

Philadelphia Local Media Field Guide

Mediations—Shannon Mattern
Archeological Forum—Kaitlynn Gilmore
Listening Lab—Isabelle Kowal
Phillies Marketing—Shannon Bifulgio
Non-Profit Media—Corelle Adams
Community Fridges—Liana Kaye-Lew
Wheatpaste Posters—Adeline Brown
Event Flyers—Anna Campbell
Stickers—Manny Fabarek
Nextdoor—Lori Ho
Barber Shops—Madison Gordon
Home Beauty—MaTeeya McCadden
Coffee Shops—Gerardo Ramirez

Designed by Elaine Lopez.

Printed by Fireball Printing in Philadelphia.

Typefaces:

Parabolica, Elfreth, and Garvis designed by James Hultquist-Todd in Philadelphia.

First edition of 100 copies.

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Contents

-
01. Local Mediations:
Introducing our Field Guide
Shannon Mattern—9
-
02. Protecting Philadelphia's
Archaeology:
The Philadelphia
Archaeological Forum
Kaitlynn Gilmore—21
-
03. The Listening Pill
Isabelle Kowal—33
-
04. Paint the Town Red
Shannon Hiffulgo—45
-
05. A Field Guide to Media
in Nonprofit Spaces:
Building Community
Lorelle Adams—55

06. Community Fridge
Networks
Liana Kaye-Lew—63

07. Posters as Protest
Adeline Brown—77

08. Event Flyers of Philadelphia
Anna Campbell—85

09. The Social Ecology
of Urban Stickers
Hanny Fabarek—97

10. Virtually Out
and About: Nextdoor
Lori Ho—113

11. A Journey Through
Woodard's Barbershop:
The Cultural Significance
of Black Barbering
in Philadelphia
Madison Gordon—125

12. Local Media in the
Beauty Scene
MaTeya McFadden—141

13. Critical Media Incubators:
Local Philadelphia
Coffee Shops
Gerardo Ramirez—155



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01. Local Mediations: Introducing our Field Guide

Shannon Mattern

species

media locālis

phenotype

multifarious, polychromatic, chameleonic

status

We may be tethered to global networks, streaming content from around the planet, and joining in conversation (or conspiracy) with folks from all corners of the earth, but we also live in places with local characters and concerns, among people with local needs and contributions. Historically, local media—city newspapers and broadcasters, bulletin boards and billboards, place-based music scenes and book clubs, town criers and neighborhood gossips—have informed and bound our communities. Yet in recent decades, amidst globalization, digitization, corporate consolidation, and privatization, our traditional local venues have either been subsumed into international conglomerates or disappeared altogether.

In our Spring 2024 “Local Media” class at the University of Pennsylvania, we assessed the important roles served by our place-based media, as well as what’s lost when local modes of communication collapse.¹ We asked: what values are inherent in the newsletters, radio shows, and libraries created, distributed, preserved, and consumed within the local realm, speaking to local concerns, and made accessible to local publics? What’s lost when those sites and systems are threatened? At the same time, we also considered what might be gained if we think more generously about what constitutes local media—and if we imagine how they might be re-designed to better serve our communities, our broader society, and our planet. We asked: how can we think capaciously about the myriad forms of media that allow us to understand, steward, and shape our communities and local environments—and about how those various media forms inform our understanding of what constitutes “the local?”

Nomenclature

The local, as media scholar Christopher Ali reminds us, is simultaneously a place, a community, and a market.² Put differently, “localism” can characterize a geographic scale, a political zone, a cultural field, an aesthetic character, and an ethical arena. It can also easily become a fetish—a character equated with authenticity, democracy, and morality, and thus romanticized as an inherent good. Yet the “local,” like “community” and “artisanal” or “organic,” can sometimes encompass homogeneity and exclusion, and mask power dynamics and inequities. What role do, or might, our local media play in

helping us appreciate the prismatic nature and complex politics of localism—and in prompting us to identify the facets of localism we want to foster and protect?

Field Protocol

We began our semester by studying the philosophical and political-economic genealogies of “localism.” We then acclimated to our field, the City of Philadelphia, by engaging with the most familiar species of local media: local news. We visited the Free Library of Philadelphia to explore the history of local news in the city—from its generalist major newspapers and its vibrant Black press, to its foreign-language venues and neighborhood-specific newsletters and alternative weeklies. Encountering this range of sub-species prompted us to acknowledge the value of supporting a wide range of venues and cultivating a heterogeneous information ecology. The following week, we mapped the local news ecologies in our own hometowns, to serve as a point of grounding and comparison as we further explored Philadelphia. Afterward, we considered, on the one hand, the lamentable state of local news across the United States—a condition shaped by the decline of print and the rise of the digital, market consolidation, and the evisceration of news by parasitic hedge funds—and, on the other hand, the rise of local initiatives that aim to foster the sharing of credible local information, the cultivation of local knowledge and culture, and engagement in local governance. We met with folks from the Philly-based Lenfest Institute to discuss their work and similar organizations’ efforts to reinvigorate local news ecologies and promote community media production.



↑ Barnes' Map of Philadelphia, 1861, via Free Library of Philadelphia; modified with Ludmila Kavalla, Four-Panel Illustration, ca. 1950, via Letterform Archive; and John D. Cardinell, Sesqui-Centennial Lival Arts Building Exhibit #67, Philadelphia, 1926, via The Free Library Digital Collections. All images in the public domain. Collage by the author.



↑ Barnes' Map of Philadelphia, 1861, via Free Library of Philadelphia; modified with Smoke Signals, WPA Poster Collection, via The Free Library's Digital Collection; and Communication Tower, WPA Poster Collection, via The Free Library. All images in the public domain. Collage by the author.

