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The University of Chicago's Place Lab Introduces Ethical Redevelopment to Chicago Communities, Making the Case for Mindful City-Building

CHICAGO (June XX, 2016)—Place Lab, an interdisciplinary team committed to arts and culture-led transformation of disinvested neighborhoods, will host a Public Convening on Ethical Redevelopment on Wednesday, June 22. This interactive, theatrical event will introduce attendees to the philosophy of Ethical Redevelopment, demonstrating the power shared urbanism has to effectuate mindful development in neighborhoods undergoing change.

Ethical Redevelopment is an evolving strategy of 9 Principles for community development that shifts the value system from conventional financial and development practices to artist-led, culture-focused processes that demonstrate neighborhood agency and discourage displacement of existing residents. Based on a foundation of 9 Principles, which include such concepts as repurposing of existing resources, engaged neighborhood participation, and pedagogical moments, Ethical Redevelopment helps communities evolve in ways that work for—and with—those currently living there.

“We want to include other urban practitioners into discussions about neighborhood transformation, and ultimately into projects that are not just preoccupied with outcome but also deeply consider process and access,” says Isis Ferguson, Project Manager at Place Lab. “Urban practitioners can be community residents, artists, entrepreneurs, bankers, organizers, activists, architects, developers, designers, and planners.”

The Public Convening on Ethical Redevelopment will include just such urban practitioners to introduce the public to the 9 Principles. The event is co-hosted by Theaster Gates, Jr., (Director, UChicago Arts + Public Life) and Steve Edwards (Executive Director, UChicago Institute of Politics). Speakers include Charlene Carruthers (National Director, Black Youth Project 100), Lisa Yun Lee (Director, UIC Department of Art and Art History,) Kerwin Charles (Deputy Dean, UChicago Harris School of Public Policy), Mabel O. Wilson (Senior Fellow, Institute for Research in African-American Studies in GSAS), and Cathy Cohen (author, *Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics*) and more. Artists, including Young Chicago Authors and Rebirth Poetry Ensemble provide artistic performances highlighting the 9 Principles of Ethical Development. The event is emceed by Quenna Lene Barrett, with music provided by DJ Madrid.

“Ethical Redevelopment is as much about peer learning as it is about neighborhood transformation,” says Gates. “We believe that the solutions to our cities’ and our neighborhoods’

greatest challenges can be solved by people who live in real neighborhoods, all across the country.”

Place Lab’s work is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Following the interactive and theatrical Public Convening, Place Lab and the Knight Foundation will continue the discussion of Ethical Redevelopment through monthly, invitation-based Salon Sessions, which bring together individuals and organizations from around the nation to discuss development projects and applications of the 9 Principles of Ethical Redevelopment. The 9 Principles will be refined throughout the year-long Salon based on member input and analysis of myriad real-world transformation projects both within and outside of Chicago.

A formal announcement of the Salon Session membership, project cases, and discussion topics will be made following the Public Convening.

The insights and lessons from these sessions will be available to the public, who are encouraged to follow the discussion and share their own thoughts and experiences through a moderated online public forum. The forum will open in July, and Place Lab encourages individuals and organizations from diverse sectors to join and contribute their voices.

“In the same way that there is no single solution, there is no single expertise that can tackle our cities’ greatest challenges,” Gates continues. “Design experts, artists, architects, humanists, policy experts and thinkers in the social sciences will be learning from one another, taking new lessons learned back to their neighborhoods. It’s not about fast answers, but rather people believing that their individual and collective efforts will make change.”

The Public Convening will be held at the Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E 60th St, Chicago, 2–5 pm on June 22. It is free and open to the public.

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About Place Lab

Place Lab is a partnership between the University of Chicago's Arts + Public Life initiative and the Harris School of Public Policy to bring together artists, policymakers, faculty, and students to observe, document, and implement new approaches to urban development. For more on Place Lab, visit <http://placelab.uchicago.edu/>.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities, and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit knightfoundation.org.