

## MISSION

Blights Out is a collaborative and creative initiative to unite residents, artists, architects, and organizers in the design of a new, inclusive model for development. Our experiential method of “performing architecture” guides us through the purchase, design, and restoration of a blighted structure into a cultural resource center that will seed creative action around issues of blight, disinvestment, and housing. Blights Out will partner with a local Community Land Trust as the cultural organizing arm of the permanently affordable housing movement to share the tools and inspiration for New Orleans residents to build the destinies of their own neighborhoods.

## OBJECTIVES

**To purchase and restore a blighted property in the Lower Mid-City/ Tremé neighborhood**, transforming it into functional “social sculpture”: a multipurpose community cultural resource center and socio-economic asset, which will serve at the “mothership” hub of Blights Out’s creative output.

**To align New Orleans’ traditional modes of cultural organizing with today’s most pressing concerns.** We believe that the Social Aid and Pleasure Club is a strong model that can be employed in new terrain. As such, we are using art to facilitate civic engagement with blight, disinvestment, and housing through programming that draws on New Orleans’ traditions of performance, storytelling, and community organizing.

**To partner with a local Community Land Trust (CLT)** to organize educational materials and programming on alternative development models, including the CLT.

**To record, visualize, and amplify the history of the neighborhood.** Blights Out produces public art inspired by neighborhood stories, architecture, and history, culled from the multi-disciplinary research and critical interactive strategies that we employ.

**To document our process and present it as a replicable model for action** through the publication of a toolkit that will consolidate scattered resources on housing, lending, and blight remediation in New Orleans, thus serving an unmet need identified at the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center 2015 Annual Fit for King Conference.

## PARTNERS

Blights Out is a collaborative process, involving residents, artists, architects, and organizers, at all stages of conception and implementation.

Our institutional partners include: the National Organization of Minority Architects; Press Street; Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University; Junebug Productions; New Orleans Master Crafts Guild; Prospect New Orleans; Loyola Law School Human Rights Clinic; Creative Capital; Justice and Beyond Coalition; & The St. Roch Community Church

*“Economic models and development schemes have been perfected by maximizing profit at the expense of people.” “The American Dream is an individual vision incompatible with collective needs.” “Artists will always hasten gentrification.”*

**We intend to deconstruct these truisms and prove them false through the design of an actionable model for community-powered neighborhood development.**