In the following weeks, we visited various field stations: We trekked to PhillyCAM to observe how public access television illuminates local news and culture, and “enable[s] democratized local communication while promoting civic health.”³ As Antoine Haywood, one of our hosts, explains, equipping community contributors with production skills and aesthetic sensibilities also cultivates critical media literacy that serves them well in advocating for their communities’ needs. The following week, we imagined climbing onto the city’s rooftops to install pirate radio antennae, and we descended into a basement studio to visit Penn’s student radio station, where we again observed how the collaborative creation and maintenance of a local technical infrastructure aids in community empowerment and amplifies local concerns and creative communities.⁴ (Just weeks later, amidst the spread of Palestinian solidarity protests to campuses across the country, we witnessed the critical role played by student radio and newspapers in chronicling the upheaval.⁵)

Afterward, we again crossed the Schuylkill River to visit Iffy Books, a book / zine store and tech workshop, where proprietor Steve McLaughlin and Alex Wermer-Colan, Executive Director of Philly Community Wireless, spoke with us about the challenges and rewards of building digital infrastructures that are accessible to—and that meet the needs of and reflect the character of—the local communities they serve.⁶ With its mix of electronics, books, xeroxed pamphlets, and anarchist posters, the shop exemplifies how different media forms can interact symbiotically within a local media ecology designed to center respect for one’s community and environment.

In our remaining weeks, we considered the post office as a vital, local civic and economic infrastructure—from its historical roles in delivering information necessary for people to participate in a democracy, providing basic civic services, and fostering the creation of local public spheres; to its potential future roles as a hub for the distribution of public information and the management of public digital infrastructures.⁷ We wrapped up our discussion by studying a selection of mail art from Penn’s Special Collections. And in our final week we explored the various forms in which we encounter local data out “in the wild”—from community bulletin boards to billboards, public interactive kiosks to wayfinding graphics, street signs to stickers.⁸ We broke into groups for some off-campus expeditions, where we gathered evidence of hyper-local atmospheric and architectural communication.

All along the way, we aimed to imagine opportunities for each of us—through our various future professions and in our roles as community members and citizens and activists—to support and contribute to our own local media ecologies, whether in Philadelphia or wherever our lives might take us. Many of our contributors were wrapping up their undergraduate careers and Philadelphia residencies. So, while we enjoyed our semester together, we identified sites across Philadelphia where our individual interests materialized, and we applied our range of disciplinary backgrounds and aesthetic sensibilities in compiling those sites and species of space into this field guide, which allows us, now, to share our commitments and fascinations with you.

The field guide is typically a formulaic genre. But just as we aimed to think creatively and capaciously about what constitutes media—so we can better appreciate the wealth of ad hoc, informal, improvisatory, and provocative systems that foster the germination of local knowledge—we also aimed to expand and upend the field guide: to twist its conventions in order to encourage more playful and generous modes of exploration and appreciation for the city itself as a polyphonic, prismatic medium that serves its legion of localities.

Our Menagerie

To begin, Kaitlynn Gilmore introduces us to the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum, an assembly of local researchers, practitioners, educators, and students who are networked together through the Forum’s website and their map of unmarked burial sites, through their programming and consulting work. We start here because, as Gilmore demonstrates, this group contends that their—and our—locality encompasses much more than Philadelphia’s current neighborhoods and people. The local also “stretches down into the dirt, below the roots of the oldest trees and foundations of the oldest buildings, forming a view of the land that unites the current residents of Philadelphia with the various human experiences that occurred since the first Indigenous people arrived in Lenapehoking over 10,000 years ago.”

We then encounter the mediated forms of two signature Philadelphia institutions: its beloved sports teams and its massive health care sector. Shannon DiFulgo highlights a range of ambient sports marketing media

that signal and strengthen the city's connection to the Phillies. From billboards to bus stop posters, ringing bells to architectural lighting: Philadelphia's myriad surfaces and volumes are marshaled to cultivate and sustain team spirit.

While most Philadelphians are perhaps a bit more enthusiastic about catching a game at Citizens Bank Park than they are about visiting the doctor, they'll inevitably find themselves interacting, either by choice or necessity, with the city's many hospitals, community health clinics, and harm reduction programs. Isabelle Kowal encourages us to engage with the health care system through a different medium: our ears. By introducing us to the Penn Medicine Listening Lab and its podcasts and arts programs, Kowal demonstrates how listening—listening between and among doctors, patients, and administrators; and listening to the tacit voices in various artworks within the city's cultural institutions—can promote more responsive, sensitive care.

Those public service institutions have to communicate their mission internally, too—among staff and volunteers, and with community members seeking attention and service. Lorelle Adames visits two local nonprofit spaces, the Kensington Corridor Trust and the Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project, to understand how they deploy a variety of bespoke media—flyers, stickers, infographics, diagrams, murals, and internally-created art—to promote inclusion. Their community spaces, Adames finds, “are designed and decorated for and by the populations that they serve, which enforces the bonding that comes with creative expression.”

Another such community space, more modestly scaled, is the community fridge. Liana Kaye-Lew studies this species, which has proliferated since the start of the pandemic; assesses its habitat and means of communicating its accessibility and utility to a range of Philly communities; and evaluates the symbiotic relationships the fridge cultivates within its hyper-local ecologies. “The idea is so simple,” Kaye-Lew writes, “yet it provides one of the most dignified, natural solutions to food insecurity.”

The socio-economic forces that generate food insecurity also precipitate displacement and other broader urban transformations. Adeline Brown calls our attention to Philly’s wheat paste posters, an informal, unsanctioned species of local media that proliferates on construction barriers and utility poles; “they typically exist in a sort of camouflage,” Brown writes, “presenting as pieces of public art but oftentimes functioning as forms of disruption and protest.” They’re also “ethnographic writings of sorts as they both absorb and reflect urban movement” and document urban change.

Some of those same substrates also frequently scaffold event flyers—whether wheat-pasted, stapled, or taped—that advertise local concerts, festivals, parties, and comedy shows. In collecting samples of such flyers across several Philadelphia neighborhoods, Anna Campbell found that their physical location and visual style reflect both their geographic habitat and social ecology. The event flyer, Campbell says, is “an organic species of local media” that “offers a glimpse into the media culture associated with the flyer itself.”

Often living symbiotically with the wheat paste poster and event flyer is the sticker, a local medium whose relatively small size and adhesive capacity allow for widespread and rapid distribution—and longevity. Danny Jarabek describes how Philly’s stickers exhibit “wilding” behavior and how their presence often constitutes “an act of rebellion” and a “disregard for the standardization and officiality” of the substrates to which they’re affixed. Stickers, much like their wheat paste companions, become a new political “skin” for the pedestrian-scaled city.

