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Arts New Orleans

RE: Impact on Arts New Orleans' organizational policy and practice from Dr. Stuart Andrews' and Prof. Patrick Duggan's research in New Orleans

In March 2025, Arts New Orleans had the pleasure of hosting Prof. Patrick Duggan and Dr. Stuart Andrews as part of their ongoing research project, *Performing City Resilience*. Arts New Orleans is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting artists and advancing access to the arts and is designated as the official community arts agency for the city of New Orleans. Our mission is to support public art and artists, creating work that inspires, connects, and enriches the community through creative expression. This most recent collaboration builds on a multi-year engagement, with initial visits in 2018 and 2019. Over the past seven years, we have worked closely with Andrews and Duggan to explore the intersections of performance, civic identity, and resilience in New Orleans.

Their prior work with us, facilitating team discussions, leading public dialogues, and convening workshops, helped catalyze significant institutional reflection. At that time, Prof. Duggan and Dr. Andrews encouraged us to envision new ways of working and proposed the creation of a citywide arts network, a concept that continues to inform our strategic ambitions. Their most recent visit deepened our longstanding relationship and offered a powerful opportunity to engage our newer staff members with strategic insights relevant to our mission, work, and community.

Prof. Duggan and Dr. Andrews have brought unique and valuable approaches to their engagements with our organization. During their recent visit, they led our team through a process of guided group and individual reflection and 'debriefing', offering a distinctive methodology that helped our staff step back from daily operations and consider the broader strategic context of our work, as well as our personal relationships with it. Their academic and practical knowledge of performance, urban space, and civic engagement offered insights into and context for our work as an organization. This interdisciplinary lens was particularly impactful in helping us conceptualize how our organization can respond more effectively to the evolving needs of the New Orleans community and better understand our role in curating the landscape of the city. Their distinctive methodology of guided reflection and debriefing has changed how our staff engage with strategic planning, embedding resilience thinking into everyday practice.

Their contribution has influenced strategic planning, funding alignment, and staff development in ways that directly benefit the cultural infrastructure of New Orleans. Their discussions with our Deputy Director, Dr. Sarah Woodward, during a public art tour of New Orleans illuminated new ways to communicate the civic value of public art, aligning directly with the goals of our Percent for Art Program. During the tour, Dr. Woodward herself saw some of the projects in their completed state for the first time, highlighting how little space there has been in our work for strategic reflection recently. In addition, their one-on-one meeting with our Grantmaking and Administrative Specialist provided tailored insights on how to position our Community Arts Grants program to better align with city resilience priorities. Drawing directly on findings from two recent publications (see below), this support has actively shaped our annual funding proposal to the city, aimed at expanding the reach and equity of arts provision across New Orleans. This represents a direct and meaningful impact on our grantmaking practices, and from there on public policy and resource distribution.

Thus, their research has catalyzed strategic shifts across our organizational approach to grantmaking - strengthening the strategic framing of our initiatives, enhancing alignment with municipal priorities, and enabling more effective redistribution of resources to arts and culture organizations citywide. Moreover, the methodologies and insights introduced by Prof. Duggan and Dr. Andrews have not only enriched our internal practices but have also begun to influence how we engage with city stakeholders and funders. Their work has contributed to a more resilient and strategically aligned arts ecosystem in New Orleans, demonstrating clear benefits to public services, cultural policy, and community wellbeing.

We are grateful for the thoughtful, collaborative, and mutually beneficial engagement that Prof. Duggan and Dr. Andrews have sustained with our organization and the city at large over these past seven years. Their work has directly influenced our strategic priorities, staff development, and public-facing narratives—making visible the civic value of public art in ways we had not previously articulated. Their work continues to provoke meaningful dialogue, unlock new pathways for civic and cultural partnership, and position the arts as a vital component of New Orleans’ resilience infrastructure. Their research is deeply applicable to the lived realities of cities and arts organizations striving for resilience and equity. We look forward to future collaborations.

Sincerely,

Joycelyn Reynolds,
President and CEO
Arts New Orleans

Underpinning research:

The impact noted above draws on a long history of collaboration between ANO and Andrews/Duggan, underpinned by research outputs dating back to 2018. However, the impact above is *directly* related to findings from:

Andrews, S. and Duggan, P., 2024. *Political public art as performative response to crisis*. *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 20(4). Available at: <http://liminalities.net/20-4/performative-response.pdf>

Andrews, S., & Duggan, P. (2024). Performance approaches to whole society resilience. *Cultural Geographies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14744740241298970>

Andrews, S. and Duggan, P. (2021), Performance as City Pandemic Response: Invitations to Innovate, September 2021. (Newcastle, UK: Performing City Resilience). Available at: <https://performingcityresilience.com/publications/>.

Andrews and Duggan, 2021. 'How Performance Can Be Vital to Emergency Preparedness', *Crisis Response Journal* 16.3, September 2021

Andrews and Duggan (2021), 'Towards Strategy as Performance in Hazard Mitigation: Reflections on Performing City Resilience in New Orleans' in *Research in Drama Education*, 26.1 pp.187-201. DOI: [10.1080/13569783.2020.1844563](https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2020.1844563)