The Heidelberg Project and Dabl's African Bead Museum, both in Detroit, MI in May 2018. Being that both of these artists are alive and continue to create work, we had the unique opportunity to speak with them, and we learned about the histories of those environments, their struggles and the reasons behind their work. While discussing these trips with friends and colleagues, it became clear that the term "Visionary Art Environment" was very unfamiliar to many and I struggled to communicate the magnificence of these places, let alone their importance. This frustration led me to explore ways to define this type of art space succinctly and begin considering the benefits they offer to their communities to prove how incredibly valuable they are.

While reading about Visionary Art Environments, I found there are several excellent books (found in the Literary Review on page 26) that give context and share the stories behind their existence and their creators, some with anecdotes of local people coming together to save them from immediate destruction, but not enough information about their sustained community involvement. In an attempt to dig deeper into the importance of these art environments, their community relations and how they tie directly to their survival, I reached out to those working behind the scenes at some of these spaces, beginning with Philadelphia's Magic Gardens and The Heidelberg Project. I decided to reach out to these two spaces first because I was the most familiar with them, and the Gardens is also very accessible for

research and collaboration, being right here in Philadelphia. These conversations led to multiple connections with other Visionary Art Environments—Pasaquan, Mary Nohl’s House and Paradise Garden—whom I also contacted and refer to in the Case Studies section of this thesis (page 28). All of these immersive spaces had common challenges and successes in terms of their relationships with their communities, but I began to notice some patterns emerging that forced me to interpret and segment the word “community.” For the purpose of this thesis and clarification, the community has been divided into three groups.

Visiting Community - time and time again it has been shown that the vast majority of those coming to Visionary Art Environments are visitors from outside the general area, tourists from other countries, states, towns. Audience research has demonstrated the power social media can have, making many of these spaces bucket list items that must be ticked off. Some people just want a picture to post and share with their many followers, others who did not realize how much they would truly appreciate the wonder these places offer until they experience it and love it, and of course, there are the art enthusiasts who know all about these art environments and are eager to learn new information.

Civic Community - many of these art environments collaborate and partner with local organizations, schools, and businesses to create programs and outreach opportunities for multiple demographics among those living in the city and its surrounding areas. Some are more successful than others, but even those who do succeed still struggle to get people from their city to come through the doors, or in some cases, even know they exist.

Immediate Community - The most complicated of all of the relationships. There was a pattern of duality between the spaces and their creators being hated and in some cases even damaged, and the love and respect they can also have which sometimes drives the community to fight to save the space, as is the case for Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, Pasaquan and The Watts Towers. However, even for those institutions whose immediate community have fought for their

survival, there still tends to be some tension because of a lack of understanding, communication and involvement among them and the art environments. However, it is important to keep in mind that depending on where each art environment is located, there will be differences in population density and one should allow for scalability. For example, in an urban setting such as Philadelphia, the radius of Immediate Community impacted is tighter than in an rural place, such as Pasaquan, where the nearest downtown area is 8 miles away.

Once the different communities were defined and I had spoken to the staff at the Visionary Art Environments already mentioned, even though their struggles were as unique as their stories, it became apparent that each one tied directly to a lack of involvement with one, or more, of these communities. I determined that by working with one of these spaces, I could identify some of the reasons behind this misunderstood relationship and address them through opportunities for engagement.

From my previous experience working at Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, I could recall comments from visitors about it being a “trash museum,” the constant battle to get local residents to visit, and the constant fear of one of Isaiah Zagar’s murals being demolished because of the rapid real estate development in the city. Remembering these experiences encouraged me to connect again with the space and create this project and research. However, I decided to focus on ways of creating a stronger relationship with the Immediate Community because Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens has been experiencing tense exchanges with their immediate neighbors. The process involved listening to the residents and businesses to learn about their perceptions of the art environment through surveys and a couple of interviews, which would then serve to identify patterns in the data that could inform some of the reasons for this splintered relationship. To learn more about the details behind the survey process, please refer to page 55 and Appendix A through D.

After gathering and analyzing all of the data, I began seeking ways to involve the community and share with them that the story of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens was also their story. While speaking

with Olivia Edlund, Education Manager at PMG, she mentioned they would be creating a series of “pop-up museums” where they would share art activities and general information about the museum in order to have broader outreach in the community and neighborhoods around them, which will be taking place summer 2019. This information gave me the idea to create interpretive materials that would share some of these connections between the history of the space and those living around it with the hopes of engaging them and showing the importance of this Visionary Art Environment. Ultimately, the designs were tested and prototyped at two locations on South Street to gather audience information and whether they inspired those who read them to visit and become involved with the space. To see detailed information about the zines, their topics, and the prototyping results, please refer to Appendix E through G.

Community Collaborators

Throughout this process, interviews with key community collaborators helped inform my research and decisions for the project portion of this thesis. Their input, knowledge, and interest in the subject helped shape the journey and ultimately guided me down a path that involved surveying the immediate community and creating prototypes for interpretation. They helped me realize the importance of nurturing relationships with the community through communication and carefully thought out involvement.

Mary Nohl's House

Alex Gartelmann, Caretaker and Restorer

Monument Lab

Yannick Trapman-O’Brien, Studio Assistant & Engagement Strategist

Paradise Garden Foundation

Tina Cox, Executive Director

Pasaquan

Michael McFalls, Executive Director

Annie Moye, Chair/Board Member at Pasaquan Preservation Society

Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens

Olivia Edlund, Education Manager

Josephine McQuiston, Visitor Relations Manager

South Philly Barbacoa

Benjamin Miller, Co-owner

Southeast by Southeast

Shira Walinsky, Artist and Community Organizer

Tattooed Mom

Robert Perry, Owner

The Heidelberg Project

Jessica Williams, Grants Manager

The Village Arts and Humanities

Aviva Kapust, Executive Director

Lillian Dunn, SPACES Residency Manager

Literary Review

Understanding Visionary Art Environments

There are several books, journals, and articles dedicated to trying to understand what defines Outsider Art, Grassroots Art and all others in the same family. Raw Vision, a British magazine dedicated to Outsider Art will prove helpful in studying specific Art Environments and creating connections to other great sources.

How to Look at Outsider Art by Lyle Rexer does their best to define Outsider Art, sometimes used as an umbrella term which includes Visionary Art Environments, and traces the beginnings to the movement while questioning the differences between “outsider” and “insider”. This book helps me understand how these environments and arts evolved throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries and how they might differ in the United States as compared to Europe.

Vernacular Visionaries: International Outsider Art edited by Annie Carlano with the essay “Imagining the Outsider” by John Beardsley, similarly to the previous book, attempts to break down Outsider Art with further emphasis in the European influences. In the essay, John really challenges the use of words to describe this movement and explores the idea of “automatic” creativity that takes over the artists of these works. Finally, this book helps break down the differences between Folk Art, Art Brut, Outsider Art, and other similar terminology.

Backyard Visionaries: Grassroots Art in the Midwest a compilation of essays about different Visionary Art Environments in the Midwest rejecting the use of the term of “Outsider Art”, instead calling it “Grassroots Art”. They explore the subject matter of these spaces and break them down to try to understand the motivations behind the artist. With Religion being a central theme in several of these Art Environments, they explore the relationships between the individual

and the community and compare different grottos in that area of the US. Last but not least, there are two essays discussing the restoration and future of Visionary Art Environments, which will also aid me in understanding the intricacies of preserving these spaces and making sure they stay in the community.

Community Involvement

“How Public Art Improves the Economic and Social Environment” by Kaid Benfield is a short article about the impact of public art, in particular through the lens Philly Painting, an initiative by the Mural Arts Program in Philadelphia to “beautify” Germantown.

The Art of Relevance by Nina Simon explores the idea that relevance is different to everyone and to make sure, one as a museum professional takes into consideration the voices of everyone. This book will help me keep in mind the best practices to ensure the community and Visionary Art Environment are involved in the proper way and allow them to empower each other and have pride in their partnership.

“The Psychedelic Assisi in the Southern Pines: Pasaquan, Visionary-Art Environments, and the National Register of Historic Places” by Keith S. Hebert goes into detail about the challenges to register Pasaquan, a Visionary Art Environment in Buena Vista, Georgia created by St. EOM, into the National Register of Historic Places.

“In Transition: The Visionary Art Environment of Pasaquan” a digital humanities project done in partnership between the Columbus State University and the Pasaquan Preservation Society gives insight into the transition of ownership of Pasaquan from the Preservation Society to the Kohler Foundation. It includes resources such as interviews with Board Members about their thoughts on the matter and their involvement in the space.

Sabato Rodia's Towers in Watts - Art, Migrations, Development edited by Luisa del Guidice includes a series of articles, essays, and interviews around the history of the Watts Towers and their founding artist Sabato Rodia. An essay titled Fifty Years of Guardianship: The Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts (CSRTW) shares a lot of detailed information about the community history from the perspective of Jeanne S. Morgan, a board member of the Watts Towers Art Center. And an interview called Artists in Conversation shares the impact this environment has had in the immediate community from the point of view of different artists who have been involved with the Art Center.

Case Studies

The following case studies explore the delicate balance between all of these communities and the survival and flourishing of Visionary Art Environments. Each highlights a different focus and approach to their engagement of these different communities, as well as what has happened when there is no support. By studying the initiatives they have in place, challenges and successes, we can begin to understand the types of impact they have on these three different communities and the importance of nurturing these community relationships.

- The Heidelberg Project** – Working with the Civic Community
- Paradise Garden** – Focusing on the Visiting Community
- Pasaquan** – What the Immediate Community can accomplish
- Mary Nohl's House** – What can happen if the community's support is lost
- Philadelphia's Magic Gardens** – Attempting to bridge all three communities

Heidelberg Project | Detroit, MI

Working with the Civic Community
Artist: Tyree Guyton (1955-)

With a mission to “improve the lives of people and neighborhoods through art”¹¹, this Visionary Art Environment created by Tyree Guyton has been in the works since 1986 and has survived two arson attacks by their own neighbors. Their relationship with residents, business owners, and other organizations are varied and has changed throughout the years. In an interview with Jessica Williams, Grants Manager at the Heidelberg Project, she also explains that “the overall population among those entities has declined over time, so the same supporters have shifted in terms of number and even their understanding of the purposes of the art environment itself.”¹² She also mentions that as an institution, they are mostly focused on creating programming and outreach opportunities outside of the actual Visionary Art Environment itself, such as partnering with local schools and businesses. However, because of the dwindling Detroit population, their participant numbers have sometimes waived their ability to hold such programs. With that in mind, they have begun a transformation named Heidelberg 3.0 with “a new vision to transform his childhood neighborhood from an art installation driven by one man into a self-sustaining arts and culture village.”¹⁴

The neighborhood where Guyton has established the Heidelberg Project went through the abandonment that has hit Detroit in the past 10 years, except 30 years earlier. Tyree Guyton began his art practice as a reaction to the lack of services, abandonment, and crime by utilizing empty structures. He was sorting it out on the land itself by conducting “exercises in art”. Not everyone in the neighborhood felt the same about this outlet of expression and some actively rejected. However, Jessica believes that the awareness of their organization's

¹¹“Mission Vision.”The Heidelberg Project. Accessed November 02, 2018. <https://www.heidelberg.org/mission-vision/>.

¹²“Heidelberg Project Interview,” telephone interview of Jessica Williams, by Samantha Mera, December 17, 2018.

¹³ Margaret Grace, “Heidelberg 3.0 Begins with Renovation of Iconic Numbers House,”The Heidelberg Project, October 10, 2017, accessed April 07, 2019, <https://www.heidelberg.org/recent-news/2017/10/10/heidelberg-30-begins-with-renovation-of-iconic-numbers-house>.



support to creating services that help the community has shifted the negative perspective of the residents.

In the end, the Heidelberg Projects strives to be a place where neighbors and residents can expand their cultural identity and their own shared experiences, and create bridges for those people that live outside to understand what the organization is doing. Through Heidelberg 3.0, one of their goals is to look at how they can work with the city in the next two years to make larger investments in structures on the empty land. They want to rezone to create more mixed-use buildings for activities in an area that has always been heavily residential. One of these structures will host the Heidelberg Arts Residence program on the top floor while designating the first floor as a community space to support their art education programs and a shop that would sell art and other items.

“The reality is that people in the neighborhood are combating poverty, lack of resources and even sex trafficking, so even if they want to participate, they are not always able to.”¹⁴

*– Jessica Williams, Grants Manager
The Heidelberg Project*

¹⁴“Heidelberg Project Interview,” telephone interview of Jessica Williams, by Samantha Mera, December 17, 2018.

	Civic Community	Visiting Community	Immediate Community
Specific Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local schools - Businesses - Local Artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourists coming from surrounding cities, states and countries - Art enthusiasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local residents - Local businesses
Institutional programs and initiatives in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heidelberg Arts and Leadership Academy (HALA) - Investment in local property and empty lots - Heidelberg Arts Residence program (in the works) - Educators kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tours - Lectures with Tyree Guyton and Jenenne Whitfield, Chief Executive Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to educational programs - Support for local businesses to establish themselves in the neighborhood
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dwindling population numbers - Lack of city resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased numbers of outside visitors to the art environment have contributed to tense relationships with the neighbors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dislike for outside visitors - Acceptance of the artwork as healing - Blight and abandonment in the neighborhood - Poverty and lack of resources
Successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1XRun, a fine arts printing shop, partnered with the Heidelberg Project to co-own a building that serves as their shop and Guyton's studio¹⁵ - Beginning efforts for Heidelberg 3.0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors feel connected to the space even if they cannot relate to its immediate history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some residents who have been there from the start and began as opposers and have turned into allies - New businesses and residents moving into the neighborhood in the past 5 years because of the presence of the Heidelberg Project¹⁶
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides opportunities for students to develop their art and writing skills, filling a gap after the city cut the arts education funding - Increased student self-confidence, interest in art and "awareness of community issues and activism"¹⁷ - Economic growth for local businesses, neighborhood and the city in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heidelberg Project and Tyree Guyton are recognized nationally and internationally - Gives the organization more opportunities for growth - Visitors purchase in local businesses and give back to the local economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocates for the organization - Creation of jobs through programs and partnerships with businesses

Fig. 1 - Table of impact The Heidelberg Project has on the community

From opposite page:
¹⁵"Heidelberg Project Interview," telephone interview of Jessica Williams, by Samantha Mera, December 17, 2018.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷Charmin Archer, Keisa Davis, and Anya Dennis, Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy Pilot Face Evaluation Report, HALA Pilot Face Evaluation Report (Detroit, MI), pg 14.

How they measure their impact

- The success and attendance of their programs and workshops.
- The Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy - they have acquired master-level educators on staff, doubled their budget and increased participant attendance on other events.
- Tracking of their partners and the resources they provide, and if those partnerships have grown or been sustained.
- Educators Kit - Free online tool that provides great information for students and teachers. Tracks where the educator is from and the number of students who engage with this information.
- Recently, they began exploring how to utilize social media data to expand their online reach within the surrounding neighborhoods by using tools like Neighbourlytics.



Paradise Garden | Summerville, GA
Focusing on the Visiting Community
Artist: Howard Finster (1915-2001)

Howard Finster was a Baptist preacher, builder, and painter who in the early 1960s began the construction of Paradise Garden where he planted trees, built cement shrines encrusted with mirrors and tiles, sculptures and paths. He believed his duty was sharing God's word through his artwork. He also began painting portraits, which brought him incredible popularity, even making the album cover design for two famous rock bands – R.E.M, and Talking Heads. It was during this time between 1965 and the early 1980s that Finster was most prolific in his Paradise Garden.¹⁸ However, as he got older and his health declined, he was unable to keep up with his masterpiece.

In 1999 his daughter Beverly bought the Garden and in 2001, soon after his death, she incorporated it into Paradise Garden Park & Museum, Inc. – a nonprofit that would preserve the work of Finster. However, in 2011 they sold Paradise Garden to the Chattooga County and it has been leased by several entities until two years ago when the Paradise Garden Foundation Inc was created by a board of local citizens who began to meet monthly. Their main goal is serving the Chattooga County by fostering the economic development of the community through tourism, public service, and creative ventures¹⁹.

¹⁸ John Beardsley and James Pierce, *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2003). Pg 78

¹⁹ "The Foundation," Paradise Garden - The Foundation, accessed April 07, 2019, <http://paradisegardenfoundation.org/history/the-foundation/>.

From opposite page:
²⁰John Beardsley and James Pierce, *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2003). Pg 78

*"I asked God, 'Why is it I'm a garbage collector? Everything I have is junk.' He said, 'You don't have anything. I want the world to understand that you can make something out of what other people throw away.'"*²⁰

– Reverend Howard Finster
Creator of Paradise Garden



	Civic Community	Visiting Community	Immediate Community
Specific Audiences	- Local schools - Local youth groups	- Tourists from around the U.S. and other countries - Christian groups and summer camps - Art and spirituality enthusiasts	- Local residents of Chattooga County - Local businesses - Members
Institutional programs and initiatives in place	- Paradise Garden Education Project Website - Art Camps - Host Local Events	- Finster Fest (Annually) - Self-guided tours - Artist in Residence Program - Paradise Airbnb Lodging - Museum - Visitor Center	- Outsider Art Tour - Membership - Music and movies series
Challenges	- The county is economically disadvantaged	- Funding for preservation of all of the structures, which in turn can affect visitor's experience - Off the beaten path, 30 miles away from nearest interstate	- Awareness of the power and reach of Finster's work
Successes	- Partnered with the county to open an outdoor entertainment area in Downtown Summerville - In 2018 664 students came through the environment for tours ²¹	- Over 25,000 visitors from 33 countries have visited since 2012 ²² - International visitors from England and France ²³	- Creation of Visitor Center to tell Finster's story - Received Appalachian Regional Commission grant in 2012 to further diversify the economy and bring local jobs
Benefits	- Bring opportunities for growth of the local economy and jobs	- Opportunities for a unique and inspiring experience - Airbnb also provides lodging for families of Immediate Community	- Creation of jobs for locals - Local advocates - Provides entertainment for community that they don't typically have (movies and music)

Fig. 2 - Table of impact Paradise Garden has on the community

²¹ "Interview with Tina Cox, Paradise Garden," telephone interview by author, April 23, 2019.

From opposite page:

²² "The Foundation," Paradise Garden - The Foundation, accessed April 07, 2019, <http://paradisegardenfoundation.org/history/the-foundation/>.

²³ Margaret Browne, "Paradise Regained," Paradise Regained | The Folk Art Society of America, Summer 2010, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://folkart.org/mag/paradise-regained>.

This page:

²⁴ "Some Numbers about Paradise," Paradise Garden Foundation | Some Numbers about Paradise, accessed April 21, 2019, <http://paradisegardenfoundation.org/some-numbers-about-paradise/>.

How they measure their impact:

- The number of visitors and the economic opportunities they create. In 2015, they had 6,468 visitors directly having an impact on the number of jobs created in the tourism industry, the revenue from travel spending and local and state taxes paid by those visitors.²⁴
- Partnerships with local organizations and businesses, including the revenue created during the annual Finster Fest.
- Grants obtained for the preservation of the different structures in the garden and the continued investment in the local economy.



Paradise Garden



Pasaquan



Pasaquan

Pasaquan | Buena Vista, GA
 What the Immediate Community Can Accomplish
 Artist: Eddie Owens Martin “St. EOM” (1908-1986)

Currently under the ownership of Columbus State University, whose mission is the priority “to preserve, maintain, provide access to and assist in the interpretation of Pasaquan”²⁵, this Visionary Art Environment has been kept afloat thanks to the continuous effort by its Immediate Community. The interest in ensuring the survival of Pasaquan began with the artist himself and then continued after his suicide in 1986.