Sticker-sized, but “sticky” in a different sense, is the social media post. Lori Ko directs our attention to hyper-local social networking platform Nextdoor, which allows Philadelphia neighbors to share information about local businesses, events, and resources, discuss local politics, and air concerns. As Ko explains, the platform can fill gaps in communities un- or under-served by more formal local media venues, while it also serves as a repository of local knowledge for journalists and law enforcement. A challenge arises, however, when posters deputize themselves and turn to Nextdoor to report suspicious activity, which can cultivate paranoia and distrust.

Trust is an integral component of the social network Madison Gordon describes. Woody’s Barbershop, next to Fairmount Park and Wynnefield Heights, is full of media—from the reception podium, to portraits and paintings, to the radio and television playing in the background—that welcome, connect, and sustain a local community. In Woody’s shop, these bespoke and broadcast media forms meld into animated conversa-

tion and social validation: here, Black men discuss local politics and neighborhood knowledge, dispense pearls of wisdom, and offer socially acceptable forms of comfort to one another. The barber's social position, Gordon explains, "helps to establish strong foundations and connections" among both their clients and those in the broader local community.

MaTaeya McFadden describes a similar hybrid species of space: Black beauty technicians' home-based businesses and their Instagram profiles. Without a storefront or a physical sign to display their services, these hair and nail professionals use the online profile as a virtual shop window and resume, and they arrange their modest spaces—sometimes in their dorm rooms—to communicate welcome and cultivate trust. As McFadden demonstrates, these businesses, like Woody's, function as local centers of communication and communion: "they're not just providing beauty services. They're [also] fostering community, serving as gossip and information hubs, and advertising those purposes through their social media accounts."

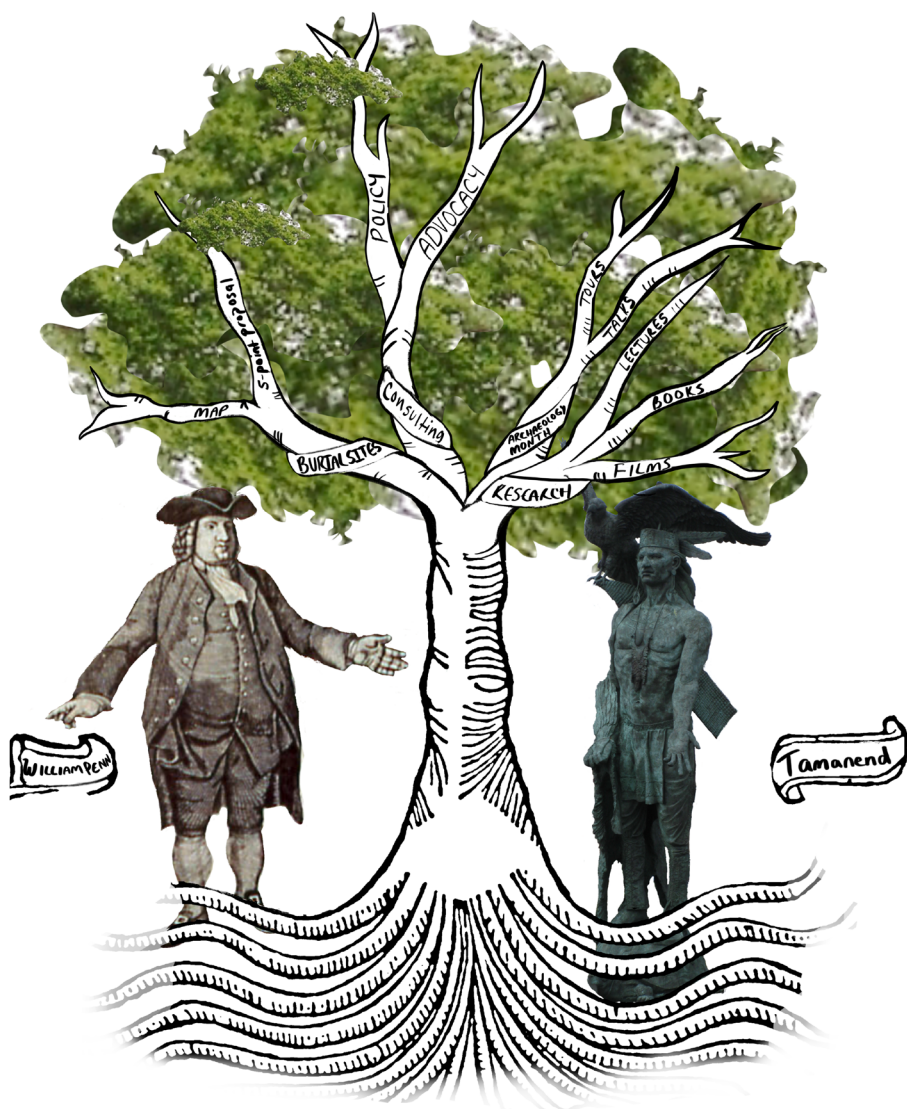
Finally, Gerardo Ramirez surveys the status of the local, independent coffee shop amidst encroaching and proliferating chains, then guides us on a tour of three exemplary community fixtures. These sites—much like the barber shops we visited earlier—feature a range of media: event flyers, advertisements for local businesses, the occasional gig by local musicians, and plenty of interpersonal communication. As Ramirez writes, "each coffee shop showcases a mix of media that is relevant [both] culturally and geographically."

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Nina Coffin at the Free Library, Samiya Green and Shawn Mooring from the Lenfest Institute, Antoine Haywood and Gretjen Clausing at Philly-CAM, Giselle Wagner at WQHS, Alex Wermer-Colan of Philly Community Wireless, Steve McLaughlin of Iffy Books, and John Pollack in the Kislak Center. Davor Svetinovic helped to process honorarium payments for all these folks. Finally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to Elaine Lopez, who expertly guided us through the design and production of this field guide, and who directed us to Philly-based foundries and printers. This whole production—from content to container—is a local affair.

- 1 Shannon Mattern, “Local Media” (Spring 2024): <https://localmedia.wordsinspace.net/spring2024/>.
- 2 Christopher Ali, *Media Localism: The Policies of Place* (University of Illinois Press, 2017): 32.
- 3 Antoine Haywood, “Community Access Television: ‘More than a Soundbite,’” *The Objective* (November 28, 2023): <https://objectivejournalism.org/2023/11/antoine-haywood-community-access-tv-more-than-soundbite/>
- 4 Christina Dunbar Hester, “‘Producing ‘Participation’? The Pleasures and Perils of Technical Engagement in Radio Activism,” *Public Culture* 26:1 (2013): 25–50.
- 5 Najib Aminy and Jacob Rosenberg, “How Columbia’s Student Radio Is Meeting the Moment,” *Mother Jones* (April 22, 2024): <https://www.motherjones.com/media/2024/04/wkcr-columbia-gaza-encampment-protests-interview/>. We also engaged with Katherine Jye Jewell’s auspiciously timed book, *Live from the Underground: A History of College Radio*, published by University of North Carolina Press shortly before the semester’s start, in December 2023.
- 6 See Greta Byrum, “Building the People’s Internet,” *Urban Omnibus* (October 2, 2019): <https://urbanomnibus.net/2019/10/building-the-peoples-internet/>.
- 7 See Casey Cep, “We Can’t Afford to Lose the Postal Service,” *The New Yorker* (May 2, 2020): <https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-communications/we-cant-afford-to-lose-the-postal-service>.
- 8 See Yanni Loukissas, *All Data Are Local: Thinking Critically in a Data-Driven Society* (MIT Press, 2019).

Philadelphia Archaeological Forum



↑ A drawing depicting the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum's activities as branches of a tree. Collaged from Arbor Scientiae (Wikimedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arbor-scientiae.png>), Tamanend Statue (ElPadawan via Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/elpadawan/3040385724/>), East Coker Elm (Ptelea via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:East_Coker_elm_2.jpg), and William Penn's Treaty with the Indians (Furnishing Fabric) (Via Art Institute Chicago, 1785, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/31467/william-penn-s-treaty-with-the-indians-furnishing-fabric>).

02. Protecting Philadelphia's Archaeology: The Philadelphia Archaeological Forum

Kaitlynn Gilmore

species

The Philadelphia Archaeological Forum

phenotype

The Philadelphia Archaeological Forum (PAF) is a consulting party and advocacy group in Philadelphia. A forum, broadly speaking, is a group where informed and invested people join together to discuss a particular topic and disseminate ideas and information. As a result, the “forum” has no central building but is instead manifested through the many members, including researchers, educators, students, archaeologists, and more. A few key members are listed on their website, but the membership is generally diffuse. While members stay active in their own careers, as the PAF, they collectively advise development projects of various kinds and levels. They also co-sponsor research projects and hold occasional public events such as “Explore Philly’s Buried Past!,” where local archaeologists and researchers give presentations. The PAF is also well known for their map of unmarked burial sites across Philadelphia and their efforts to protect them through social awareness, policy, and advocacy.

Historical Habitat

The PAF's most commonly observed (and self-defined) habitat is the Philadelphia area. While it has no "home base," in the form of a dedicated building, it lives in the offices of the staff and in the land itself, among the archaeological remains from centuries of urbanization and even longer centuries of Native American life. To restrict or even degrade the land to the simple legal and modern boundary of Philadelphia, however, belies the multi-millennium history of the Native American people who have resided here. Especially when referring to an archaeological group that interacts with and promotes this long history, it is vital to redefine the land itself as something more than the restrictive "Philadelphia." Furthermore, it is impossible to understand the "archaeological" landscape of the area that the PAF explores and protects without a certain familiarity with the land's history.

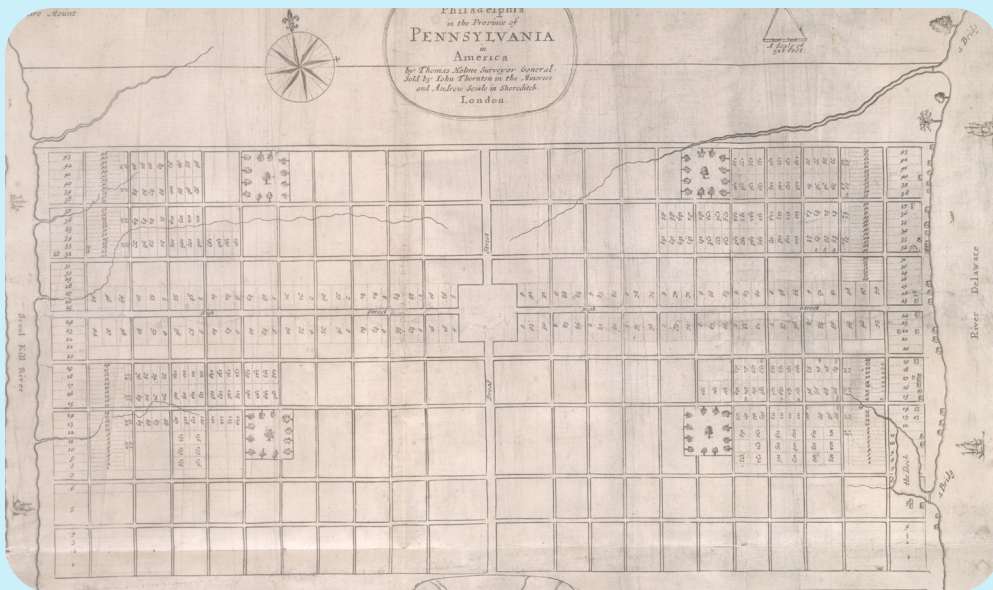
The land around the Delaware and Hudson rivers, including Philadelphia and New York, is called Lenapehoking (Lënapehòkink), the ancestral homelands of the Lenni Lenape. This knowledge has become much more common in recent years, as institutions begin to place land acknowledgments on their websites, buildings, and in their programming. It is much less known that the Philadelphia area specifically was once called Coaquannock, or "the grove of long pine trees."¹ Though the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania now acknowledges no tribes within state boundaries, the remaining Lenape people in Pennsylvania have organized into an independent, legally unrecognized group known as the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania (LNPA), while other Lenape from the area were forcefully relocated centuries ago.²