Eddie Owens Martin inherited the property after his mother’s death in 1950 but did not permanently move into the house until 1957. Before he moved to Buena Vista, he had been living in New York since he was 14 years old and made a living by reading people’s fortunes, a practice he continued to do once he returned to Georgia.²⁶ He was friendly to influential people in town, including business owners and they endorsed his work when he was alive, more than they do now. When he was alive, he spent a lot of money on different businesses and participated in town meetings but once he passed in 1986, nobody was sure what to do with Pasaquan. However, the civic and immediate community did not want it to be torn down like so many other similar environments in different parts of Georgia and they came together and formed the Marion County Historical Society in order to legally be allowed to receive Pasaquan. Fred Fussell was one of the community members who spearheaded this initiative but as the organization grew, it became more interested in other causes such as other historic homes, cemeteries, and buildings and Pasaquan stopped being their number one priority. Because of this, the organization felt they could not continue caring for Pasaquan and offered the art

²⁵ “Pasaquan, An Internationally Recognized Art Environment” Pasaquan, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://pasaquan.columbusstate.edu/>.

²⁶ Rees, A., et al. 2015. “In Transition: The Visionary Art Environment of Pasaquan.” Buena Vista, GA.: Columbus Community Geography Center. [<https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/ccgc/13>] Community Partner(s): CSU Art Department and Pasaquan Director, Dr. Mike McFalls.

environment to the Columbus Museum, who refused to accept it because several board members did not see the value of Eddie Owens Martin’s work, as well as having different fundraising priorities. During this time, some vandalism and theft occurred in the space, but nothing major.

By 1990, in light of Pasaquan being placed in the back burner, Fred, his wife Cathy, and other members of the Marion County Historical Society separated from it in order to create the Pasaquan Preservation Society, which would focus solely on Pasaquan. Their efforts consisted mainly in fundraising to ensure the art environment was protected, secured and preserved. Around 2003, while searching for grants, Fred Fussell came across the Kohler Foundation and reached out in seek of funding for certain preservation projects. However, they had their hands full and were unable to help. In an attempt to bring more recognition to the space, he also worked to add Pasaquan to the National Register of Historic Places, which he accomplished in 2008.

In order to keep the community involved, they created programs, tours, events with local musicians, contests and educational outreach. But without consistent funds to rely on and most of their money going towards preservation efforts, the organization couldn’t hold a sustainable model. They continued reaching out to the Kohler Foundation, who rejected their petition a second time, before finally accepting to begin a discussion about what would happen to Pasaquan in 2013 after Fussell wrote directly to Terri Yoho, the Director of the Kohler Foundation. An agreement was then created that would allow the foundation to take ownership of the space in order to fully restore it. The only stipulation was that after they were done with that process, they could not return the environment to the original owning entity. The Pasaquan Preservation Society agreed to these terms and worked with the foundation and Columbus State University to ultimately transfer the ownership of Pasaquan to the university, where students and faculty would be better equipped to continue the preservation and interpretation of this environment through programs, classes, workshops, and other research efforts.²⁷

²⁷ Rees, A., et al. 2015. “In Transition: The Visionary Art Environment of Pasaquan.” Buena Vista, GA.: Columbus Community Geography Center. [https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/ccgc/13] Community Partner(s): CSU Art Department and Pasaquan Director, Dr. Mike McFalls.

	Civic Community	Visiting Community	Immediate Community
Specific Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Columbus State University students, faculty and researchers- Local businesses in nearby counties- Schools in Merion County and other surrounding counties- Other universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Art enthusiasts- Those seeking spiritual experiences- Tourists - 3100 visitors in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Howard School- Local residents- Local businesses
Institutional programs and initiatives in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Yearly community event - Pasafest 2018- Lectures- Artist Residencies- Partnership between Columbus State University and the Kohler Foundation and restoration of site- Exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Yoga meditation retreats- Tours- Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scavenger hunts and tours- Committed to buying from local businesses- Yearly community event - Pasafest 2018
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Still growing and learning after shifting ownership- Continuous preservation of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marketing to outside visitors because there is not a lot to do around the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensuring they are still supportive of the space as it continues to grow
Successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preservation and restoration of the structures around Pasaquan- Ownership passed to Columbus State University.- Over 750 people attended Pasafest- Pasaquan opera	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thanks to the internet, they have a large following from Japan, Germany, France, and Belgium.- Inspiring people to create	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Local residents are now appreciating the space and understanding the true story, not the myths.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The partnership between the different organizations has legitimized Pasaquan in the eyes of the civic community.- Small economic engine for the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cultural tourism brings economic opportunities to the civic and local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase in jobs and revenue from cultural tourism- A point of pride for the people of Buena Vista

Fig. 3 - Table of impact Pasaquan has on the community

How they measure their impact:

In conversation with Mike McFalls, Director of Pasaquan, he explains they do not have a formal way to measure impact because it is very difficult. However, for the purposes of grant applications and such, they do the following:

- The yearly attendance by visitors and schools.
- Pasaquan works with the local Chamber of Commerce and they keep track of the tax revenue earned from the visitors coming to Pasaquan and spending on local businesses.
- The attendance in their yearly events, such as Pasafest.
- Through Columbus State University, they work with local organizations, universities and schools and the amount of partnerships, the work they do and number of students participating also serve to inform this impact.
- The number of tours and visitors.²⁸

Pasaquan “was a point of pride for us. It was one thing that we had to show company that was different. He was weird but he was our weird, you know?”²⁹

*- Cathy Fussell
Former Board Member of
Pasaquan Preservation Society*

²⁸ “Interview with Michael McFalls, Pasaquan,” telephone interview by author, April 23, 2019.

²⁹Rees, A., et al. 2015. “In Transition: The Visionary Art Environment of Pasaquan.” Buena Vista, GA.: Columbus Community Geography Center. [<https://csuepress.columbusstate.edu/ccgc/13>] Community Partner(s): CSU Art Department and Pasaquan Director, Dr. Mike McFalls.



Pasaquan

Mary Nohl's House | Fox Point, WI
What Happens When There is No Support
Artist: Mary Nohl (1914–2001)

Unlike the other case studies in this thesis, Mary Nohl's House is the only one not open to the public. The purpose to show how the lack of support from any or more of the communities discussed in this project, can threaten the survival of Visionary Art Environments.

Beginning around 1950 and until her death in 2001, Mary Nohl created cement sculptures and other artwork and completely transformed inside and out her home, a cottage owned by her family in Fox Point, WI. Before she passed, she drafted a deal in which she left the property and all of the artwork to the Kohler Foundation. Additionally, she left \$11 million to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation to grant to artists so they could focus on creating work.³⁰ However, once she died, all efforts to open the house to the public were met with negative responses by the immediate and civic communities. Most literature states that Mary Nohl was not well liked by these communities but during an interview with Alex Gartelmann, a staff member from the Kohler Art Center, and the person in charge of restoring and caring for the house, he shares that this was not necessarily always the case. In fact, she got along with her neighbors, but the town of Fox Point has very restrictive laws in terms of allowing businesses. He explains that 93% of the town has residential zoning and that there is not a lot of room for the town to grow, which is why they have created such strict laws. This is also one of the main reasons why Mary Nohl's house has never been allowed to have public programming or allow visitors to the space. In fact, in order for him to work on the house, he has a lease just as a regular tenant would, and lives there.

³⁰ "Mary Nohl," SPACES, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://spacesarchives.org/explore/collection/environment/mary-nohl/>.



Mary Nohl's House



Mary Nohl

For about a decade after the Kohler Foundation took over the art environment, they attempted to change the zoning of the house to no avail, and the house was left closed and in disrepair. The neighborhood is one with wealthy residents and they disliked seeing the house fall apart, but they also would not allow for it to be opened to the public, leaving the foundation to deal with a very complicated issue. In 2012 the Kohler Art Center took ownership of the house from the Kohler Foundation, in an attempt to shift the efforts towards restoring the building and the grounds. For a brief moment in 2014, they even considered moving the house out of Fox Point, but instead, they decided to begin cataloging and preserving the artifacts inside the house, some of which have been on display at the Art Center and will be part of the collections of their new Art Preserve, a space with a permanent display highlighting 13 different Visionary Art Environments which will open to the public in the summer of 2020.

For now, Alex shares his job consists of doing the concrete restoration of all of the figures in the grounds, managing the space and building relationships with the people in the neighborhood. Only one of the residents now actually knew and remembers Mary Nohl and in fact, he has tried to help the Art Center get the zoning necessary to do programming, but the other neighbors get nervous about the prospect of opening it up to the public. He says that at the moment, the Art Center is trying to think of other ways to display Mary Nohl's work and focusing on the restoration, as well as what will go in The Art Preserve, but is not sure what will happen in the future with the property.³¹

³¹ "Interview with Alex Gartelmann, Mary Nohl's House," telephone interview by author, April 18, 2019.

	Civic Community	Visiting Community	Immediate Community
Specific Audiences	- Kohler Foundation - Kohler Art Center - Local government	N/A	- Local residents
Institutional programs and initiatives in place	- Restoration of the art environment	N/A	- Alex Gartelmann, caretaker, to work on building relationships
Challenges	- Restrictive residential zoning laws - Lack of support from local government	N/A	- Mistrust by residents in the neighborhood - Lack of communication among all parties involved
Successes	- Began restoration efforts in 2014 under the ownership of Kohler Art Center	N/A	- Have changed the minds of a few residents who have then advocated for the space
Benefits	- Mary Nohl's work will not be destroyed	N/A	- Creating better relationships that could potentially allow for the organization to do more with the environment

Fig. 4 - Table of impact Mary Nohl's House has on the community

*At the moment they do not have specific ways to measure the impact on the community since their focus is solely on the preservation of the work.



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens | Philadelphia, PA
Attempting to bridge all three communities
Artist: Isaiah Zagar (1939-)

Since 2008, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens (PMG) have welcomed people from all over the world, sharing the mosaics of Isaiah Zagar and the stories behind all of the artwork embedded in the walls and created by folk artists from Mexico to Bali. Through their programs and exhibitions, they strive to inspire and bring unique experiences to their community. PMG's mission as stated on their website is,

"Philadelphia's Magic Gardens (PMG) inspires creativity and community engagement by educating the public about folk, mosaic, and visionary art. PMG preserves, interprets, and provides access to Isaiah Zagar's unique mosaic art environment and his public murals."

Through programming, community outreach, exhibitions, tours and by creating a safe space for all, PMG is now a role model among Visionary Art Environments. They attract over 100,000 visitors a year and have all kinds of events throughout the year for people of all ages and backgrounds. However, there are still several struggles the institution has been in the process of working out, from having mostly visitors from outside of Philadelphia to an ongoing battle with the neighbors and the rapid development the city is experiencing. Throughout all of this, PMG has been exploring possible solutions that will allow them to continue growing and thriving, while also keeping into consideration the changes happening in the city and being mindful of those living around the museum.

PMG relies heavily on the revenue created by ticket sales but

they also understand that not everyone has the funds to pay admission to a museum. In an attempt to reach as many people as possible, they partnered with Art-Reach, a Philadelphia organization that advocates and creates opportunities to make the arts accessible for all. Through this partnership, PMG’s staff has received accessibility training, Touch Tours training—a tour designed for people with low to no-visibility to experience through touch—and they participate in the ACCESS Program, which offers \$2 admission tickets to ACCESS cardholders and up to three other visitors with them.

Through surveys and basic demographic research, PMG has learned that less than 20% of their visitors were from Philadelphia, with the majority coming from other parts of the United States. To address this, an initiative was created in 2016 to encourage Philadelphia residents to visit, called Philly Free Week. Happening in September, PMG allows free access to anyone living in Philadelphia beginning on Sunday and going through Friday. However, because the gardens are rather small, tickets during that week sell out quickly in advance, but not everyone with tickets ends up actually coming in, which takes away the opportunity for those people who do want to visit but were unable to purchase tickets.³²

Two major efforts by PMG to continue their mission and protect the work of Isaiah Zagar took place between 2016 and 2018 but were received with backlash by the immediate and civic communities. First, in an attempt to properly zone the property that PMG uses, they requested a Use Variance and Special Assembly license. However, several neighbors actively fought them and filed a petition to deny this license to the gardens, involving other residents and gathering signatures stating that “the neighbors are concerned that the approval of the zoning variance is too broad to stop PMG or any future owners/management of the property at 1020 South Street from using the property to develop such establishments”³³ (a bar or nightclub). To remediate the situation, PMG held community meetings to address their concerns and create opportunities for dialogue. Yet the neighbors who filed the complaint to the Zoning Board continued pushing for its denial and a hearing took place on March 21, 2017. Ultimately, PMG was granted the zoning they needed but the whole situation left tense

³²“Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, interview with Josephine McQuiston, Visitors Relations Manager” Interview by Author. March 28, 2019

³³ “Zoning Variance Appeal for The Magic Gardens Philadelphia (1020 South Street),” Josh Rosenzweig and Rachel Rosenzweig to Zoning Board of Adjustment Members, February 24, 2017, 1004 Kater Street, Philadelphia, PA.

relationships with the neighbors.

The second obstacle came in 2017 with the rapid development of the city and the desire of the Painted Bride Art Center organization to sell its building to an outside investor without ensuring the proper survival of its mosaicked facade. Isaiah Zagar worked on this mural between 1991-1999, marking the height of Old City’s cultural boom and giving the structure a new life, creating an iconic marker in the neighborhood. When talks about the possible sale of the building to a developer who was thinking about demolishing the structure to make way for condos reached Emily Smith, Executive Director of PMG, she worked to try and ensure the survival of the mosaics. Yet The Painted Bride did not want to add a clause that would require the developer to preserve the mosaics, stating that work was falling apart. The gardens offered to do ongoing pro bono preservation work on the murals if The Painted Bride promised to save the artwork but their offer was rejected by the art center. Members of the community took sides, some thinking that PMG had no right to prevent The Painted Bride from selling their property, others supported the preservation of this iconic artwork. In a final attempt to save the murals, PMG submitted an application to nominate The Painted Bride building to be part of the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places which would prevent the artwork from being torn down. However, the designation was denied in 2018 with just one vote difference leaving this iconic building at risk for destruction.

Finally, in an attempt to further outreach in the community and bring pride to the residents around Isaiah Zagar’s murals, PMG will have pop-up museums in front of four murals in different neighborhoods around Philadelphia from May until August 2019. Each pop-up museum will offer art-making activities and basic information about this Visionary Arts Environment and its founding artist. Additionally, they will offer free passes to PMG in order to encourage them to continue their experience and visit the museum.³⁴

³⁴ “Zoning Variance Appeal for The Magic Gardens Philadelphia (1020 South Street),” Josh Rosenzweig and Rachel Rosenzweig to Zoning Board of Adjustment Members, February 24, 2017, 1004 Kater Street, Philadelphia, PA.

	Civic Community	Visiting Community	Immediate Community
Specific Audiences	- Local schools - Local organizations - City government	- Over 100,000 visitors a year, with the majority being 18-34 years old ³⁵ - The majority of visitors come from 100+ miles away from PMG ³⁶ - Not the typical museumgoer	- Neighborhood businesses, particular those on South Street - Local residents
Institutional programs and initiatives in place	- School tours - Educational programs - Philly Free Week - ACCESS card program - Touch Tours - Preservation of Isaiah Zagar's murals around the city - Visionary Visits Discounted Tours - Outreach activities at four different murals across the city in summer 2019	- Mosaic workshops - Site and neighborhood tours - Rotating exhibitions - Public programming, some paid, some free with admission	- Philly Free Week - ACCESS card program - Arts & Drafts at Tattooed Mom's - Participation in neighborhood festivals - Membership
Challenges	- Rapid real estate development and gentrification in Philadelphia - Isaiah Zagar murals being torn down - Denial of Historical Designation for The Painted Bride Art Center building	- Rapid growth in such small facilities has stretched the limits of the space - Most visitors only come once	- Tension in regards to the number of tourists that come to visit - Lack of support from the immediate community in regards to programs and proper rezoning of the space
Successes	- The members of PMG are Philadelphians who really want to support the museum - Over 400 members - Received proper zoning for its facilities	- Huge growth since it opened to the public in 2008. - 2015 was the first year it reached 100,000 visitors - System of timed tickets with an opportunity to buy in advance - Trained staff to approach people and tell the stories behind the artist and the space	- The immediate community came together and ensured the gardens survived between 2002-2008 - Partnerships with Tattooed Moms and other local businesses
Benefits	- Creating opportunities for collaboration with local organizations - Economic growth	- Visitors leave inspired - Self-sustained through the sale of tickets - Welcomes everyone and is a safe space for dialogue and learning	- Many businesses on South Street agree that PMG brings a lot of business to them - Real estate development and economic growth

Fig. 5 - Table of impact Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has on the community

From opposite page:
³⁵ Wenlu Bao et al., Philadelphia's Magic Gardens Visitor Evaluation Report 2015, Museum Audience report, Museum Studies, The University of the Arts (Philadelphia, PA, 2015). Pg 7.

³⁶Ibid pg 20.

How they measure their impact:

- The number of visitors buying tickets every year, tracked by Altru. This system also keeps a record of visitor's zip code information.
- Most of their programming involves receiving feedback from the visitors, usually through surveys sent out via email after public events, tours and exhibitions.
- Semi biannual audience surveys, with the most recent having taken place during all of 2018.
- The number of educational programs and school tours given a year.
- Partnerships with local organizations and businesses.



Isaiah Zagar - Philadelphia's Magic Gardens



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

A Deeper Dive

Part 1 - Asking the community

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, like most of these spaces, has gone through many challenges to establish a good relationship with the Immediate Community, which to a certain extent, has also affected their relationship with the Civic Community and threatened the survival of some of Isaiah Zagar's murals. To better understand the current impact PMG has on the different communities and to provide recommendations for nurturing those relationships, a partnership was created to develop this project. With the guidance and encouragement of Emily Smith, Executive Director, and the collaboration of the staff at PMG, a series of evaluations, interviews, and prototyping took place to find opportunities for the Immediate Community to be engaged in impactful ways.

Through interviews with Olivia Edlund, Education Manager; Josephine McQuiston, Visitor Relations; and Emily Smith, information about the current impact from the institutional perspective was gathered (see fig.5), but it was also essential to learn about the view the Immediate Neighborhood residents and business have of the space. A front-end evaluation was developed with three goals in mind to help inform the possibilities for creating an engaging relationship.

Goal #1: Gauging the community's familiarity with Isaiah Zagar and Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Goal #2: Finding out the level of engagement neighbors have with the art environment

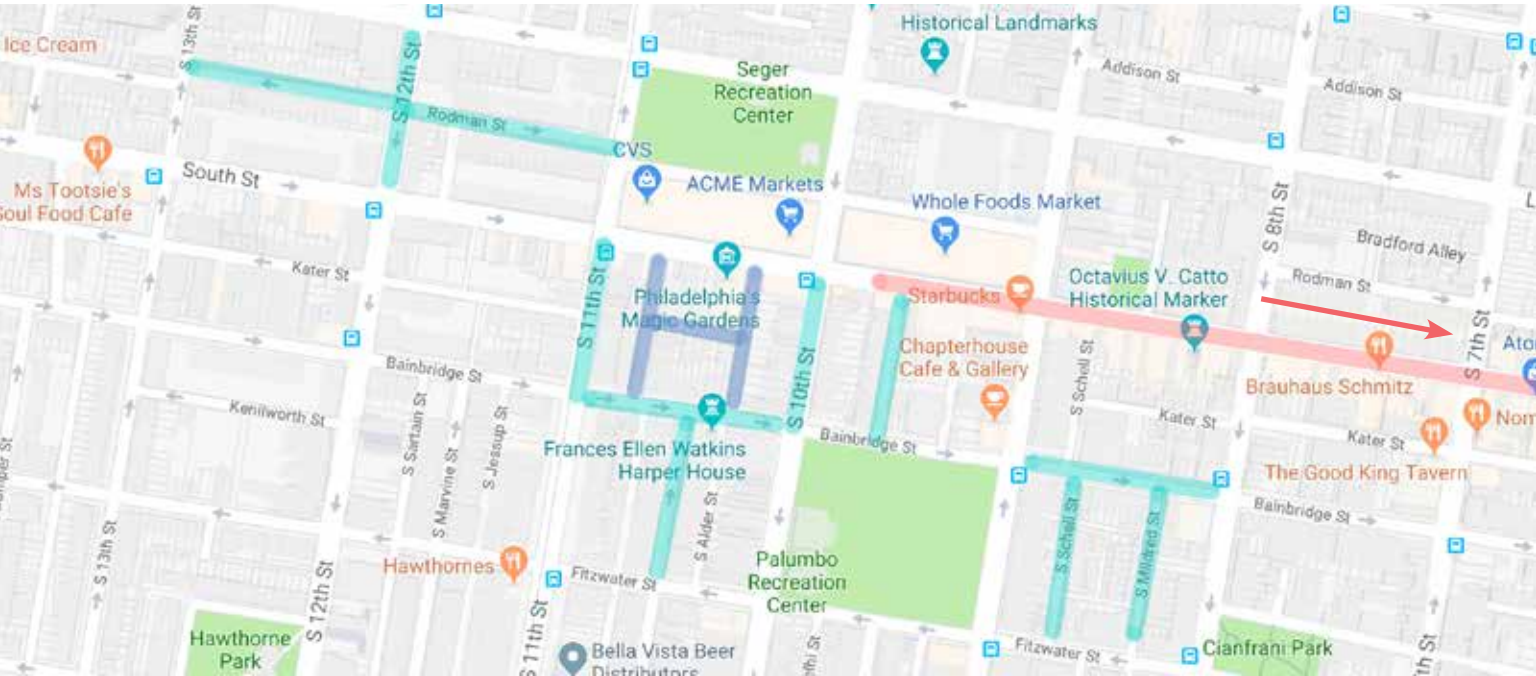
Goal #3: Understanding how Philadelphia's Magic Gardens is perceived by their neighbors and the reasons why

After initial testing in January 2019, it was determined that two survey instruments were necessary to better gather the information according to the audience being addressed, one for residents and one

for local businesses. The first survey instrument was mostly distributed by going door to door to residences, between February and April of 2019, around a four-block radius from PMG to get the perspective of those who interact with the work almost every day because they live so close. During talks with Emily Smith, we agreed to avoid the residences on the immediate Kater, South Clifton, and South Alder Streets due to recent clashes between PMG and some of the neighbors in those houses. She believed that approaching them could potentially have some repercussions and we were mindful not to create further tensions between the neighbors and the museum. Additionally, since this thesis takes scalability into consideration when considering the Immediate Community, I focused on the 8 block radius of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens.' 80% of the 40 total responses were obtained by knocking on

- Streets avoided
- Surveyed residential streets (For survey details and responses see Appendix A)
- Surveyed South Street businesses (For survey details and responses see Appendix B)

Fig 6. - Area where door-to-door surveys were conducted



people's doors. The residential neighborhood survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

The second survey instrument was specifically designed to address the staff at businesses on South Street, between 4th and 9th streets, and included questions directly addressing the locale and not just the individual staff member to gather information on the business demographics. However, all of the other questions about the staff's perception of PMG and Isaiah Zagar were virtually the same as those from the residential survey. Because approaching businesses can be more challenging and disruptive to their daily tasks, it was decided only to collect ten business surveys. To see the business survey instrument, please refer to Appendix C.

In the residential survey, some questions gathered demographic information, such as how long the person interviewed had lived in the neighborhood, their age and whether they were initially from Philadelphia or not. Other questions were based on their personal experiences, feelings, and knowledge of Isaiah Zagar and PMG, which proved the most helpful in determining the options for further interpretation and engagement. These questions included gauging their familiarity with both, Isaiah Zagar and PMG; reasons for visiting or not the museum; using three words to describe the artist's work and PMG, as well as what they thought PMG's relationship with the neighborhood was like and if they believed the institution brings value to the area. These questions also contributed the most information because they were open-ended and some people spoke more freely.

Because Visionary Art Environments take decades to build and their surroundings change, the demographic data was useful in assessing if there were any trends between the length of the time the person has lived in the neighborhood and their familiarity, level of engagement and perception of the space and its relationship to the community. For the neighborhood residential survey responses and additional graphs, see Appendix B.

Key observations from neighborhood residential survey analysis

- A cross-tabulation of the questions “Are you originally from Philadelphia?” and “What is your age range?” found that 40% of those surveyed were between 23-35 years old and are not originally from Philadelphia. 13% of those surveyed were between 36-50 years old and also not originally from Philadelphia. However, while performing these interviews, many residents stated they were from the suburbs of Philadelphia, meaning that they could also have had access to Zagar’s work before they even moved to the city.

What is your age range | are you originally from Philadelphia?

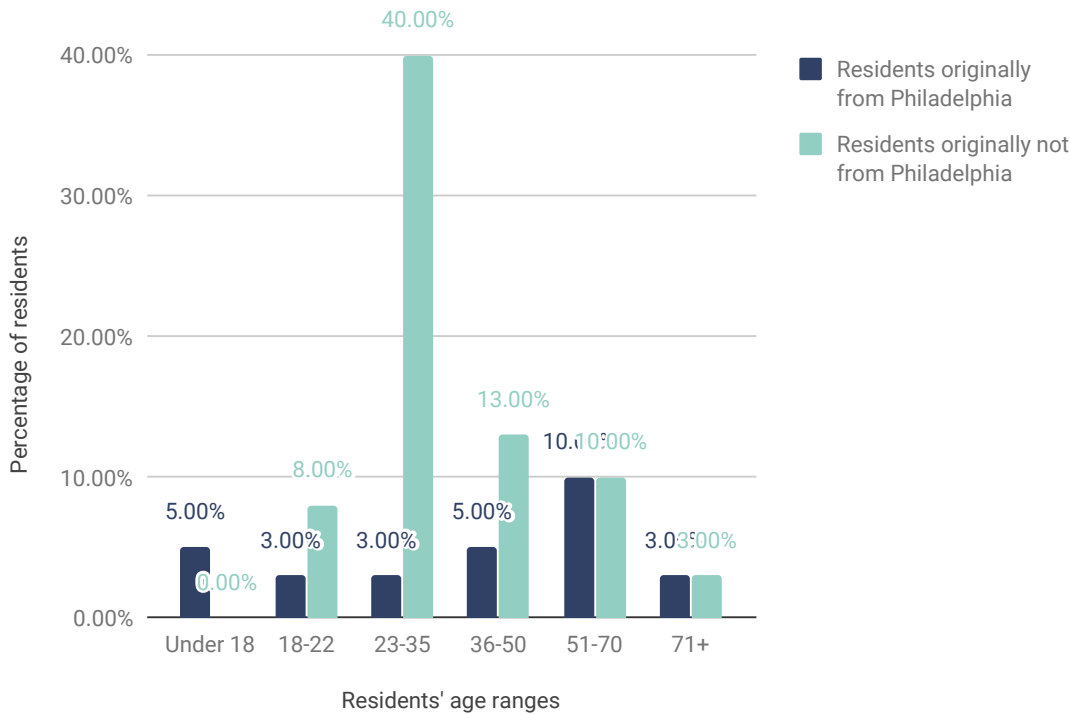


Fig.7 - Demographics cross-tabulation

- This survey found that 40% of those interviewed had lived in the neighborhood for over 5 years. Of those, 63% said they had visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens but none visited more than once a year. In fact, 80% of those who had lived in the area for more than 5 years and had visited the art environment, stated they only visited once every few years. Alternatively, of those residents who have lived in the neighborhood for 5 years or less, 71% said to have visited PMG and of those, 35% said they visited several times a year and another 35% said they visited once a year.

How often do you visit PMG?

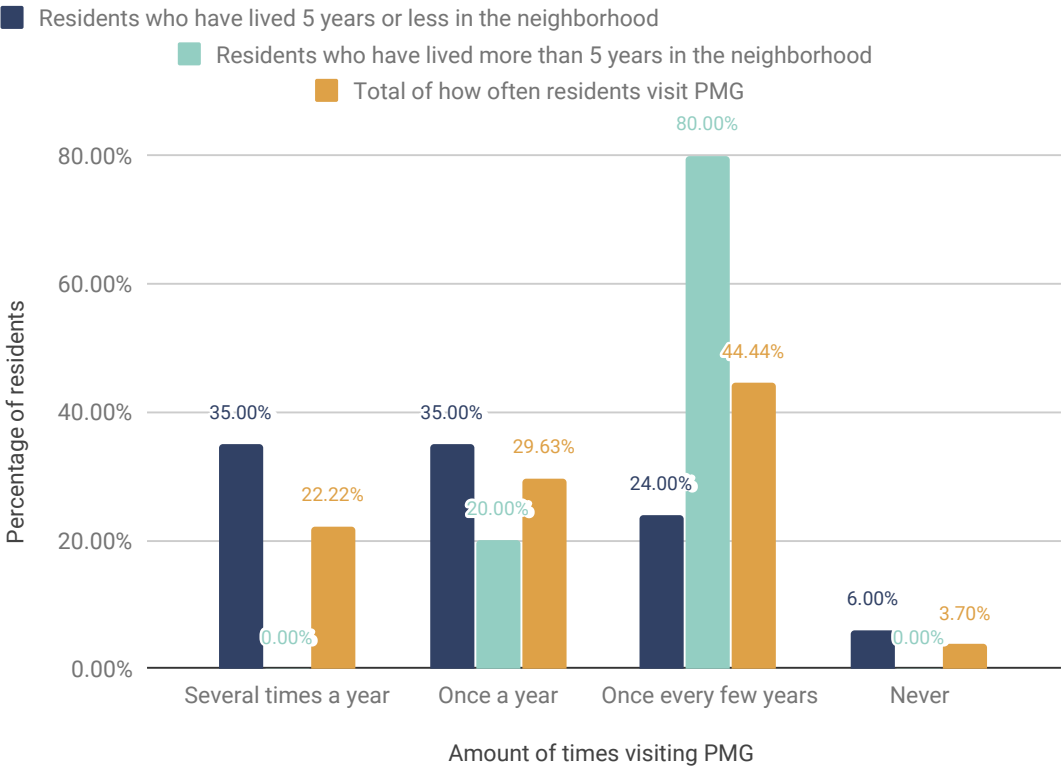


Fig.8 - Amount of times residents have visited PMG

- Of the residents who have lived in the neighborhood for 5 years, 29% stated they visited PMG because it is “Beautiful, unique and interesting”, followed by having to go because of a class trip (18%) and bringing out of town visitors (18%). The reasons differed for those people who have lived in the neighborhood for more than 5 years, with 40% of those residents saying that they visited PMG because of curiosity, followed by those visiting because of personal growth and satisfaction (20%) and a combination of curiosity and bringing out of town visitors (20%).

Why did you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

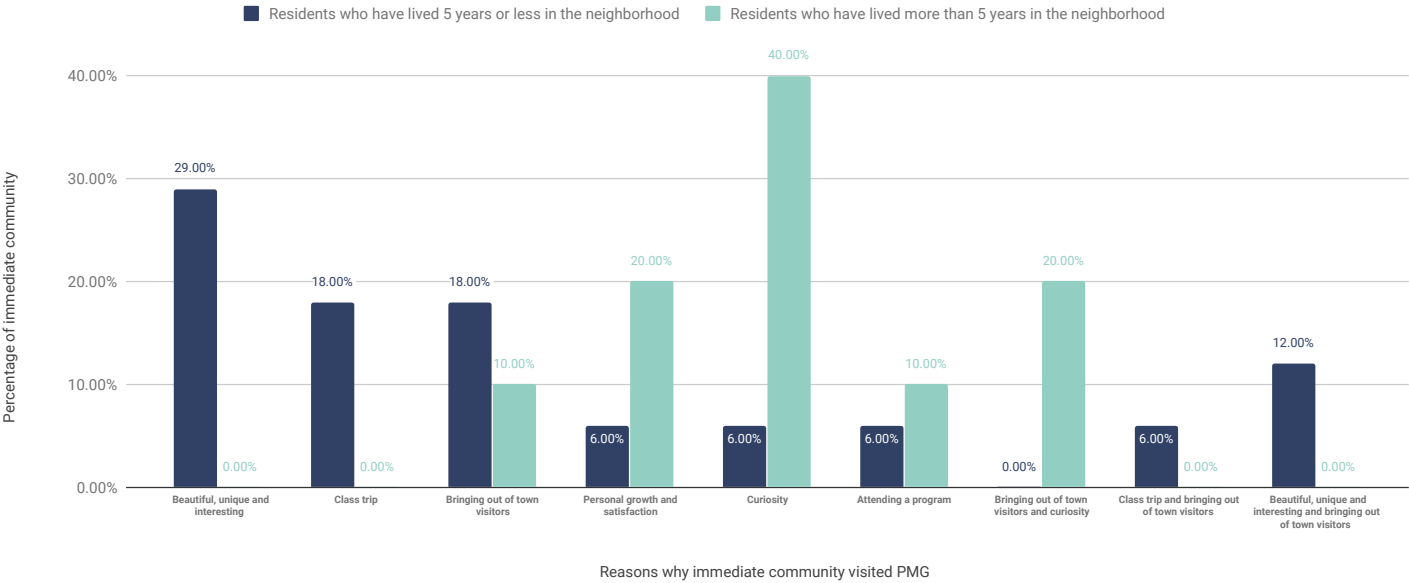


Fig.9 - Reasons why Immediate Community visited PMG

- Of the people who have not visited PMG, the responses for those having lived in the area for 5 years or less and those who have resided for over 5 years, were quite similar with the two main reasons being the fact that the art is everywhere around the neighborhood for free and not having had the time to go to the museum yet.

Why have you not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

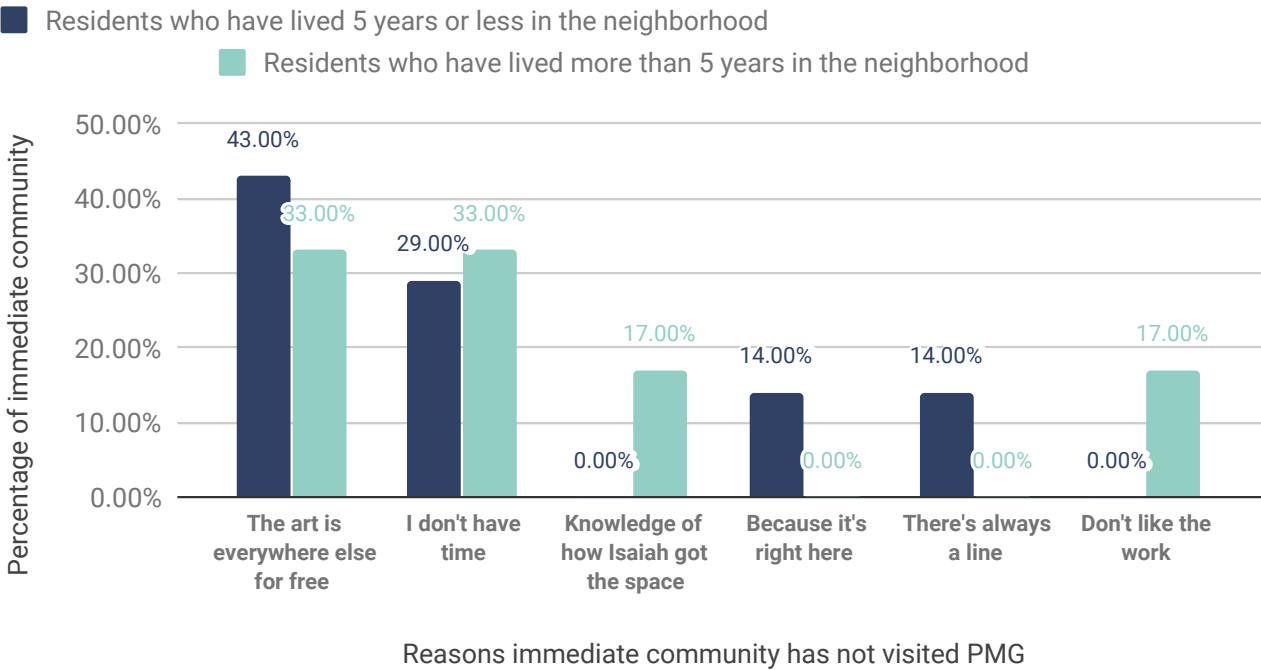


Fig.10 - Reasons why Immediate Community did not visit PMG

- While 80% said they were either “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the work of Isaiah Zagar, 15% said they were “not familiar at all” even though his work covers dozens of walls around the neighborhood. This was mostly due to the fact that they did not know the name of the artist responsible for all of the murals.
- 88% said they were either “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the work of PMG. Among the programs offered by the museum, residents mentioned being the most familiar with the Site and Walking Tours and Garden Party. However, some of the neighborhood residents surveyed said **“I don’t know what the Magic Gardens does aside from existing?”** and **“No clue what else they do.”**
- Overall, 53% of residents surveyed used positive words when describing PMG and only 5% used negative words. Of the positive remarks, some that stood out include “unique”, “meaningful”, “welcoming”, “positive” and “peaceful”. Of the negative remarks “monetized”, “derivative” and “touristy.”
- For the most part, the residents interviewed believed that PMG has a positive relationship with the neighborhood. **“Part of the fabric of the neighborhood.” ; “Gives the neighborhood personality.”** and **“Integrated and brings people into common space. Everyone loves it”**. Some people highlighted the programs PMG has done, as well as times when Isaiah invited the residents in the block to help create the murals down the street, or other opportunities where they had been engaged. Those who had negative or neutral views of this relationship mentioned the large number of tourists that line up outside - **“I don’t really feel like it’s meant for me as a neighbor because I see lots of visitors lined up outside, doesn’t feel like a place for me as someone who lives two blocks down.”**
- Ultimately, 58% of those interviewed said PMG adds tons of value to the neighborhood, and 40 % said it adds some value.

What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood?

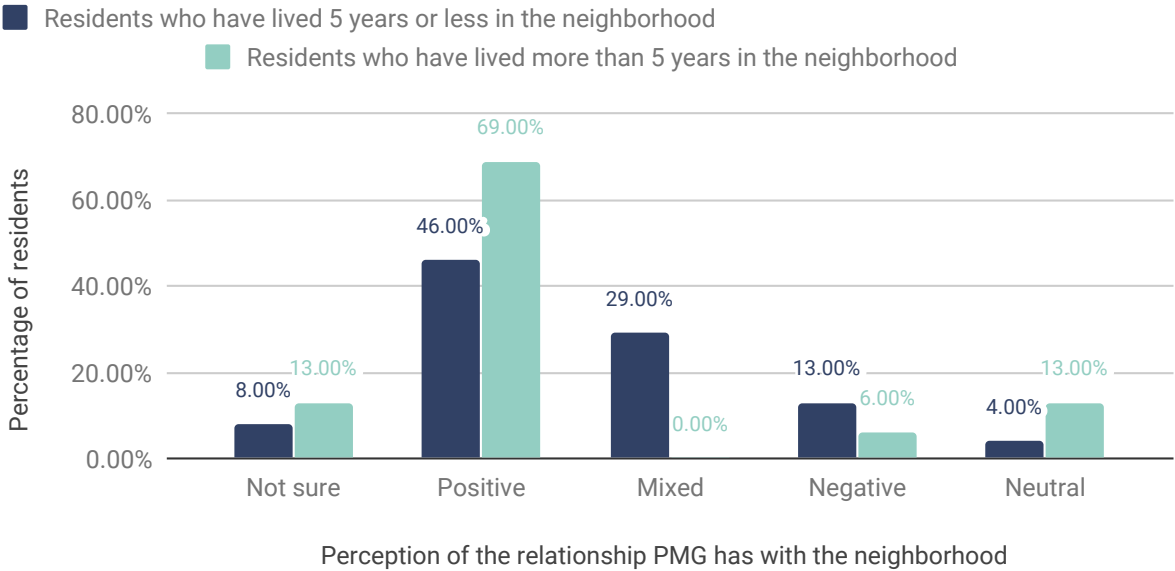


Fig.11 - Type of relationship residents think PMG has with the neighborhood

- In the end, the residents around PMG tend to have positive views of the museum and believe it adds something special to the neighborhood. However, they do not feel connected to the space, they want to be involved but feel separate from the art environment. There were several reasons for this feeling of disconnect:
 - Not knowing exactly what PMG does and what they offer.
 - A general feeling that PMG is catered more towards tourists without opportunities for the people in the neighborhood.
 - The lines out the door to purchase tickets and “crowding” also discourage them from stopping by.