In the early 1680s, William Penn came to Lenapehoking with the Quaker Society Of Friends, carrying a dream to establish a land of religious toleration and equality (as they defined it at the time, however limited we may regard it now).³ Thus, eventually, Coaquannock became Philadelphia. While Penn himself may have attempted cordiality and pacifism, his descendants were notably less concerned with positive relationships with the Lenape.⁴ The region eventually found itself inhabited by a diverse population of Jewish, Dutch, Swede German, Scots-Irish, Welsh, French Huguenots, and Africans, some of whom arrived even before William Penn.⁵

The land itself, even as we experience it now, is full of remnants of this history, both above and below ground. Many archaeological artifacts are buried below the surface, built up over thousands of years of life. At least 85 unmarked cemeteries have been recorded, though certainly more graves, especially private ones, must exist throughout the city. This is a problem in many older cities, but especially prolific in Philadelphia, which had many small churches throughout the expanse of the city, and which, when destroyed/repurposed, may not have relocated the remains. These remains and artifacts, remnants of the many humans who inhabited Coaquannock and Philadelphia, make up the major resources that the PAF addresses and protects.

↓ A sticker about Lenapehoking pasted over a sticker about West Philadelphia. The cropped back sticker originally read, "It's West Philly / University City is a Marketing Scheme." Photo by Kyle Cassidy via Wikimedia, 2007. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lenapehoking.jpg>



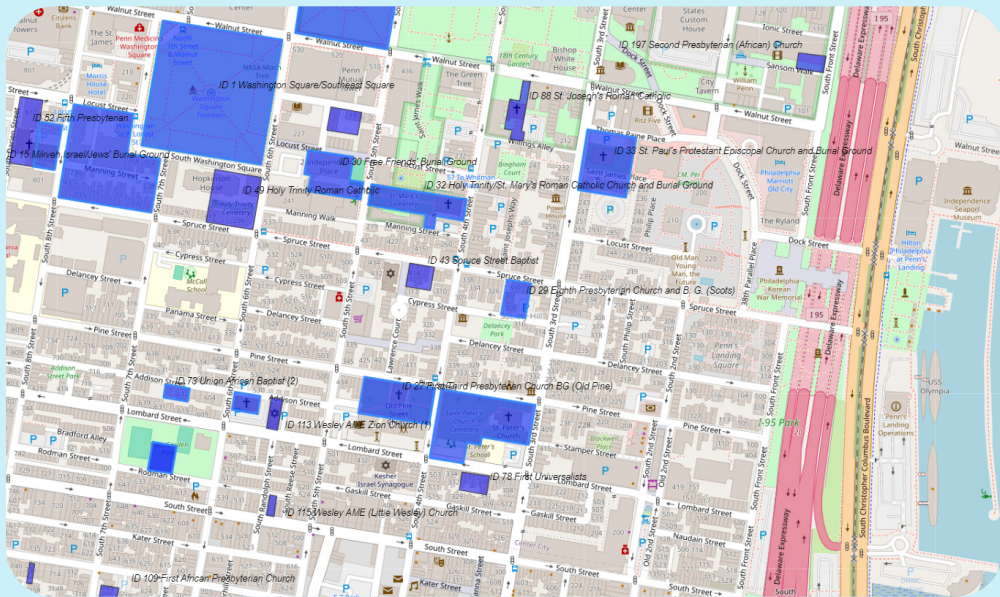


↑ A map of the city of Philadelphia as of 1683 from a letter from William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders. Via Penn Libraries. <https://colenda.library.upenn.edu/catalog/81431-p34f1n169rum'sawan/3040385724>, East Coker Elm (Ptelea via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:East_Coker_elm_2.jpg), and William Penn's Treaty with the Indians (Furnishing Fabric) (Via Art Institute Chicago, 1785, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/31467/william-penn-s-treaty-with-the-indians-furnishing-fabric>).

Climate

Though the PAF is not officially affiliated with the city of Philadelphia, recent notable changes and conditions in the area have especially facilitated the PAF's actions as “unofficial protectors” of Philadelphia's archaeological history and unmarked graves. Rebecca Yamin, a member of the PAF Advisory Committee, explains in her book *Digging in the City of Brotherly Love* that “a post-recession construction boom in Philadelphia” resulted in rapid construction across the city.⁶ At the same time, private developers are not required to do any archaeological research on the sites they are redeveloping. Construction of private buildings, casinos, apartment complexes, etc. has often occurred without any background research into what lies underground. As a result, Philadelphia's archaeological history is less protected, in practice, than in other sites such as New York, which require research for private development.

In *Advocacy and Archaeology*, Elizabeth Meade and Douglas Mooney (president of the PAF) discuss the further implications of this condition on city archaeology. The Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) *does* have the power to register important sites in the Philadelphia Register of Historical Places, which would subsequently compel the developers to do research, but since no archaeologists are on the PHC staff, this authority is not properly applied. In the case of burial remains, while developers must report the remains to the police and Medical Examiner's Office, there is no legal need to proceed governmentally or archaeologically with those remains, leading to the "desecration of burials and the violation of descendants' legal rights."⁷ While the PHC formed a committee to discuss appointments of protected land, with PAF president Mooney as a member, the PHC actually has no obligation to heed the advice of the committee. An example of these limitations in play occurred at the Society Hill Historic District in 2018, another case of residential development which Mooney spoke publicly about. In this case, the PHC declared that the commission didn't have the legal authority to force the developers to research the area before developing it, despite acknowledging the possible remains underground.⁸ What Mooney and the PAF are advocating for, that the PHC doesn't seem to account for, are remains primarily underground. Areas deemed "non-contributing" for having no above ground structures can be written off, despite their underground archaeological potential.