Key observations from South Street businesses survey and interviews

The surveys conducted at businesses on South Street took place between March and April 2019 and involved going to local shops on South Street between 4th and 9th streets because there is greater concentration of locales. Additionally, Eyes Gallery is on the corner of 4th and South Streets, bookending the area. It was imperative to be mindful of not stopping by during Fridays or weekends because they are busiest at those times.

- 80% of those staff members surveyed at businesses on South Street said they were either “Very Familiar” or “Somewhat familiar” with the work of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens and 60% have visited the museum.

How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

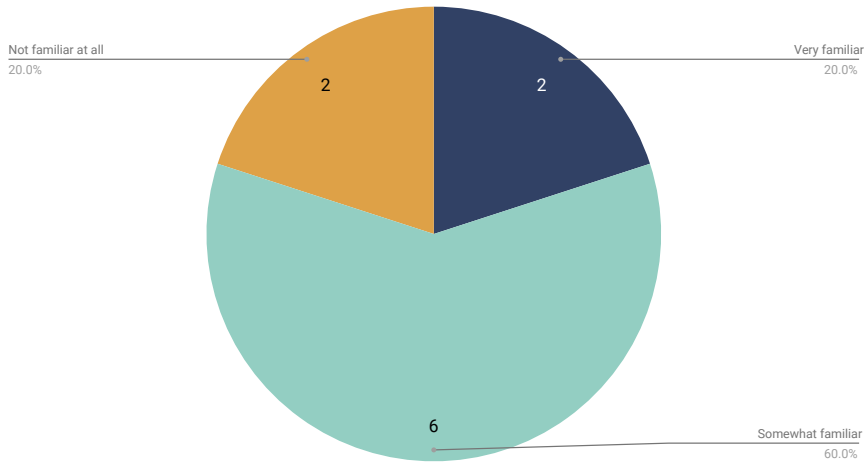


Fig.12 - Level of familiarity with the work of PMG

- When asked about their perception of PMG’s relationship with the neighborhood, the general feeling was that it was a positive one because it brings customers to all of the businesses on South Street. Some even highlighted the importance of the gardens as “a stabilizing form for the neighborhood.”

What kind of relationship do you think PMG has with the neighborhood?

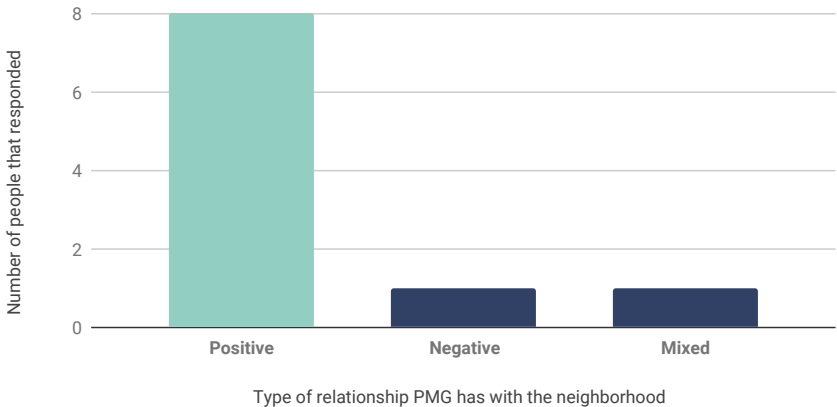


Fig.13 - Type of relationship businesses think PMG has with the neighborhood

- In an interview with Robert Perry, owner of Tattooed Mom, a bar on 5th and South Street that has been open 22 years, he speaks about Arts and Drafts, a happy hour program where 20-25% of sales go towards Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. To further engage guests, PMG staff set up art activities throughout the bar. He also states that the gardens **“is a cultural gem of the South Street District” and Isaiah Zagar is “part of the self-discovery of the youthful and creative self.”** He agrees that they bring many visitors to the neighborhood and adds tons of value to South Street and the city's economy and cultural heritage. He does, however, believe that PMG does not get as much support from the city as they should, and mentions the destruction of multiple Zagar murals, including the one at the Society Hill Playhouse and the battle to save The Painted Bride Art Center.
- Some businesses have closer relationships to Isaiah Zagar, while others to PMG. For example, South Philly Barbacoa has partnered with PMG, but **their relationship is stronger with Isaiah, whom they collaborate with** from time to time in the creation of pop-up events in his private studio on Watkins Street in South Philadelphia. Ben Miller, co-owner of South Philly Barbacoa with his wife Cristina, shared over the phone that they even have an agreement with Isaiah Zagar—him and his guests eat for free whenever he wants, in return for unlimited access to his artwork.

For full business survey results, please refer to Appendix D.

Part 2 - Prototyping Possibilities

Through interviews with Community Collaborators such as Aviva Kapust, Executive Director of the Village Arts and Humanities, the importance of community involvement, communication and trust became evident in order to create strong relationships. In our conversation, she hints at the potential PMG has of being the “fuel that brings new neighbors in, to meet and to understand the history of the neighborhood and existing neighbors, which means they have the control.”³⁷ She explains that it is imperative for the residents around the gardens to understand why events are important, why Isaiah started making the work and create connections to their lives in order for them to begin to care and get involved with the museum.

“Using art to bring people together and to promise action, it is an immediate palpable way to show creative power and impact in a community”³⁸

*- Aviva Kapust, Executive Director
The Village Arts and Humanities*

Additionally, through the analysis of the neighborhood surveys and the multiple remarks by residents around not knowing what PMG could offer them and not feeling connected to its history, it was determined that additional opportunities for interpretation and involvement were needed. Since PMG will be doing the pop-up museum over the summer months, this seemed to be the right moment to engage those community members. During these pop-ups, PMG education staff will assist participants in the art activities and share information about the Gardens and Isaiah Zagar. However, besides

³⁷ “Village Arts and Humanities Interview, Aviva Kapust,” interview by author, January 21, 2019.

³⁸Ibid.

their museum brochures, no other literature would be available. In order to share some of the stories that connect Zagar and PMG to Philadelphians, in particular, those in the Immediate Community I thought it would be important to create interpretive materials that could be easily transported and are aesthetically pleasing so as to attract the attention of those visiting the pop-ups. Because of the increased popularity of zines in recent years, the idea to create four different ones, each with a particular story that directly tied the neighborhood or other aspects of the human experience to the history of the Zagars and PMG, flourished. The following four topics were explored:

- **The South Street Renaissance** - Sharing the history of the “Crosstown Expressway” and the fight by the community to prevent it from being built. Without these community members, which included the Zagars, South Street would not exist. This particular topic was chosen to bring awareness to this history and the role the Zagars had in saving and preserving the neighborhood all of the residents around PMG live in, particularly since now there are so many who are new to the area.
- **Mental health and the Benefits of Art Therapy** - Mental health problems affect everyone, including Isaiah Zagar, and Art Therapy saved his life as he created this Visionary Arts Environment. This topic touches almost everyone in the world and it gives some insight behind the reasons Zagar has created so many murals around Philadelphia.
- **Folk Art at PMG** - The story of how the Zagars became interested in Folk Art and how it represents the communities it comes from. There are many Mexican traditions represented in the gardens through art. By 2018, Philadelphia’s Latinx population had increased to 14.1% of the total residents in the city and it is important that they see themselves represented in the museum. Additionally, the Italian Market a few blocks away from PMG has a large concentration of Latinx culture and residents.³⁹

³⁹ “Visit Philadelphia, “LATINX PHILADELPHIA FACT SHEET Facts & Figures About Latinx Life, Culture & More In Philadelphia,” news release, Visitphilly.com, accessed February 6, 2019, <https://www.visitphilly.com/media-center/press-releases/latinx-philadelphia-fact-sheet/>.

- **Community Members in Zagar’s Murals** - Isaiah Zagar’s murals feature many everyday community members, from his plumber to characters of the neighborhood. This zine includes a map of all of the murals featuring local residents. This subject was chosen because based on the surveys and interviews, locals want to be involved, recognized and a part of something bigger. Seeing others like them can inspire them.

In addition to careful consideration of what stories to share, PMG was interested in incorporating other languages to this interpretive piece. A decision to explore this design with English and Spanish text was made since there are many members of the Latinx community in South Philadelphia, as well as the fact that so many of the Folk Art pieces in the gardens are from Latin American countries. My fluent management of the language also helped inform the decision to translate the text to Spanish. It is important to understand, however, that the combination of two languages in one zine does present an additional challenge in the design because the quantity of the text in general can turn people off from reading. Additionally, Spanish tends to take more room and have more letters than English, which makes it difficult to place in similar sized areas. A couple of solutions to create contrast between the languages and guide people to understand the difference are to assign a different color for each language and select a couple of key sentences to pop out with bold letters.

For the actual design of the zines, I decided to create a double-sided one-page imposition that when unfolded, the inside would create a poster design that would inspire the person reading it to keep it and even display it in their home. Aesthetically, the zines use collaged images and drawn elements to mimic the mosaic elements that define Zagar’s aesthetic. Although a tad chaotic, they are to give the reader a feeling of fun. To see the full written text for all four zines and final design, refer to Appendix E.

Two of the designed zines, as well as the text for the other two, were tested as prototypes on Saturday, April 13, 2019, over a period of 4 hours at two different locations. The first one was on Alder Street right next to PMG, where their visitors wait with their timed tickets to



the rain started coming down. I was able to collect 19 surveys total.

The majority of the people who tested the zines were either not familiar with the work of PMG or knew only a little bit. However, after reading the zines they said they were inspired to visit the museum and learn more. Some of the readers made positive remarks about the text being in both languages and everyone responded they were either more or equally interested in the zines because of it. Several groups asked to take more than one of the zines and some even requested copies of the text for the other two zines that did not have a design yet. This shows a genuine interest in the content and the stories shared. Finally, many of the readers also commented on how attractive the design of the zines was but had some difficulty folding them back together after they fully opened them. For zine survey instrument and full survey results, please refer to Appendix F and G.

finally have a chance to walk through the gardens. Since for many of them, this is their first time visiting, they tend to not have preconceived notions of what the art environment will be like or who the artist is. I arrived around 3 pm because I knew they would have begun to sell timed tickets by then since it was one of the first warm days of Spring. The majority of the surveys and interactions occurred here while people were waiting to be called out for their ticket time. 17 surveys were filled out here, but not everyone that read the zines wanted to answer it.

The second location was by the “South Street” mural Zagar created between 4th and 5th streets off of South Street but in this location, it was more difficult to get the attention of those walking by. Almost everyone seemed to be in a rush somewhere and did not want to be bothered by the prototyping. I was only able to collect two surveys in this location and had to close earlier than expected because



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Conclusion

As shown through the case studies, interviews and immediate neighborhood surveys throughout this thesis, Visionary Art Environments must nurture their relationships with their Immediate, Civic and Visiting Communities to secure their continued existence. Time and time again these communities have played vital roles in ensuring these art environments do not disappear after their founding artists are gone or can no longer take care of the space. However, just as much as their communities offer benefits to them, these places also provide opportunities for economic and educational growth and become iconic monuments of acceptance and appreciation of the unique. They inspire others to create, think differently and open their minds to something out of the ordinary.

As seen in the “Symbiotic Relationships Chart” (Fig. 14) each type of community has assets to offer Visionary Art Environments and each other. Civic Community entities, such as schools, city government, and local organizations give support and funding, as well as partnership opportunities for Visionary Art Environments to continue to fulfill their mission. In return, these spaces offer educational programs, contribute to the local economy by providing jobs, bringing visitors and creating revenue, and some of them even invest in property as they continue expanding. On another leg of the stool that holds Visionary Art Environments up, the Visiting Community provides tremendous economic contributions and opportunities to share the legacy of the founding artist. Meanwhile, these immersive spaces create unique, exciting and fulfilling experiences, engaging programs and provide cultural awareness in a genre of art that is still going through a discovery.

Finally, the most delicate of the community relationships and one that needs the utmost attention is the one with the Immediate Community. They offer necessary support that can affect law changes which could potentially preserve or put the artwork at risk, and many share their time and advocate for the continued life of these Visionary Art Environments. However, in return, these organizations must provide a

Symbiotic Relationships Ecosystem for Visionary Art Environments and Their Communities

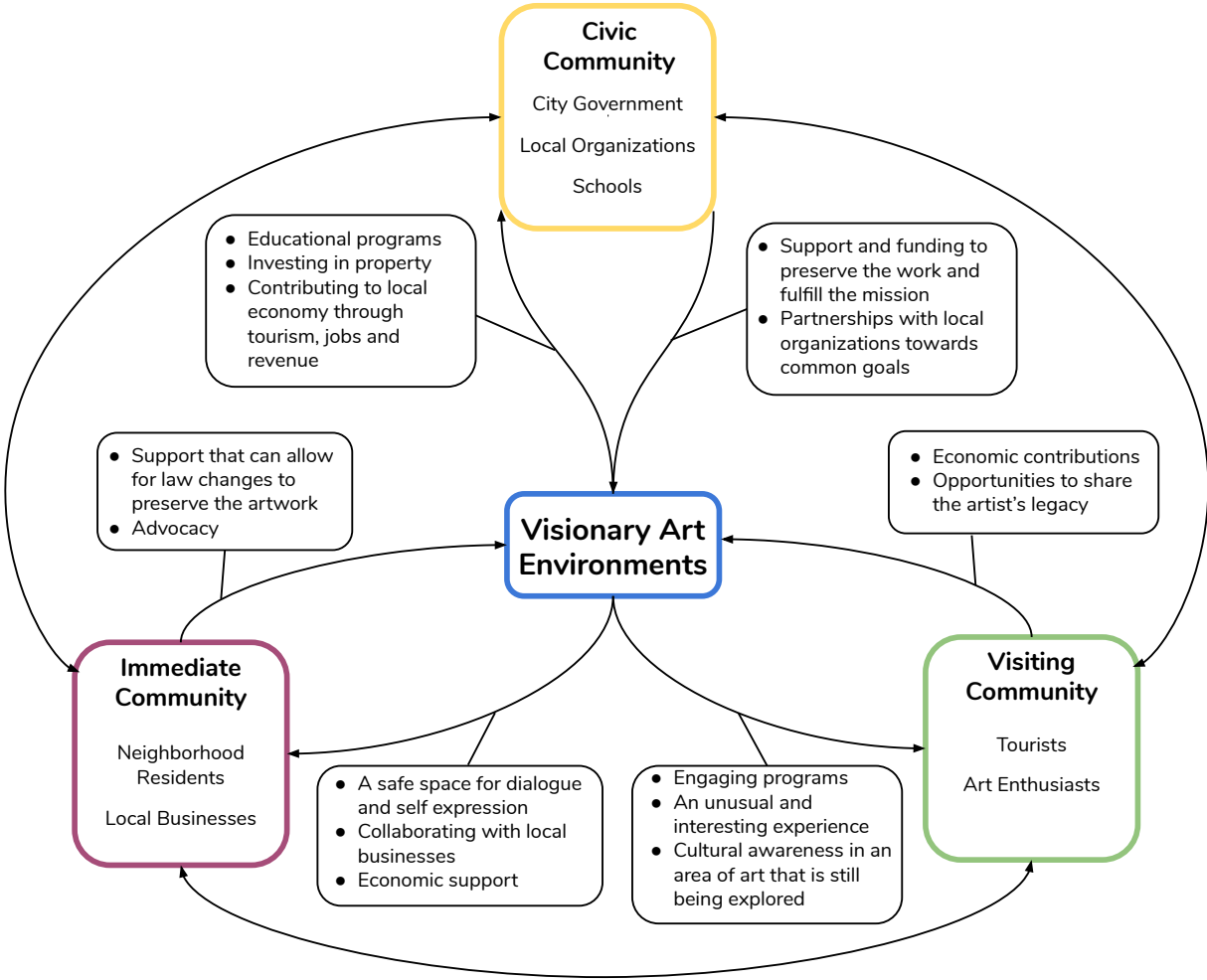


Fig.14 - Symbiotic Relationships Chart

safe space for dialogue and self-expression. They must also listen to the needs of the residents and make opportunities for them to be involved if they choose to. Additionally, by partnering with other local businesses and working towards a common goal that fulfills the mission of the space, they can provide economic support for the neighborhood. If these iconic spaces do not want to fade away but instead rather thrive, they must take an active role in protecting this delicate balance between all communities.

Without collaboration, there is no growth. Without looking out for each other, there is no support. Without each other, the opportunities for survival are minimal.

Implications for the field

This thesis serves as the beginning of a more in-depth conversation around the survival of Visionary Art Environments and establishes a case for ensuring these spaces work towards creating strong relationships with the different communities that are impacted by them. The simple fact that most of these art environments have not been thoroughly researched and understood proves this work is just the top of an incredible world of possibilities and investigation. From a curatorial standpoint, the amount of unique public history contained in these spaces creates unlimited opportunities for exhibitions and interpretation. The fact that they disregard the rules of “Elite Art,” the reasons behind their creation, the unorthodox materials used along with their unconventional techniques alone, make them a fascinating subject to continue to explore. Ultimately, these art environments can only endure the test of time if these three communities support them because each of them offers different assets necessary for the organizations’ health.

It is imperative to understand that Visionary Art Environments also have the opportunity to be the leaders in their community by creating trust, being transparent and sharing the hidden histories of these spaces. The Community Collaborators interviewed throughout this project recommend creating channels of communication between the institution and influential community members to establish more credibility in the eyes of other residents and build said trust. The surveys

have also shown that people want to be involved and see more connections between themselves and the art environment. By creating interpretive materials that are accessible, interesting and share a common history, such as the zines made for Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens summer pop-ups, Visionary Art Environments can start building connections that catch the attention of members of the Immediate and Civic Communities, which in turn can offer opportunities to develop sustainable symbiotic relationships that benefit everyone involved. However, this thesis recommends that these materials be used outside the museum, whether it is at pop-up events or leaving them at local libraries and community centers to further the reach.

In particular regard to PMG, other recommendations include the potential for activities that can bring together the neighborhood residents and give them some ownership of PMG, including allowing them to participate in a community mural. Since several residents brought up those types of opportunities for collective creativity during the survey, perhaps during Philly Free Week, a week created to celebrate Philadelphia residents, visitors can make their own personal doily tiles to be fired and placed as part of this community mural. They will leave their mark and feel proud to be a part of something bigger.

Finally, it is also recommended that these Visionary Art Environments listen to the needs of the community and become role models for them. In the case of PMG for example, since South Philadelphia has such a large number of Latinx residents, in particular, Mexican immigrants, perhaps creating program opportunities for them to learn English or heal from traumatic events through art, just as Isaiah Zagar did, can establish a deeper connection to that specific community, which is reflected all over the gardens. This outreach and support are particularly crucial at a time when the political climate is so complicated.

Questions for Further Study

- How does the socioeconomic history of the communities around Visionary Art Environments might affect the relationships between them?
- Is there a sustainable model for the physical preservation of these art environments?
- How can Visionary Art Environments shift from being about one person to being about the community without losing their history and essence?



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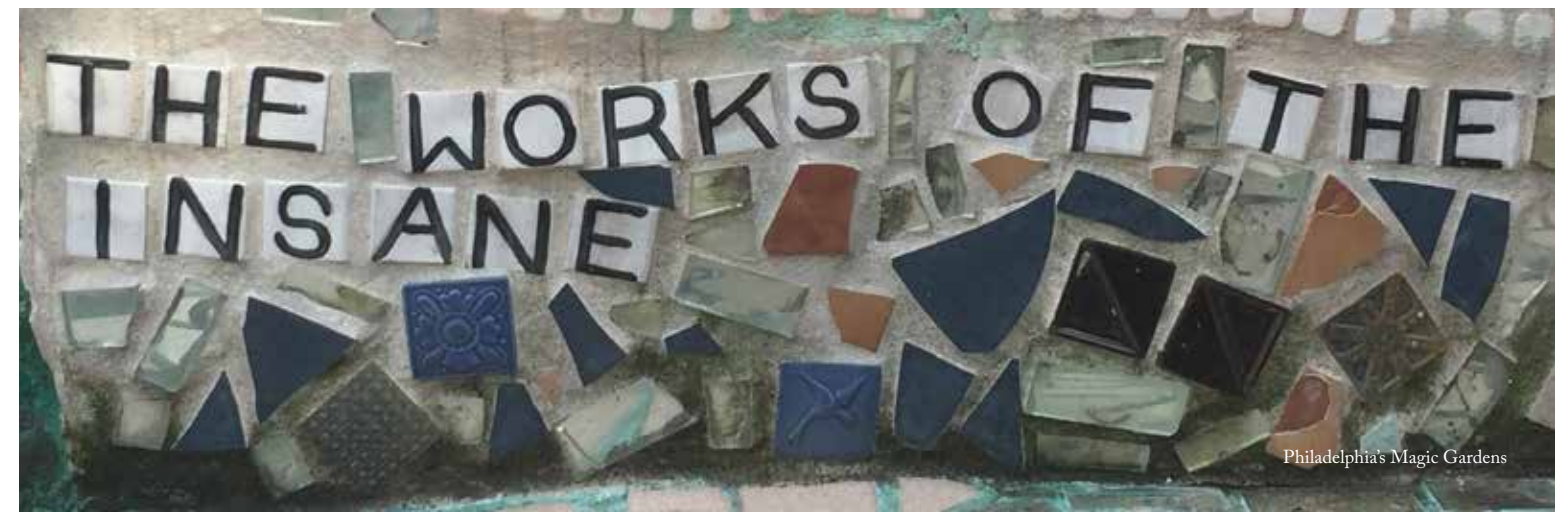
Photo Credits

Cover	“Fitness Works.” Isaiah Zagar Mosaic Murals, Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, Philadelphia.
p. 2	“Garden Pool.” PMG Images, Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, Philadelphia.
p. 5	“Heidelberg Project.” January 2, 2018. Social Media, Heidelberg Project, Detroit.
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p. 12-13	Personal photograph. Detroit, MI. May 2018.
p. 13	Jones, Phillip March. “Paradise Garden.” May 11, 2015. In Alabama Chanin Journal. May 11, 2015. Accessed May 5, 2019. https://journal.alabamachanin.com/2015/05/travel-howard-finsters-garden/howard-finster-paradise-garden-phillip-march-jones-3/ .
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p. 33	Personal photograph. Detroit, MI. May 2018.
p. 35	Jones, Phillip March. “Paradise Garden.” May 11, 2015. In Alabama Chanin Journal. May 11, 2015. Accessed May 5, 2019. https://journal.alabamachanin.com/2015/05/travel-howard-finsters-garden/howard-finster-paradise-garden-phillip-march-jones-3/ .
p. 37	Jones, Phillip March. “Paradise Garden.” May 11, 2015. In Alabama Chanin Journal. May 11, 2015. Accessed May 5, 2019. https://journal.alabamachanin.com/2015/05/travel-howard-finsters-garden/howard-finster-paradise-garden-phillip-march-jones-3/ .
p. 38	“Pasaquan.” Columbus State University, Buena Vista, GA. “Pasaquan.” Columbus State University, Buena Vista, GA.
p. 43	“Pasaquan.” Columbus State University, Buena Vista, GA.
p. 45	Mary Nohl’s House. Fox Point, WI. In Hyperallergic. December 12, 2014. Accessed May 5, 2019. https://hyperallergic.com/168575/a-single-woman-is-a-witch-battling-to-save-the-art-environment-of-mary-nohl/ .

- p. 45 Mary Nohl's House. Fox Point, WI. In Hyperallergic. December 12, 2014. Accessed May 5, 2019. <https://hyperallergic.com/168575/a-single-woman-is-a-witch-battling-to-save-the-art-environment-of-mary-nohl/>.
- p. 48 "Philadelphia's Magic Gardens" PMG Images, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, Philadelphia.
- p. 53 "Isaiah Zagar" PMG Images, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, Philadelphia.
- p. 54 Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 7, 2016.
- p. 70 Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 2019.
- p. 71 Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 2019.
- p. 77 Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 2019.
- pg. 83 Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 2019.
- Personal photograph. Philadelphia, PA. March 2019.



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens



Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

Appendix A | Neighborhood Residential Surveys

Art Environments and Their Impact on the Neighborhoods Around Them - Philadelphia, PA

Hello! My name is Sam and I am independently working to assess the impact immersive art spaces have on the immediate neighborhood community. Since Philadelphia's Magic Gardens is right here in the neighborhood, I have chosen it as a study and would like to ask you a few questions that will inform my research and give you an opportunity to be heard. All answers will be anonymous.

* Required

1. What is your zip code? *

2. Are you originally from Philadelphia? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3. How long have you lived in this neighborhood? *

4. What is your age range? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 18
☐ 18-22
☐ 23-35
☐ 36-50
☐ 51-70
☐ 71+

5. How familiar are you with the work of Isaiah Zagar? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very familiar
☐ Somewhat familiar
☐ I've heard of it
☐ Not familiar at all

6. How familiar are you with the work of the Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very familiar
☐ Somewhat familiar
☐ I've heard of it
☐ Not familiar at all

7. Have you visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes Skip to question 8.
☐ No Skip to question 10.

8. Why did you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

9. How often do you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Several times a year
☐ Once a year
☐ Once every few years
☐ Never

Skip to question 11.

10. Why have you not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

11. Use three words to describe the work of Isaiah Zagar *

12. Use three words to describe the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens *

13. What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood? *

14. What value, if any, do you think Philadelphia's Magic Gardens adds to the neighborhood? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Tons
☐ Some
☐ None

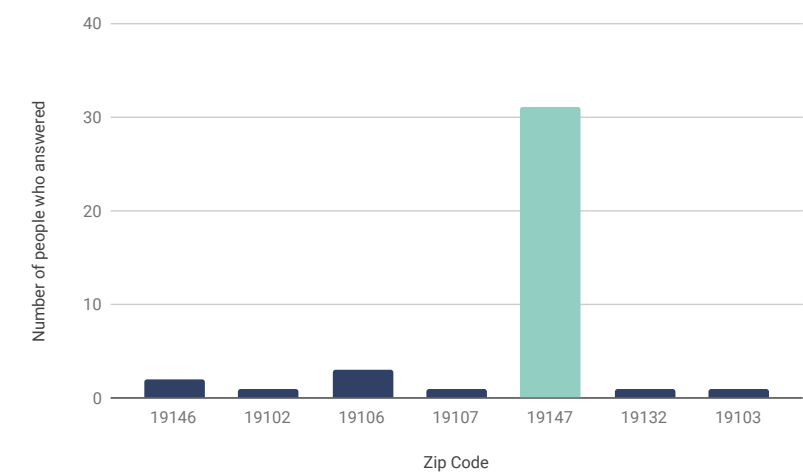
15. Of the following programming Philadelphia's Magic Gardens offers, which ones are you familiar with? (select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Family Jams
☐ Site and Walking Tours
☐ Twilight in the Gardens
☐ Garden Party
☐ Rotating art exhibitions
☐ The Museum as Muse
☐ Other:

Appendix B | Neighborhood Residential Answers

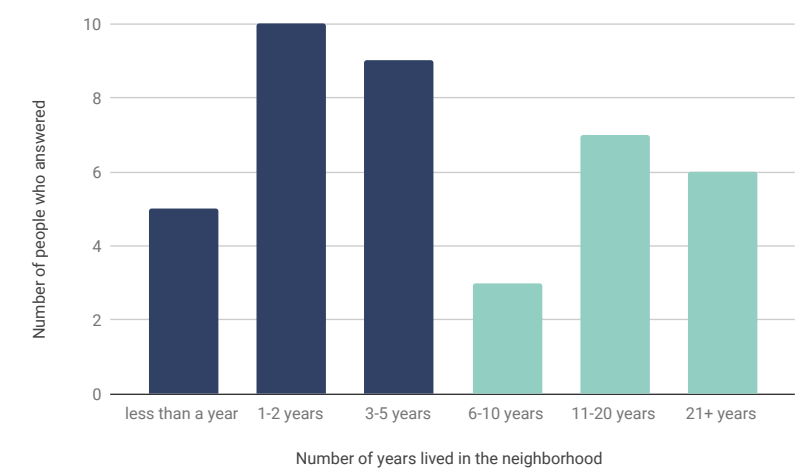
1. What is your zip code?



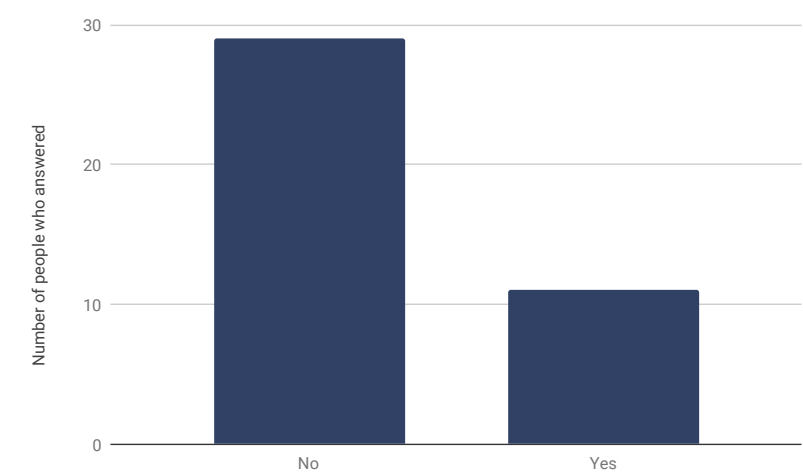
78% of those residents interviewed lived in the 19147 zip code. Other zip codes included are all within 8 block from Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. However, zip code 19132 is from the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of the city, further than one mile away. This is because the person surveyed works in one of the residences a block away from PMG.

40% of residents surveyed have lived in the neighborhood for over 5 years, with 18% saying they have lived in that area 11-20 years, followed by 15% having lived 21+ years in the area. However, 25% of the total number of participants stated they have lived in the neighborhood for only 1-2 years.

3. How long have you lived in the neighborhood?



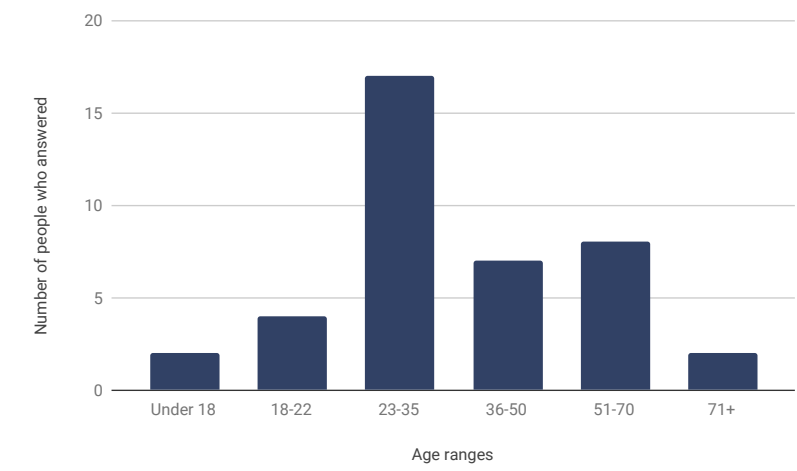
2. Are you originally from Philadelphia?



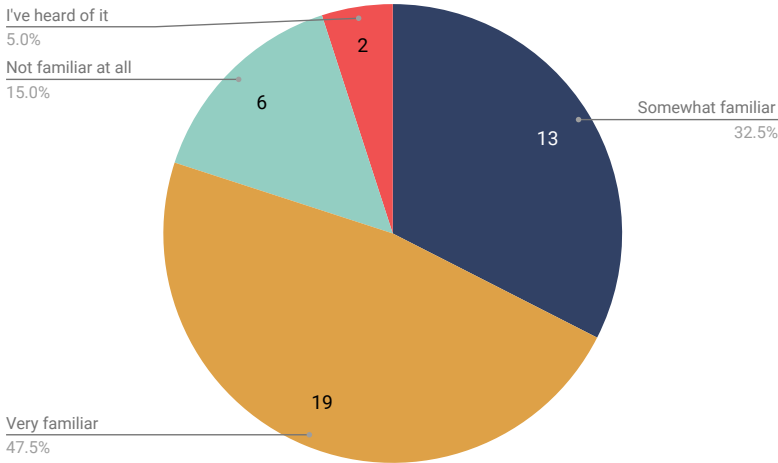
73% of participants stated they were not originally from Philadelphia. Though a big number of them said they were from “right outside the city.”

43% of those surveyed were between 23-35 years old, followed by 20% being 51-70 years old, and 18% being 36-50 years old.

4. What is your age range?



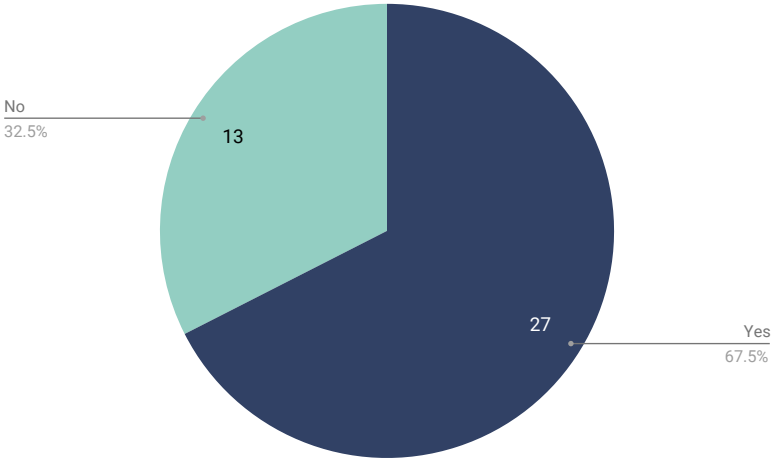
5. How familiar are you with the work of Isaiah Zagar?



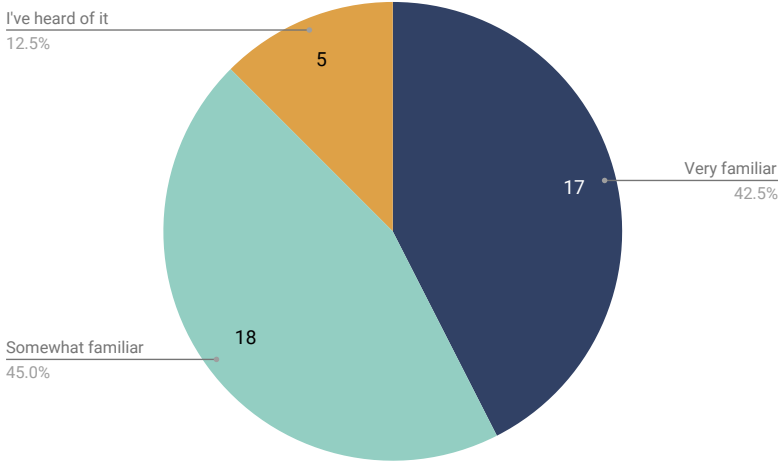
The majority of residents surveyed stated they were either “Very familiar” (48%) or “Somewhat familiar” (33%) with the work of Isaiah Zagar.

68% of participants in the survey stated they had visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens in the past. While only 33% stated they had never visited.

7. Have you visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens before?



6. How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?



The majority of residents surveyed stated they were either “Somewhat familiar” (45%) or “Very familiar” (43%) with the work of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens.

19% of those who visited gave reasons that identified with Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens being “Beautiful, unique and interesting” while another 19% mentioned being curious about the space in their answers. 15% mentioned bringing out of town visitors as their main reason for visiting PMG.

8. Why did you visit Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?

- I like quirky, unique spaces. I had seen Magic Gardens on tv before moving here and was interested in going to experience it myself.
- Once on a class field trip, once for fun, and a couple of times bringing family/friends from out of town.
- For my graduate program.
- I visited for class
- Beautiful and when you walk passed it draws you in. Bring people from out of town. More interesting than other options.
- My sister invited me.
- Some friends came to town and we went to see it with them.
- Curiosity.
- Because it’s in the neighborhood.
- Because it was there, I was curious and it looked cool
- There have been a couple of times where I’ve been with friends. I think it’s cool and I wanted to see what it was like inside.
- Because it’s nearby, I was curious

- Curiosity. Before it was gated off we walked in. But also, lots of school trips with my kids. I bring friends from out of town here.
- They were having an event that I wanted to go for. I think I had to buy a ticket, it was like a happy hour event.
- Family was in town.
- Cause I live around the corner and I've never been.
- It looked interesting from outside. I first went inside in 2005 when I lived in the Rittenhouse area.
- Because it's cool and interesting.
- Beautiful place. Not a lot of places like that, so to have this makes it feel like a second home because of my hometown also having a similar artist like this one.
- My sister was visiting and wanted to go.
- Great place to bring out of town guests. Beautiful and like their mission a lot.
- We have a three year old now. We rarely get over there before. Once we had a kid it felt like a good reason. I remember seeing his work in the 90s.
- Being there makes me content, happy, and provides creative inspiration.
- Because I enjoy the art and it is fun and interesting.
- Because of the beautiful artistic work.
- I went for a gallery opening.
- Personal trip and school trip.

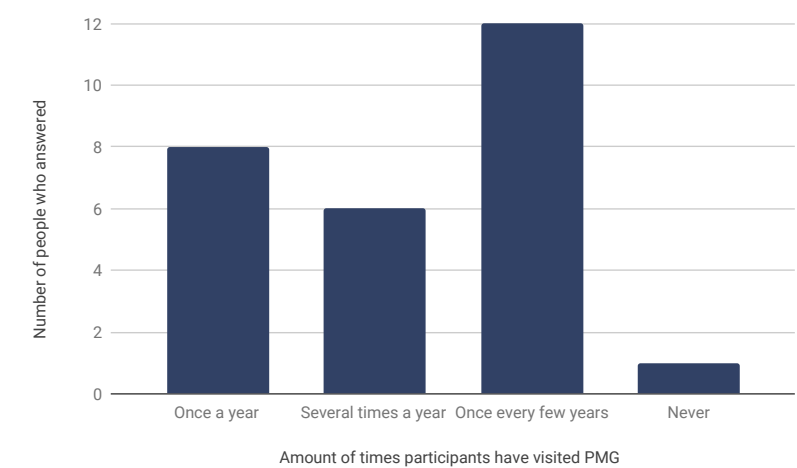
Categories chosen to best describe why participants have visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens:

- Beautiful, unique and interesting
- Attending a program
- Class trip
- Bringing out of town visitors
- Curiosity
- Personal growth and inspiration

30% of those surveyed said they only visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens "Once every few years." Everyone who answered this questions had previously visited PMG, the "Never" selection was picked by someone who had only been to the art environment once and said they would not go again.