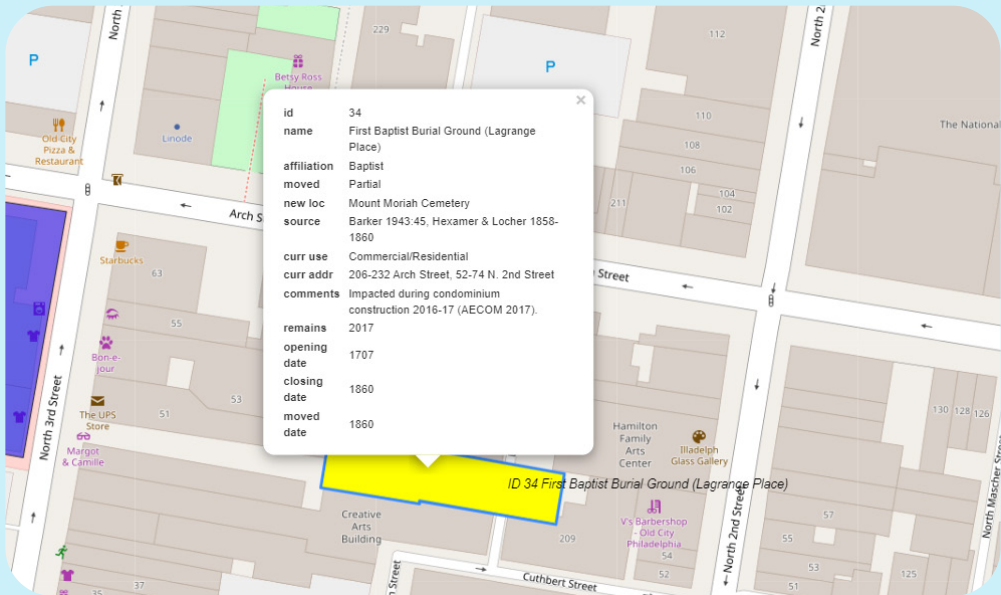


Behavior

The members of the PAF are responsible for a variety of projects independently, and together the members sponsor events and research. Here, I'll examine a few examples of their projects as case studies, as well as the issues to which they respond. Through these various activities, the PAF approaches archaeology as an act of activism, through which they "[advocate] for those who can no longer speak for themselves."⁹

↑ A screenshot of the GIS Philadelphia Burial Sites map, over the area of Society Hill Historic District, from the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum. From <https://www.phillyarchaeology.net/paf-activities/burial-places-forum/>.

We have no interest in seeing one more minute expended than is necessary to complete pre-construction archeological work. But it is absolutely vital that not one minute less than necessary be expended to thoroughly survey the site; to do otherwise risks destruction of a heritage that belongs to Philadelphians and, indeed, to all Americans.



↑ A detail of PAF's burial site map, hovering over the details for the 2nd and Arch Street burial site. Shared from the PAF's website, <https://www.phillyarchaeology.net/paf-activities/burial-places-forum/>.

1. The Burial Ground Database and Advocacy

The PAF hosts, accessible through their website, a GIS (geospatial) map which marks the location of over 200 burial sites across Philadelphia. Clicking on a site reveals further information about the space, such as whether the graves were removed and any relevant dates. The PAF hopes that developers would use this map to inform their development projects, which might prevent the desecration of human remains and major delays and fees for the developers. For example, at Arch and 2nd Street, over 500 human remains were located during the construction of condominiums, along with coffins, a few gravestones, and other artifacts—and Mooney believes even more remains were dumped into landfills during construction.¹⁰ The PAF advocates for policy change to prevent such a problem from happening again, and they've proposed a five-part plan, including: policy declaring burial places as legacy “worthy of preservation,” working on the GIS map, the listing of burial places as a thematic district, an ordinance with stricter and clearer guidelines for unmarked graves, and more changes within the staff and systems of the city's agencies which oversee burial site protection.¹¹

02. The Philadelphia Archaeological Forum

2. Commercial Development Consulting and Advising

The PAF also functions as a Consulting Party. As it is composed of members who are experts in the fields of archaeology and urban preservation, the PAF often voices its opinion, and is consulted for such, on matters pertaining to archaeology, remains, or development. In 2008, the PAF, through a document signed by Mooney, wrote to James Boyer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the archaeological potential of a site to be developed into the SugarHouse Casino. In this letter, PAF members expressed their concern over the treatment of the site, and offered specific comments to guide further investigations. For example, they encourage archaeology of certain soil layers and explain the specific archaeological potential of each region under construction. While advising, they must navigate balancing the restrictions of the development schedule with the archaeological value they have deemed the land to have. They tell Boyer the following, and it sums up their stance on the matter well:

3. Explore Philly's Buried Past!

In October, the PAF celebrates National Archaeology Day and Pennsylvania Archaeology Month by co-sponsoring an event known as Explore Philly's Buried Past. This event was held virtually in 2021, and before that would typically be held at the National Constitution Center. The event includes many talks by PAF members and archaeologists, raffles, group museum tours, and Q&A sessions. Through this event, the PAF educates Pennsylvanians about the major archaeological happenings of the past year, the recent work of the PAF and its members, and the vast archaeological heritage that

needs to be protected.¹² For instance, some talks have been updates about the PAF's recent projects, information about local sites being researched, or object-based presentations on a certain artifact.

4. Online Media

The Forum's website is a home for "gray literature" and research undertaken by members and in the Philadelphia area. The many tabs of phillyarchaeology.net provide links to research documents, speeches, events, books, digital exhibits, and even news. In this way, the website acts as a hub for Philadelphia's archaeological scene. The great lengths through which the webmaster has gone to provide a variety of links and educational resources serves as further evidence that the PAF hopes this website would be a useful resource for students, developers, and others in the field. The PAF also uses Facebook as a resource to share events, talks, and updates. As with Archaeology Month, this is a testament to the PAF's interests in connecting their archaeological projects to the general public to raise awareness about issues within the city.

Condition

When looking at the PAF's social media websites, one might imagine that the PAF has been somewhat inactive. Certain pages have not been updated since pre-Covid, and the Facebook group seems to reach a somewhat limited audience. However, the members remain highly active and engaged in the archaeology community, and these updates are still commonly posted to the front page of their website. In 2024, member David G. Orr won the J.C. Harrington Award for Historical Ar-

chaeology. Other members of the PAF have been working on publications, such as Yamin's *Digging in the City of Brotherly Love* and Mooney's chapter in *Advocacy and Archaeology*. Consulting, which occurs primarily behind closed doors, may not be publicized, but still occurs across the city as companies continue to develop the land. Members of the forum collaborate with local universities to host classes, and the Facebook page still shares information on lectures, events, and job opportunities. That is, the PAF's publicized media presence belies the levels of activity each member sustains in their respective fields, since many of the PAF's activities do not necessarily require, or even permit for, publication online. Meanwhile, the government is also continuing to navigate policy related to burials and archaeology.

Just recently, in 2023, the Department of Interior revised the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to, as secretary Deb Haaland described, "strengthen the authority and role of Indigenous communities in the repatriation process."¹³ Archaeology as a means of advocacy, as the members of the PAF often approach it, will continue to be a relevant and important approach to historical preservation and awareness for many years to come.

Conclusion, on Locality

The PAF, as a group, is dedicated to and composed of experts on the archaeology of Philadelphia in particular, though this purview has been expanded to Lenapehoking. Through all of their programming, their lectures, their map, and even their consulting, the members of the PAF view the region of Philadelphia—that is, their locality—as something that encompasses not just current neighborhoods and people, but also a shared histo-

ry and geographical experience. The PAF's historic-archaeological approach to the "local" stretches down into the dirt, below the roots of the oldest trees and foundations of the oldest buildings, forming a view of the land that unites the current residents of Philadelphia with the various human experiences that occurred since the first Indigenous people arrived in Lenapehoking over 10,000 years ago.¹⁴

To learn more about the history of Philadelphia, the land, and its various occupants over time:

—Denise Bright Dove Ashton-Dunkley, “Lenapehoking, ‘the Land of the Lenape,’” Mural Arts Philadelphia (October 31, 2023): <https://www.muralarts.org/blog/lenapehoking-the-land-of-the-lenape/>.

—Amy Jane Cohen, *Black History in the Philadelphia Landscape: Deep Roots, Continuing Legacy* (Temple University Press, 2024).

—Jean R. Soderlund, *Lenape Country: Delaware Valley Society before William Penn*, 1st ed. (University Of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

—Samantha Spengler, “For Years, People Said There Were No Lenape Left in Pennsylvania. This Group Begg to Differ,” *Philadelphia Magazine* (November 7, 2021): <https://www.phillymag.com/news/2021/11/06/lenape-nation-pennsylvania/>.

- 1 Marian (Molly) Leech, "Place-Names as Monuments: The Entangled Histories of Coaquannock and Philadelphia," Monument Lab (October 4, 2022): <https://monumentlab.com/bulletin/place-names-as-monuments-the-entangled-histories-of-coaquannock-and-philadelphia>.
- 2 Samantha Spengler, "For Years, People Said There Were No Lenape Left in Pennsylvania. This Group Begs to Differ," Philadelphia Magazine (November 7, 2021): <https://www.phillymag.com/news/2021/11/06/lenape-nation-pennsylvania/>.
- 3 Gary B. Nash, *First City : Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006): <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fj3c5>.
- 4 Nash: 31.
- 5 Nash: 37-39.
- 6 Rebecca Yamin, *Digging in the City of Brotherly Love: Stories from Philadelphia Archaeology*, 2nd ed. (2008; repr., Temple University Press, 2023): <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/lib/upenn-ebooks/reader.action?docID=30649856>.
- 7 Elizabeth D Meade and Douglas Mooney, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones," in *Advocacy and Archaeology*, ed. Kelly M Britt and Diane F George (Berghahn Books, 2023): 14-44, <https://www.degruyter-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/document/doi/10.1515/9781800739659/html#contents>, 20-23.
- 8 Stephan Salisbury, "Historical Commission Ponders Archaeological Potential and Decides There's Nothing It Can Do in Society Hill," Philadelphia Inquirer (October 13, 2018): https://go-gale-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/ps/i.do?p=BIC&u=upenn_main&id=GALE|A557929883&v=2.1&it=r&sid=Summon&asid=18928c13.
- 9 PAF, "Burial Places," Philadelphia Archaeological Forum: <https://www.phillyarchaeology.net/paf-activities/burial-places-forum/>.
- 10 Elana Gordon, "Archaeologist Claims Hundreds of 18th-Century Philly Remains May Have Been Dumped in Landfill," WHYY (October 30, 2017): <https://whyy.org/articles/archaeologist-claims-hundreds-18th-century-philly-remains-dumped-landfill/>.
- 11 PAF, "Burial Places."
- 12 PAF, "Explore Philly's Buried Past," Philadelphia Archaeological Forum (2016): <https://www.phillyarchaeology.net/paf-activities/admin/explore-phillys-buried-past-2016/>.
- 13 Department of Interior, "Interior Department Announces Final Rule for Implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act | U.S. Department of the Interior" (December 6, 2023): <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-final-rule-implementation-native-american-graves>
- 14 Bartram's Garden, "Lenapehoking and Kingsessing: A History," Bartram's Garden (July 19, 2022): <https://www.bartramsgarden.org/lenapehoking-and-kingsessing-a-history/#:~:text=The%20earliest%20known%20archaeological%20evidence>.

Penn Medicine Listening Lab



I live because of my donor family

♥ Janet Dennis ♥



Grieving in a pandemic

☼ Kerry Meltzer ☼



My Superpower

◇ Kate Brett ◇



↑ My favorite stories from the Penn Medicine Listening Lab. Illustration by the author.

03. The Listening Pill

Isabelle Howal

<i>species</i>	website and podcast
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<i>phenotype</i>	Individual stories from health care physicians and patients condensed into a single point of access. Sounds are variable—some stories are hopeful, some sad, some reassuring, and many embody a range of additional emotions.
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<i>reason for choosing</i>	Neuroscience major interested in healthcare from an external perspective
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<i>condition</i>	Thriving and growing
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Listening as a Medium

Healthcare in Philadelphia

From yearly visits to the doctor, to emergency visits, to treatments for various diseases, everyone encounters the healthcare system numerous times in their lives. While some patients come from great distances to receive care in Philadelphia's various hospitals, those facilities overwhelmingly serve the local communities in which they reside. These local communities often have very place-specific needs since a community's health is in part the product of its local ecology. Healthcare professionals are ideally trained to attune themselves to, most importantly to listen to, those local needs and contextual clues. Therefore, adequate training of healthcare professionals is absolutely essential for proper treatment and satisfactory healthcare experiences.