38% of those who had not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens mentioned that "The art is everywhere else for free", while 31% said they "Don't have time."

9. How often do you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?



10. Why have you not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

- It seems overpriced, especially when you can see some of the art from outside for free.
- Haven't had the time.
- Because I get to enjoy the beauty on walks by and there's always a line outside.
- Just haven't had the time; his work is also around the city for free to view.
- Good question. Not sure what's on the inside. There's already a lot to see outside. I know they have classes. But I'm not sure what they can offer me. I do enjoy the outside.
- Mosaics ubiquitous here.
- No particular reason. Haven't made time for it.
- I don't like Zagar's work.
- Not sure. I've planned it but haven't gotten around it.
- Cause we don't want to have to pay for it. Theres so many murals around that we can easily and freely see.
- Because it's right here.

- Because of my familiarity with Isaiah Zagar’s work and how they went about procuring the property on which it exists.
- Honestly, we have talked about going with my girlfriend but haven’t had time. She’s in med school.

Categories chosen to best describe why participants have NOT visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens:

- The art is everywhere else for free
- I don’t have time
- Knowledge of how Isaiah got the space
- Because it’s right here
- There’s always a line
- Don’t like the work

11. Use three words to describe the work of Isaiah Zagar

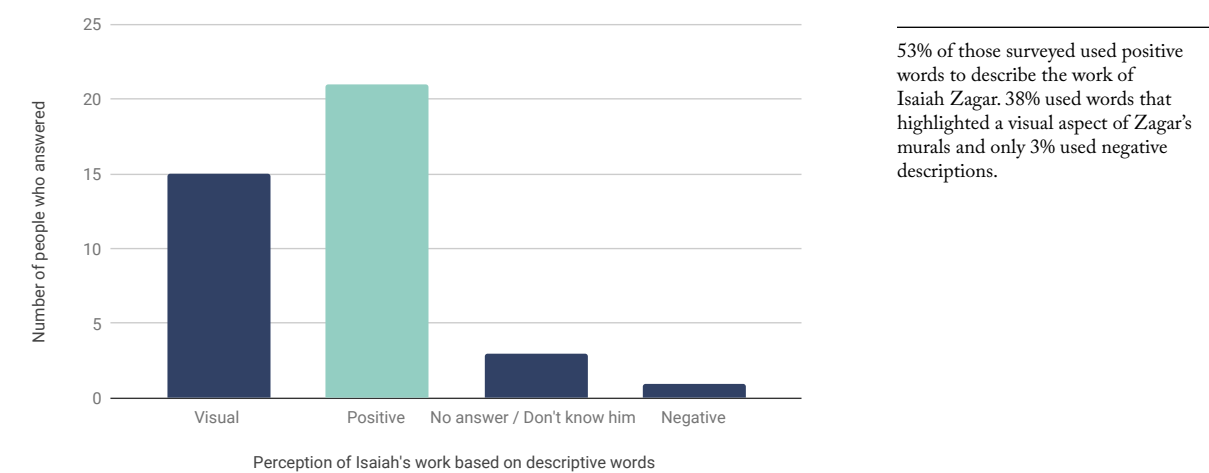
- Mosaic, elaborate, humorous
- Unique, colorful, intriguing
- Intricate, unique, inspired
- Beautiful, colorful, intriguing
- Interesting & eco-friendly?
- I am not sure
- Mosaic. Trippy. Colorful
- Mosaic. Colorful. Cooky
- Can’t
- Whimsical, resourceful, unique
- Interesting, bright, different
- Original, textural, recognizable
- Unique, enriching, original
- Creative, unique, fun
- Ceramic shard mosaics
- Ubiquitous, reflective, popular
- Original, abstract, influential

- Visual, repetitive, prolific
- Original, majestic, unusual
- Creative, colorful, inspiring
- Wacky, inventive, colorful
- Formulaic, trite, a blight
- Colorful, pretty , interesting
- Surprising, mosaic, up-cycle
- Surprising. Unique. Photographic
- Creative. Interesting. Edgy
- Glass. Eclectic. Gaudy like
- Mosaic fun colorful
- Interesting, I like his stuff not a fan of mural arts, indescribable
- Unique, insightful and powerful
- Nothing, I don’t know him
- Innovative. Community. Beautiful
- Vivacious. Ubiquitous. Derivative.
- Unique. Abstract. Recognizable
- Colorful, narrative
- Inspiring creative humorous
- Naturalist, artistic, creative
- Colorful, textured, expansive
- Unique, reflective, fun
- Inspiring, happy, uplifting.

Categories chosen for descriptive words:

- Positive
- Negative
- Visual
- No answer/Don’t know him

11. Use three words to describe the work of Isaiah Zagar - Chart



- Unique, peaceful, beautiful
- Inclusive, engaging and friendly
- N/A as I have not visited
- I can't because I haven't been there
- Kaleidoscopic, playful, seasonal
- Unique. Photographic. Pretty
- Overwhelming. Cluttered. Interesting
- Interesting. Bottles. Different
- Beautiful inspiring fun
- Gaudiesque, no clue what else they do
- Eye-catching, bright, lively
- Shiny, irrelevant, pretty
- Interesting. Photogenic. Fun
- Monetized. Derivative. Touristy
- Intricate. Impressive. Detailed
- Community-building, educational, artistic
- Impactful meaningful fun
- Outstanding, stunning, creative
- Engaging, unique
- Authentic, community
- Creative, colorful, busy (in terms of what's going on)

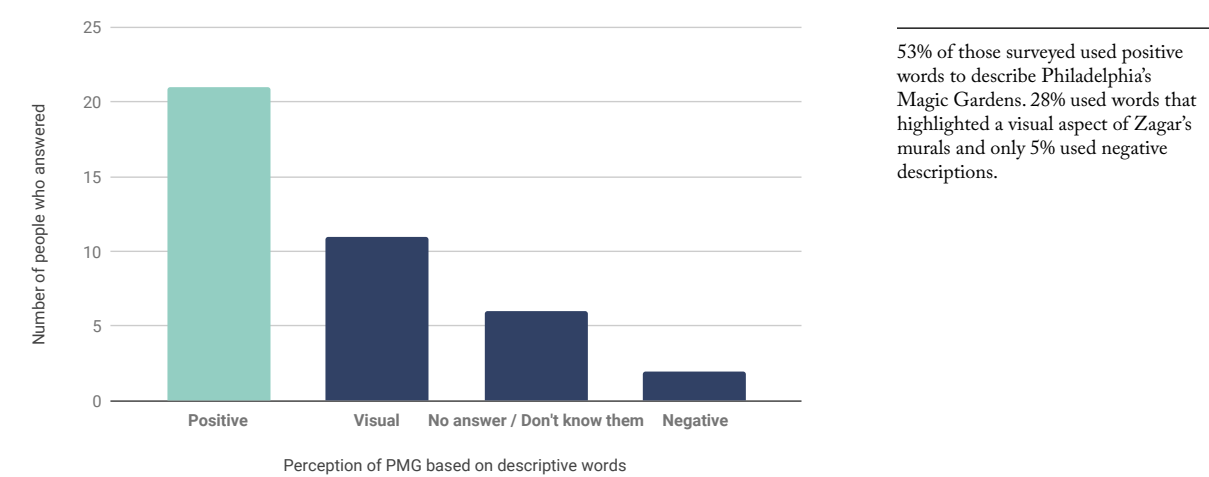
Categories chosen for descriptive words:

- Positive
- Negative
- Visual
- No answer/Don't know them

12. Use three words to describe Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

- Immersive, beautiful, unique
- Shiny, playful, immersive
- Communal, thoughtful, welcoming
- Not really sure
- I don't know what the Magic Gardens does aside from existing?
- Fun glass interesting
- Same. Recycled
- Bustling. Chaotic. Urban
- Unique. Local. Well known
- Sanctuary, peaceful, thoughtful
- Exorbitant, different, special
- Good location, important, unique
- Unique, enriching, original
- Eclectic, different, creative
- n/a
- Zany, Dr. Seuss-like, Very cool
- Interesting, Different, Iconic (Very Philly)
- Visual unique
- Original, beautiful, unique

12. Use three words to describe Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens - Chart



13. What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood?

- Not sure
- From what I understand, a lot of the locals have mixed feelings; it’s mostly visited by tourists
- I’ve heard of a lot of wonderful programming that the Museum does with the immediate neighborhood
- Not a very strong one I believe, mainly because it seems like it is for tourists.
- Not sure
- A strong one
- Probably pretty good one
- Impacts a lot of the art. Especially because of murals
- Good. Always busy and brings people into neighborhood
- They do a good job of celebrating Isaiah and his work throughout the city
- A very special one
- Part of the fabric of the neighborhood. Not sure what it does connecting with other organizations

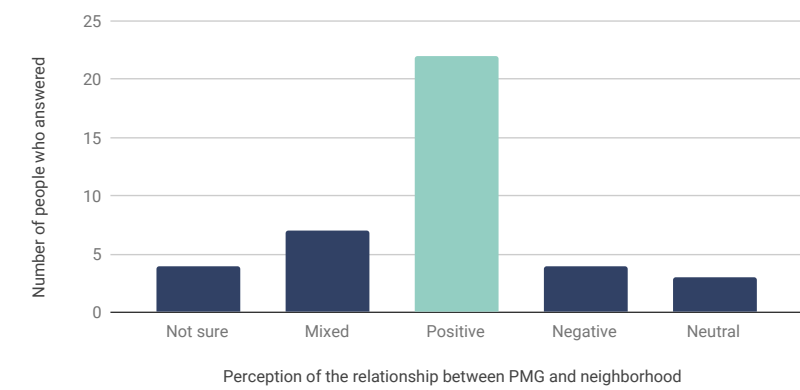
- Part of the neighborhood plus all of his murals around
- Give the neighborhood personality. Besides Whole Foods
- a good one
- Pretty integral part of neighborhood. Very popular. Brings foot traffic to the neighborhood
- Not good or bad. Adds cultural past to neighborhood but doesn’t represent everyone
- I don’t know
- Close relationship
- I don’t know. I think it definitely has relationships with schools in Center City. Most of us think it’s a cool part of the neighborhood.
- Distant, it’s not on my radar
- Not sure
- A good one. They have done community events and invited neighbors. Years ago when Isaiah Zagar did the murals here in the street, he had everyone help
- I think its meant for tourists now. I don’t really feel like it’s meant for me as a neighbor because I see lots of visitors lined up outside, doesn’t feel like a place for me as someone who lives two blocks down
- Opportunity to create neighborhood events
- Not much? Seems to be more for tourists. Maybe we take it for granted since we don’t go. But it might have been revitalizing for the neighborhood
- Positive
- It brings in many tourists and they offer a lot of programming.
- It’s great it’s here. Big plush
- All of the locals I talk to love it. It’s kinda a tourist trap but also a nice addition to the area
- No idea, brings lots of people in and they crowd the sidewalk, so probably not good
- Integrated and brings people into common space. Everyone loves it
- Since it is a commercial venture in a mixed use neighborhood, I expect it is a formal relationship with regard to zoning and licensing
- Probably good because it brings people in and keeps neighborhood going. Notoriety for the neighborhood

- Generally positive but I feel like Magic Gardens has become more of an attraction to people outside the neighborhood and city
- Very good, although it does get a lot of tourists
- Sufficient maybe more
- Seems like it might be a love/hate kind of relationship? It's a really cool addition to the neighborhood and they have a lot of events and shows and features emerging artists, but it also brings a lot of tourists and some people might find that annoying. Probably also makes rent more expensive
- Close relationship
- Murals speak to something and brings different people together and speaks to the things that have happened in area

Categories chosen to best describe participants’ perception between Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens and the neighborhood:

- Positive
- Mixed
- Negative
- Neutral
- Not sure

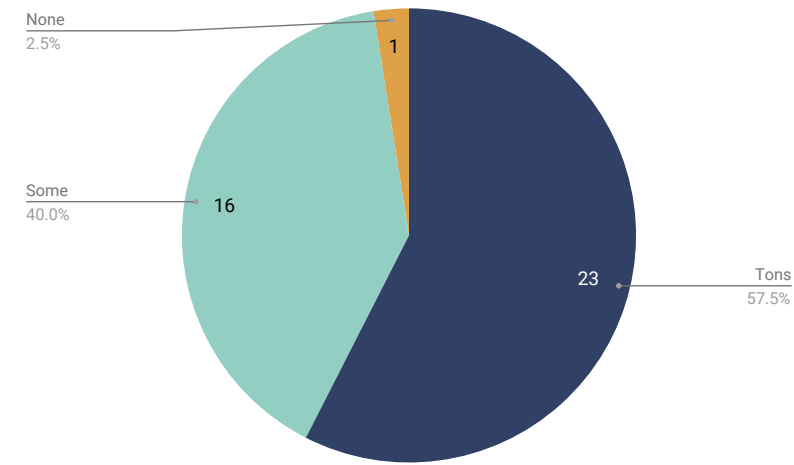
What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood?



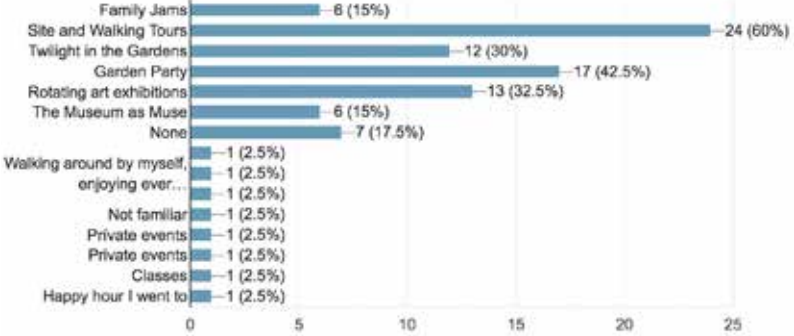
55% of participants answered they believed Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has a "Positive" relationship with the neighborhood. Only 10% believed PMG has a "Negative" relationship with the neighborhood.

58% of those surveyed answered that they thought Philadelphia's Magic Gardens brings "Tons" of value to the neighborhood. Only 3% of those who answered the survey, said they did not think PMG brought any value to the neighborhood.

14. What value, if any, do you think Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens adds to the neighborhood?



15. Of the following programming Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens offers, which ones are you familiar with?



The programs residents are most familiar with according to this survey are "Site and Walking Tours" with 60% of participants selecting this answer, as well as "Garden Party" with 43% of participants choosing it.

Appendix C | Neighborhood Business Survey

Business Neighborhood Survey

Hello! My name is Sam and I am independently working to assess the impact immersive art spaces have on the immediate neighborhood community, including businesses. Since Philadelphia's Magic Gardens is right here in the neighborhood, I have chosen it as a study and would like to ask you a few questions that will inform my research and give you an opportunity to be heard. All answers will be anonymous.

1. What is the name of the business?

2. What is your position in this establishment?

3. How long has this business been in the neighborhood?

4. Are you originally from Philadelphia?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. How familiar are you with the work of Isaiah Zagar?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ I've heard of it
- ☐ Not familiar at all

6. How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ I've heard of it
- ☐ Not familiar at all

7. Have you visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens before?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes Skip to question 8.
- ☐ No Skip to question 10.

8. Why did you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

9. How often do you visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Several times a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Once every few years
- ☐ Never

Skip to question 11.

10. Why have you not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

11. Use three words to describe the murals of Isaiah Zagar

12. Use three words to describe Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

13. What kind of relationship do you think PMG has with the neighborhood?

14. What value, if any, do you think PMG adds to the neighborhood?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Tons
- ☐ Some
- ☐ None

Appendix D | Neighborhood Business Answers

1. What is the name of the business?

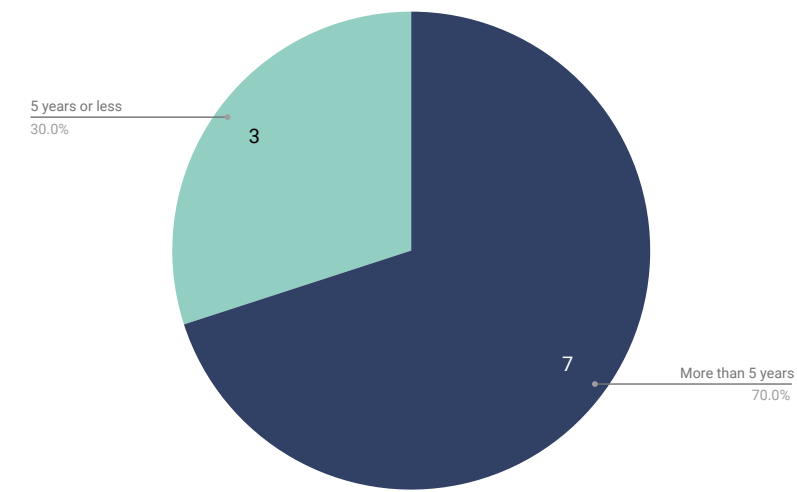
- Tattooed Mom’s
- Garland of Letters Bookstore
- Lit & Company
- Totem Brand
- Atomic City Comics
- Greene St. Consignment
- Bridgeset Sound
- The Sweet Life
- South St. Business Center
- Brauhaus Schmitz

2. What is your position in this establishment?

- Bartender
- Property Manager/Sales
- Associate
- Sales/Store Manager
- General customer service
- Shift Supervisor
- Owner
- Head cake decorator
- Shipping Clerk
- Server

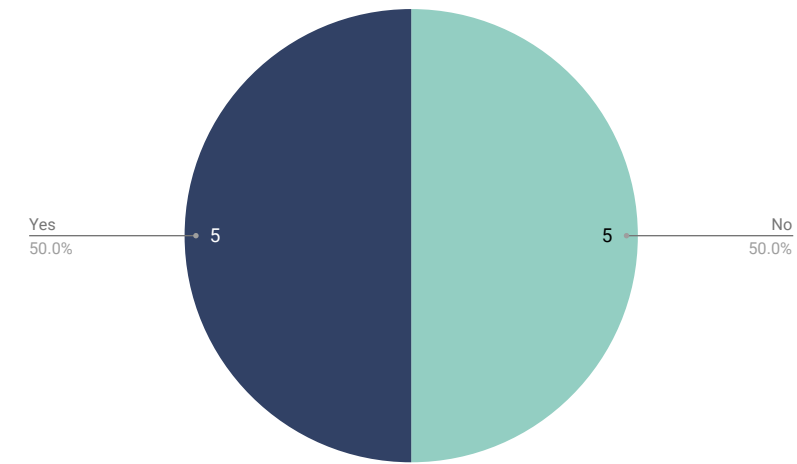
3. How long has this business been in the neighborhood?

70% of the businesses surveyed stated they have been established in the neighborhood for more than 5 years.

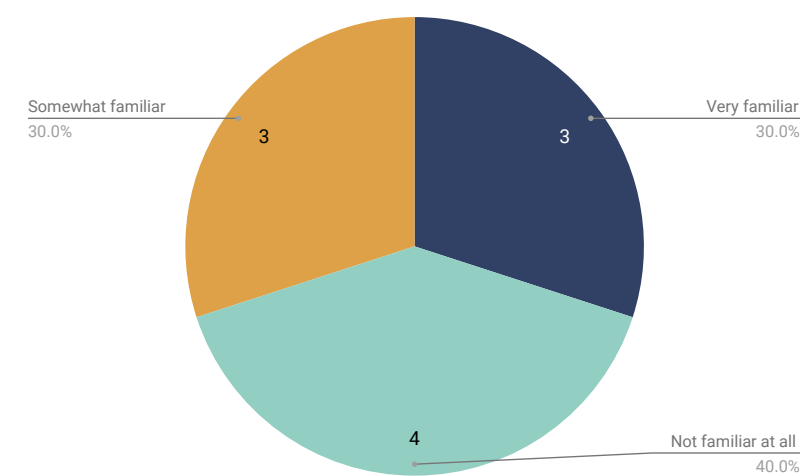


4. Are you originally from Philadelphia?

50% of the business employees surveyed said they were originally from Philadelphia, while the other 50% were not.

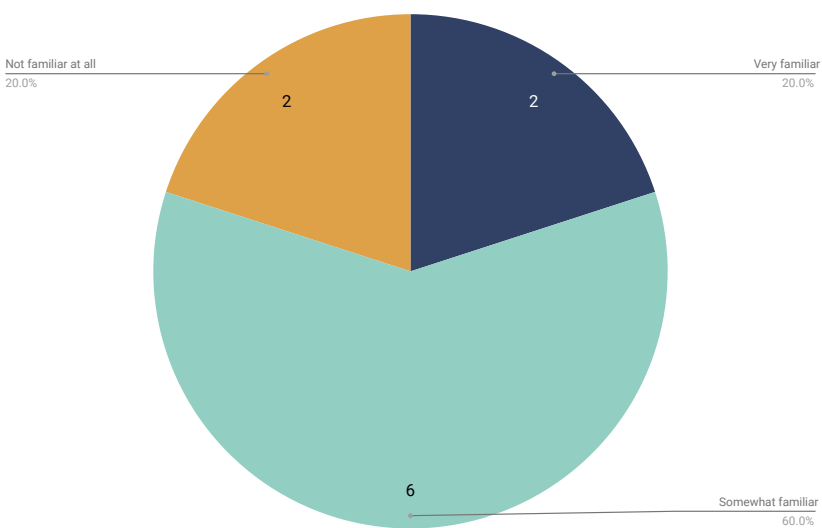


5. How familiar are you with the work of Isaiah Zagar?



40% of employees from businesses surveyed stated they were “Not familiar at all” with the work of Isaiah Zagar. While there was an even number of those who said they were “Somewhat familiar” and “Very familiar”, both with 30% of participants.

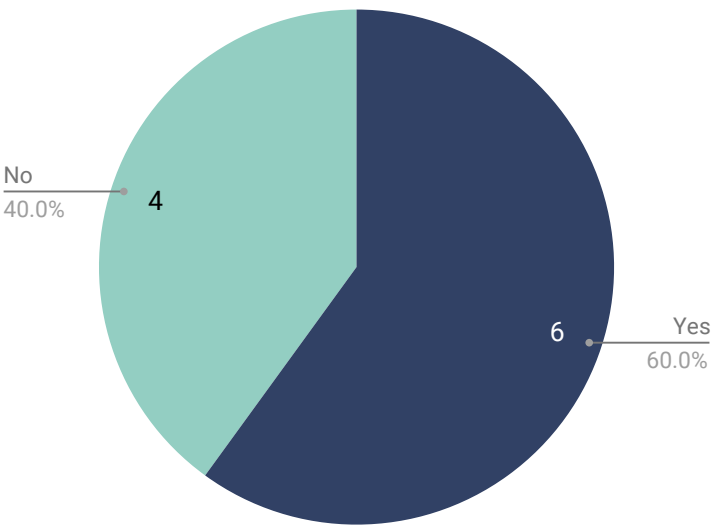
6. How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?



60% of those interviewed stated they were “Somewhat familiar” with the work of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens. Only 20% mentioned they were “Not familiar at all” with PMG.

60% of participants in this survey stated they had visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens in the past. While only 40% stated they had never visited.

7. Have you visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens before?



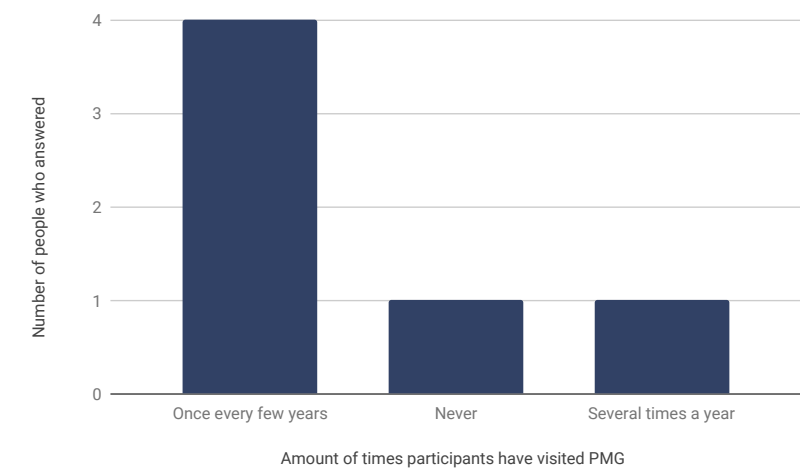
8. Why did you visit Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?

- It’s been years since I visited. It’s one of those places you have to go to. They come here and we partner with them all the time, they give us free passes to visit
- Someone took me
- High school trip. I went to CAPA
- We do events together
- I was captivated by the glass work
- A friend wanted to see what was there. It’s a landmark

Categories chosen to best describe why participants have visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens:

- Partnership
- Went with a friend
- Class trip
- Beautiful, unique and interesting

9. How often do you visit Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?



40% of those surveyed said they only visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens "Once every few years." Everyone who answered this questions had previously visited PMG, the "Never" selection was picked by someone who had only been to the art environment once and said they would not go again. !0% mentioned they visited several times a year.

10. Why have you not visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?

- Never gotten around to it
- Because I don’t want to pay and when you walk through South Street there are tons of his murals everywhere. It’s a tourist trap
- I feel like the outside and inside are the same. Don’t care about mosaics
- I feel like as someone who lives here, it’s too crowded

Categories chosen to best describe why participants have visited Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens:

- I don’t have time
- The art is everywhere else for free
- Don’t like the work
- Too crowded

10% of participants who had not visited Philadelphia's Magic Gardens stated they didn't have time, 10% stated the are was already everywhere else for free, 10% said they did not like the work and the last 10% said they thought it was too crowded.

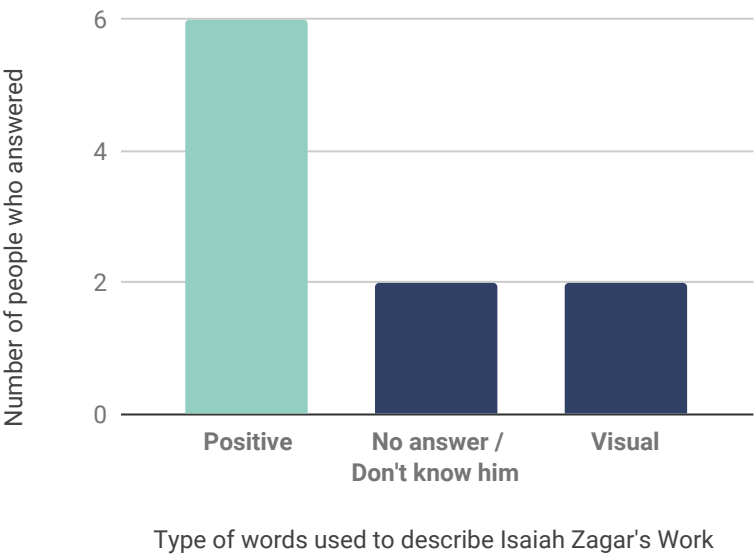
60% of those surveyed used positive words to describe the work of Isaiah Zagar, while nobody used any negative remarks. Only 20% said they did not know him.

11. Use three words to describe the work of Isaiah Zagar

- Unique, fun, shiny
- Can’t answer. Don’t know him
- Don’t know him
- Shiny, mesmerizing, colorful
- Engaging, magical, resourceful
- Things-in-walls
- Inspiring, iconic, colorful
- Mesmerizing, creative, a pillar

Categories chosen for descriptive words:

- Positive
- Negative
- Visual
- No answer/Don’t know him

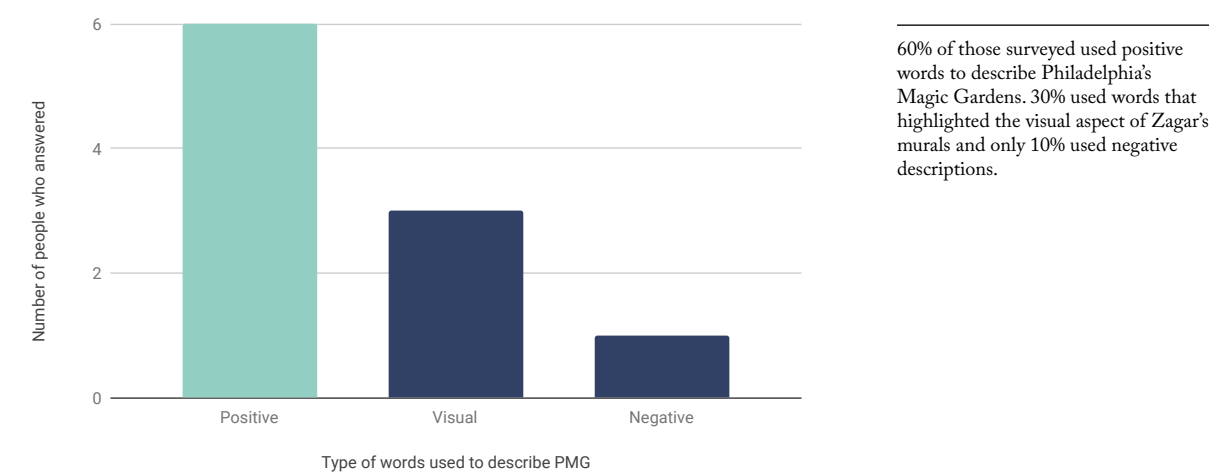


12. Use three words to describe Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens

- Unique, fun, shiny
- Eclectic, mirrors, avant garde
- Beautiful, refreshing, colorful
- Clogged, busy, fun
- Whimsical, beautiful, relaxing/comforting
- Lots-of-tourists
- Institution, iconic, colorful
- Intimate, fun, refreshing
- Different, iconic, captivating
- Intriguing, mysterious, unusual

Categories chosen for descriptive words:

- Positive
- Negative
- Visual
- No answer/Don’t know them



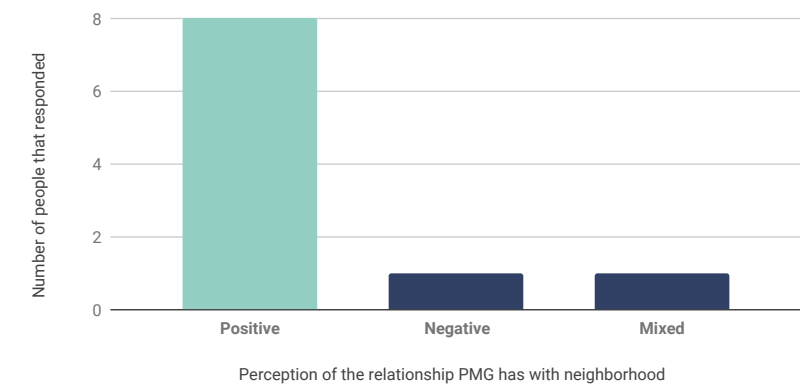
13. What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood?

- Very good. Most institutions on South Street that have been here for a while have to have good relationships with the neighborhood. You can’t last if you don’t
- Integrated well, popular
- Everyone likes them. There’s nothing else like that here. We need it. As long as something is different then it brings people in. We bring people in for each other
- A little disjointed. Part of South Street’s identity but south st. has been evolving and Philadelphia’s Magic Garden’s is ahead of it. It’s too clean/put together. Not what you think of Philly. Not an artistic city at all. Philly is not a place for small business. It doesn’t give back to the neighborhood. Seems like a place for people to take pictures, but it doesn’t bring people to businesses. Everything happens between 3rd and 7th streets. Over there it’s residential
- It’s the one that if people come from outside you have to do. If you live here, you know the dude. It’s a Philly staple now
- Probably similar than we have we tourists. Mostly for them. No one around here really goes there. We get their customers though. South Street is a good place for the arts, it values them
- Depends on who you’re talking to. All positive except for the people that moved to South Street and expect peace and quiet
- A really good one. They have a lot to offer and people know these mosaics. We tourism coming here, we direct them to PMG because it’s something new to the average person. We get tons of customers from them and they from us
- Without PMG there’s not South St. Tourist attraction in the summer. Extremely good. This business wouldn’t survive without him. A lot of tourists come because of them and they buy things. PMG also a customer, they support us. Kept South Street as unique and eclectic. It’s a stabilizing form for the neighborhood. They should have coupons at different businesses around
- I’ve worked at a couple of places on South Street and they always interact with them. Tourists come and go to businesses.

Categories chosen to best describe participants’ perception between Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens and the neighborhood:

- Positive
- Mixed
- Negative
- Neutral
- Not sure

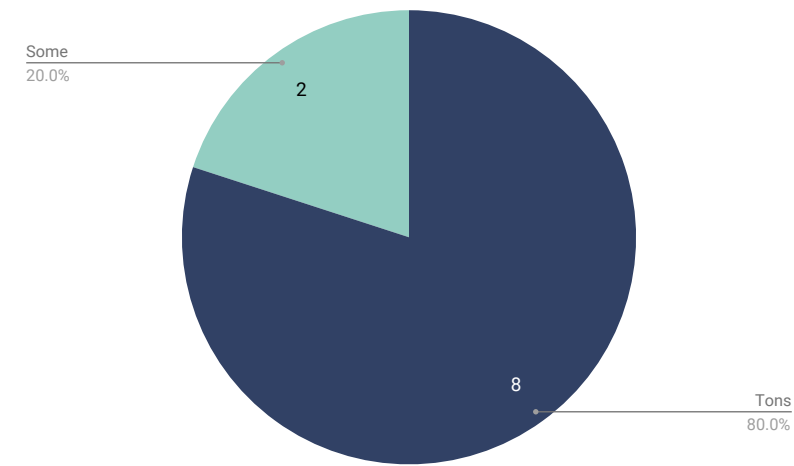
What kind of relationship do you think Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has with the neighborhood?



80% of participants answered they believed Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens has a “Positive” relationship with the neighborhood. Only 10% believed PMG has a “Negative” relationship with the neighborhood.

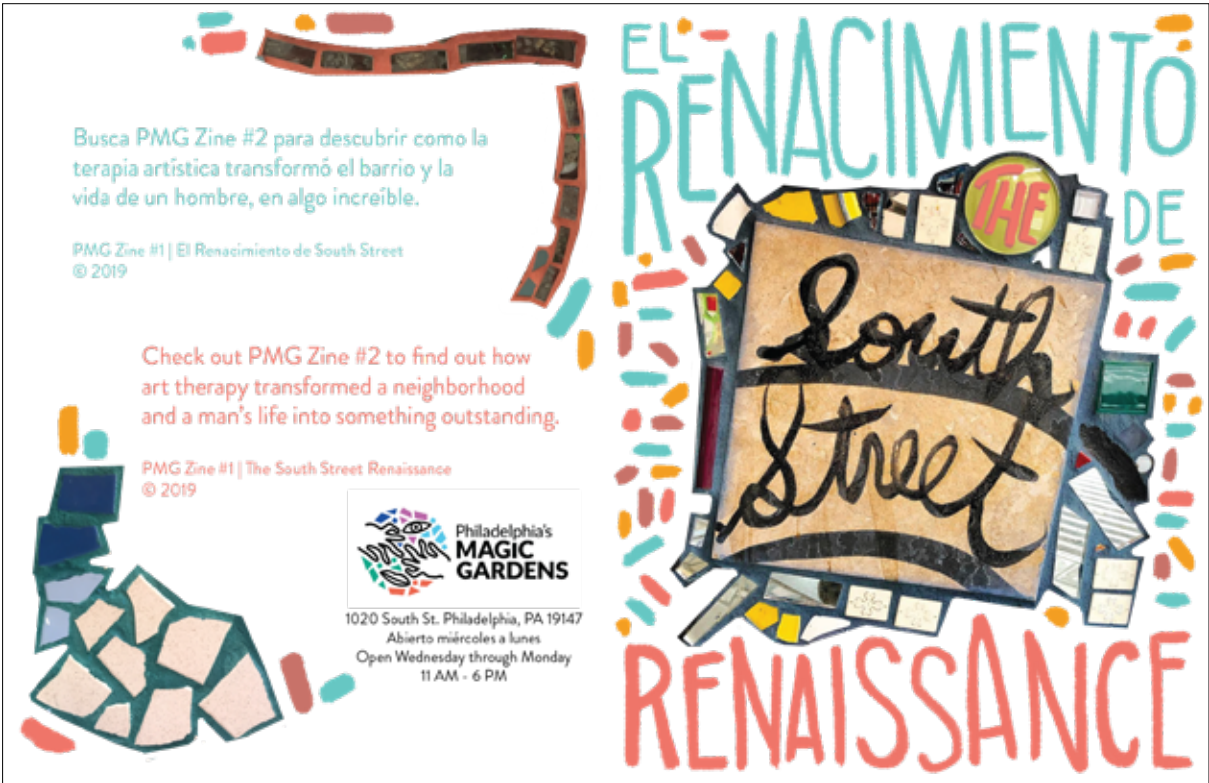
14. What value, if any, do you think Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens adds to the neighborhood?

80% of those surveyed answered that they thought Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens brings “Tons” of value to the neighborhood. Nobody said they did not think PMG brought any value to the neighborhood.



Appendix E | Zines

Zine #1 | South Street Renaissance



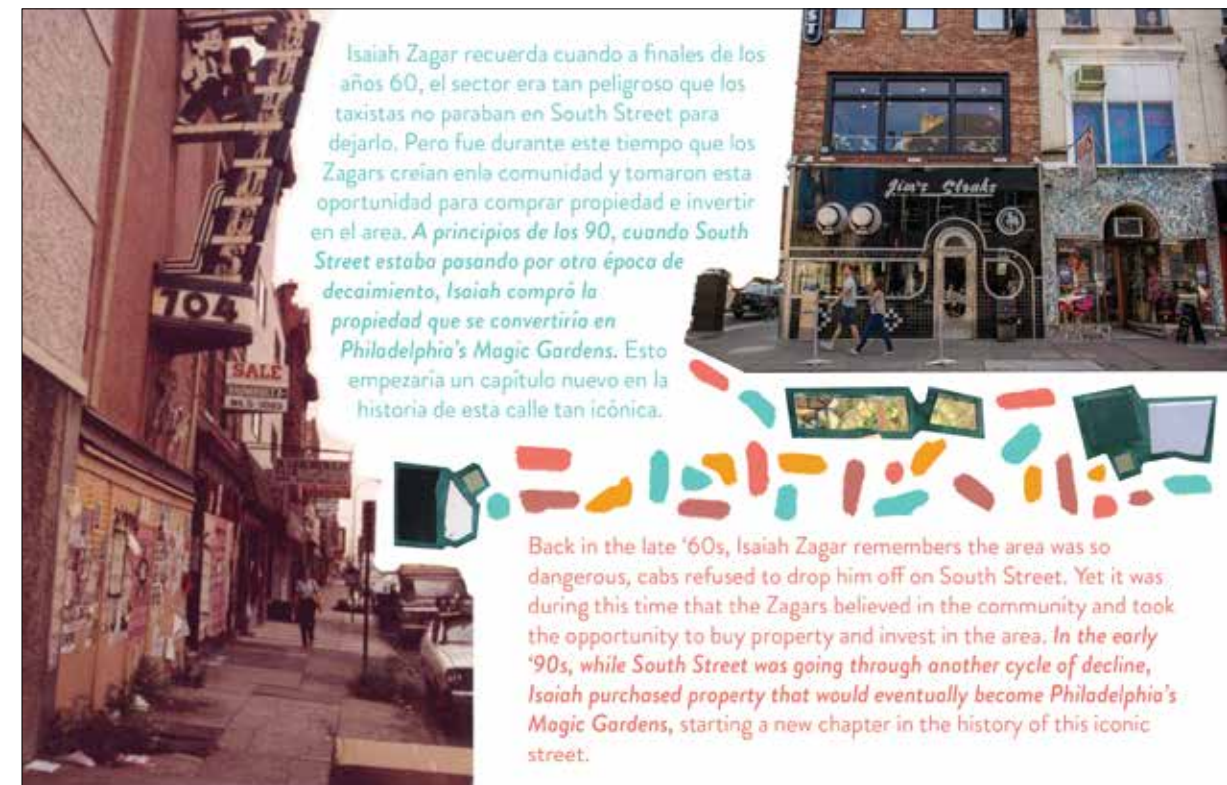
Back Cover



Spread #1



Spread #2



Spread #3



Inside poster image

Zine #2 | Art Therapy and Mental Health

Spread 1 - Mental health problems affect everyone, whether you know someone affected or you are the one struggling with it. They are not something to hide, and treatment has proven to help people feel better. In fact, Isaiah Zagar, the creator of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, has lived with his own mental illness and has learned ways to thrive by using his art practice to heal him. Known as art therapy, this type of treatment has come to the forefront in recent years.

Spread 2 - After Isaiah and Julia Zagar moved back to the U.S. in 1968, Isaiah became very depressed. He began to grow isolated and attempted suicide, leaving him hospitalized in a mental health institution for two weeks. While there, with the help of his psychiatrist, Isaiah began experimenting with mosaics and saw it helped organize those negative thoughts. He realized the repetition of putting one piece next to another kept his mind busy. His recovery took a lot of time and effort. Zagar has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, depression, and the learning disorder dyslexia. Through it all he has accepted and embraced himself through his art and is honest about his struggles.

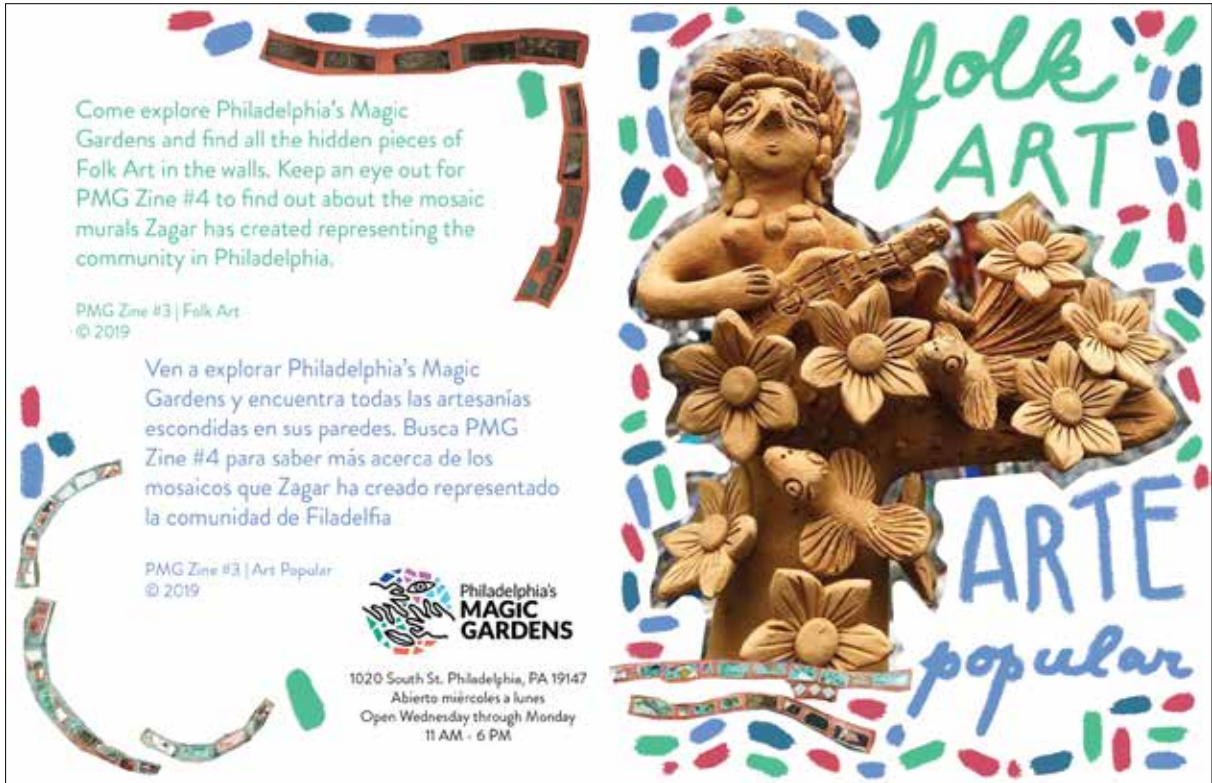
Spread 3 - Art therapy is not only for people with mental illness, but it can help many others, such as cancer patients, trauma survivors, and prison inmates. Some of its benefits include acknowledging and recognizing your feelings, increasing self-esteem, creating an outlet for emotions that are difficult to discuss, and relieving stress. And of course, it can also create beautiful artwork for all to enjoy if you're brave enough to share it with the world!

Back - If you or someone you know is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, help is a phone call away at 1-800-273-8255. Keep an eye out for PMG Zine #3 to find out about the Folk Art Latinx influences in Zagar's work.

Inside - Collage of Isaiah and his work.

*Zine will also be fully translated into Spanish once the design is done.

Zine #3 | Folk Art

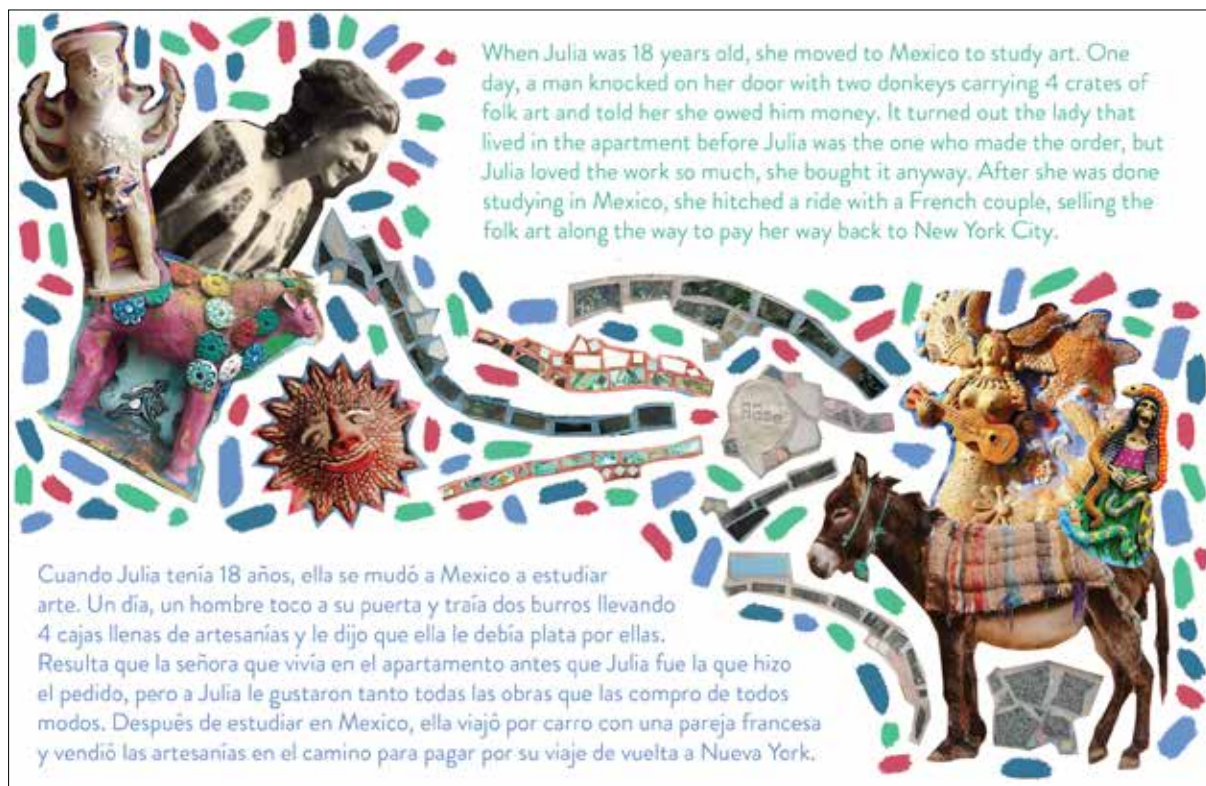


Back Cover

Front Cover



Spread #1



Spread #2



Spread #3



Inside poster image

Zine #4 | Community Murals

Spread 1 - When we see a mural with a portrait on the street, it is usually of well-known public figures. On the walls of cities all over the world, there are politicians, activists, and artists. But in our own neighborhoods and daily lives, we encounter people who inspire the community, who are respected and should also be celebrated. That is how Isaiah Zagar approaches the portraits in his mosaic murals. The Zagars have lived in the South Street neighborhood since 1968. Since Isaiah's work is a reflection of his life, thoughts, and surroundings, we can see many people who from the neighborhood in his murals.

Spread 2 - Around the corner from Philadelphia's Magic Gardens on Alder Street, we can see Rose, a woman who lived in the neighborhood and would walk every day by Isaiah and chat while he was working on this mural. This mosaic is on the building that was once the only African American firehouse until it was desegregated in 1952 – Engine Company 11.

Spread 3 - The relationships Isaiah has created with many residents are laid out tile by tile throughout the streets and their names and portraits are commemorated in the murals. They tell stories and share with everyone a little bit more about the fabric of Philadelphia and its people. A mural on 8th and South Street shows a trail of yellow tiles representing the man that for many years walked around the neighborhood with a giant yellow snake wrapped around his shoulders. Another mural down Mildred Street celebrates John Gaeta, a local resident who had asked Zagar to make a mosaic in a wall that had been vandalized down the street, along with his wife and dogs.

Back - To learn more about the community and the work Philadelphia's Magic Gardens is doing, stop by the museum, participate in an event, or take a walking tour of the neighborhood to hear local stories captured in the murals.

Inside - Map of the area highlighting the murals that Isaiah has done about people in the community.

*Zine will also be fully translated into Spanish once the design is done.

Appendix F | Zines Prototyping Survey

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens Zine Prototype

This is a survey to assess your engagement and reaction to the zine(s) you just read about Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. All answers will be anonymous.

* Required

1. What is your zip code *

2. How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Very familiar

☐ Somewhat familiar

☐ I have heard of it

☐ Never heard of it

3. Which zine did you choose to read? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ South Street Renaissance

☐ Folk Art

☐ Text for Mental Illness

☐ Text for Community Murals

☐ All

4. How familiar are you with this information? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Very familiar

☐ Somewhat familiar

☐ I have heard of it

☐ Never heard of it

5. Is this zine easy to understand? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

6. Do they inspire you to visit Philadelphia's Magic Gardens and learn more? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. How did you feel about the magazine being bilingual? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ More interested

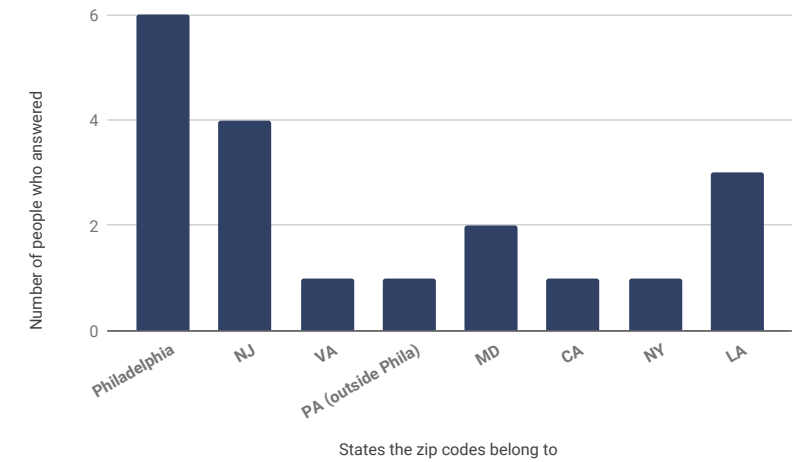
☐ Neither more nor less interested

☐ Less interested

Appendix G | Zines Prototyping Answers

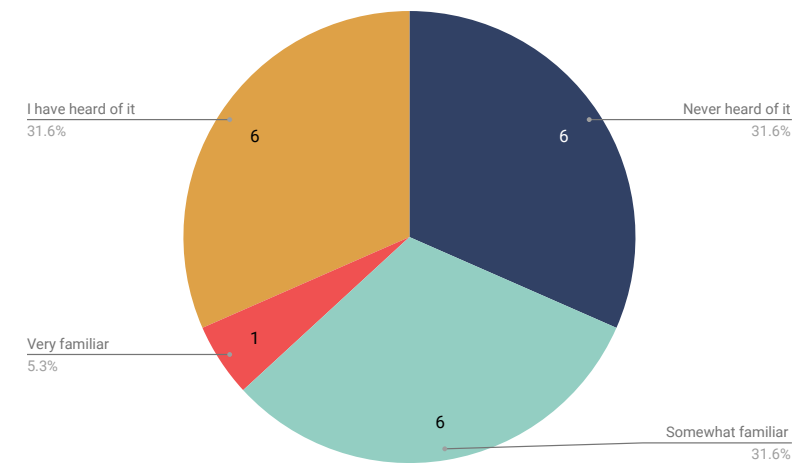
1. What is your zip code?

32% of those surveyed during testing said they reside in Philadelphia, while 21% said they live in New Jersey.

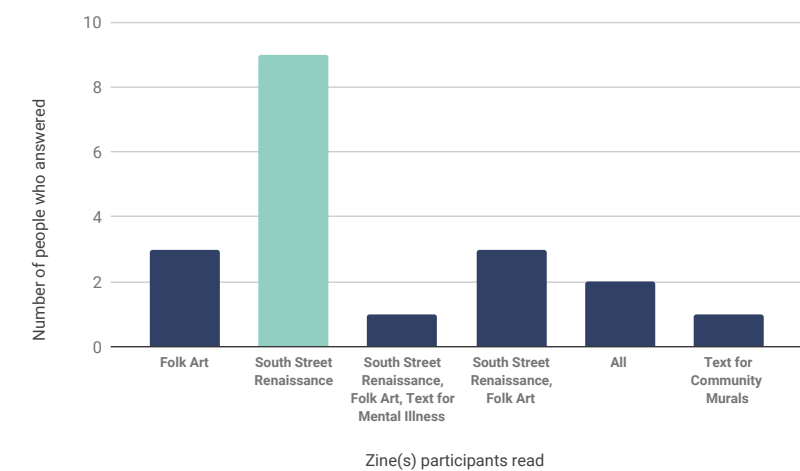


2. How familiar are you with the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens?

32% of those surveyed during testing said they were "Somewhat familiar" with the work of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. Another 32% said they had "heard of it", while another 32% said they had "Never heard of it." Only 5% shared they were "Very familiar" with the work of PMG.

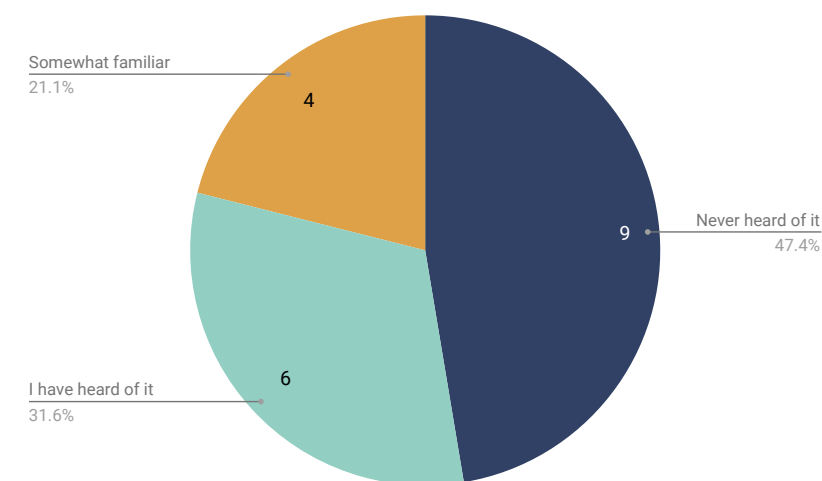


3. Which zine did you choose to read?



68% of those who participated during testing read the “South Street Renaissance” zine, while 37% read the “Folk Art” zine. 11% of those who answered the survey said they read the text for all four zines.

4. How familiar with this information are you?

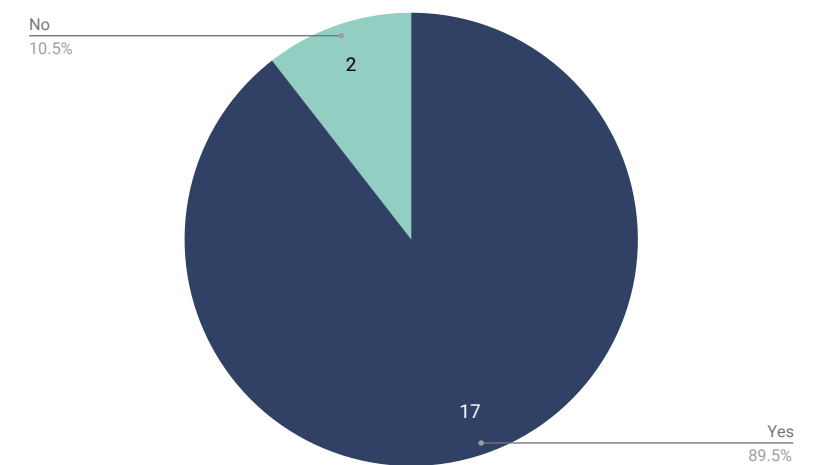


47% of those who participated in the survey during testing stated they had “Never heard of” this information. 32% said they had “heard of it” and 21% shared they were “Somewhat familiar.” Nobody answered that they were “Very familiar” with the information in the zines.

5. Is the zine easy to understand?

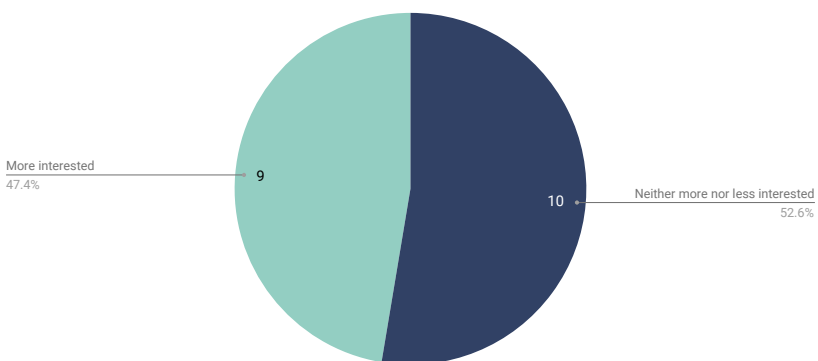
100% of participants who took the survey during testing stated the zine was easy to understand.

6. Do they inspire you to visit Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens?



90% of those who participated in testing the zines said they were inspired to visit Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens after reading the zines.

7. How did you feel about the magazine being bilingual?



47% of those who participated in testing said that they were “More interested” in them because they were bilingual. While 53% stated the fact that they were bilingual made them “Neither more nor less interested” in them. Nobody said they were “Less interested.”