The importance of listening

Listening takes more than a set of ears. One special aspect of listening is that it constitutes a hyper-local mediation with voices and ears engaged in a close setting. In healthcare and medicine, listening saves lives. Research has shown that good communication and listening between medical professionals and patients results in more accurate clinical diagnosis and increased probability of patients following through with their treatments.¹ Medical knowledge and surgical skill are important components of a good doctor, but to be an excellent doctor one must also have interpersonal and communication skills.² Obviously, effective doctor-to-doctor communication is necessary for a hospital to function and properly care for its patients. Yet an equally important communication avenue lies between doctor and patient. Listening lies at the heart of good communication. Additionally, listening can serve as a

healing agent itself, as patients who felt their doctors listened attentively felt less stress and anxiety in relation to their illness.³ Plus, music and sounds of nature often have therapeutic properties. The advantages of listening in a medical setting are endless.

A new way of listening

Technology has reformed our way of listening – from stethoscopes to headphones. More recently, podcasts have arisen as a new medium. Listening virtually and on the go opens so many new avenues of connection. Expanding from a talk that once could only reach the people in the near vicinity, podcasts allow a whole new range of audiences to be engaged far and wide. This enlarged scope potentially extends the intimacy and localism of listening to a broader community. Studies have considered how healthcare professionals are utilizing podcasts as a convenient, flexible way of staying informed in their fields.⁴ Communication through podcasts allow medical professionals to connect with others in their field without having to attend conferences or presentations.⁵ What's more, podcasts can model the act of listening: exemplary interviews can demonstrate how doctors might engage with their patients. For example, listening to a podcast could possibly train doctors to practice more compassionate listening practices when in more intimate, hyper-local situations, such as in the exam room. Innovative sound design can cultivate enhanced listening methods for the everyday, which could attune healthcare professionals to the sounds of medical equipment or the role of ambient acoustics in supporting patients' well being.

Listening with Hour Ears: Surface Listening

A Philadelphia local media project that prompts us to listen to the local scene is the Penn Medicine Listening Lab (PMLL). PMLL is a website consisting of over 70 audio stories of experiences from patients, caregivers, staff, and providers. It is a gathering place for stories from Penn Medicine affiliates.⁶ PMLL aims to emphasize the importance of patient-centered care and hearing patients' voices. The goal of this tool is to humanize health care, address health care system inequities, and highlight the human interactions that define Penn Medicine.⁷ Each story is a few minutes long, and anyone with access to the internet can listen to all of them. The audience of these mini "podcasts" is not restricted to a single population. You could be in the Penn Medicine community yourself and want to learn about local patients' experiences directly from the source, or you could be halfway across the world but resonate with a certain story. For example there is a whole subset of PMLL stories about various COVID-19 experiences. Here, we can see the formation of a virtual, global community of listeners around their connection to a set of local stories. Penn Medicine Listening Lab is a local medium because it creates communities of people who are connected through a shared experience.

I've seen a lot of hearts open to me because I've been vulnerable out in the open. And I think that that's really the superpower.

—Kate Brett, patient and advocate, via Penn Medicine Listening Lab

Health care workers are often expected to know better than other people how to deal with grief. We don't.

—Kerry Meltzer, doctor, via Penn Medicine Listening Lab

Pieces

Although all the Penn Medicine Listening Lab stories deserve to be spotlighted, I have picked out a couple of my favorite ones to share. I urge you to go to the PMLL to hear the actual voices of the storytellers.

A quote that really stuck with me was in Kerry Meltzer's story: "health care workers are often expected to know better than other people how to deal with grief. We don't." Meltzer reminds us that it is important to humanize doctors and not let their hero status take away from their personal lives and feelings. PMLL does just this, giving them a place to share their stories of grief, hope, faith, etc. and be heard. Growing its archive of stories over the past five years, the Penn Medicine Listening Lab project is not only thriving itself, but it also indicates that Penn Medicine's healthcare system is simultaneously growing and improving. Founded in 1751 as the nation's first hospital, Penn Medicine now has six hospitals and numerous outpatient practices and alliances across 27 counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.⁸ And that system serves a city with a population of 1,533,916. That is over a million voices resonating within Philadelphia's health system as employees and patients. the health care system in Philadelphia employs and serves.

Listening with Your Eyes: Deep Listening

Description

Art can be healing, serving as a sort of medicine itself. One study involving women with cancer found that those who participated in artistic activities had significantly decreased physical and emotional distress symptoms during treatment.⁹ There is even evidence that the presence of art in a hospital room decreased patients' need for narcotics as well as the length of their hospital stay.¹⁰ For health care practitioners, art appreciation can promote new sensitivities, including attunement to both spoken and unspoken words. Where Penn Medicine Listening Lab uses audio stories to cultivate sonic attunement, its companion project, Rx/Museum, uses paintings to promote an even deeper listening and to frame the city's cultural institutions as an integral part of its broader healthcare system.¹¹ The goal of the Rx/Museum publication is to spark reflection about art as a learning tool in medicine and beyond.

Pieces

Out of the 52 individual artworks, I picked the three that sounded the loudest to me.

Before telling you any information about this piece, I want to invite you to think about how this image makes you feel based on the experiences you have had in your own life. Personally, this image makes me comforted and hopeful. Ready to learn about the background behind this photo? This artwork is titled "Week 13: Trapped" and is a still from Dawn Porter's 2016's docu-



↑ A still from Dawn Porter's 2016 documentary, *Trapped*. Used under the auspices of fair use.

mentary about the rise of targeted regulation of abortion providers throughout a three-year period restricting abortion and reproductive healthcare access. I no longer feel hopeful after hearing its name.

What is amazing about this photo is the juxtaposition between a compassionate, supportive moment and a cold, restrictive healthcare environment.¹² Abortion rights are a heavily debated topic, both nationally and locally, and the only way for women to fight for their bodily autonomy is to find their voice and make people listen—a local, intimate connection that is evoked, purely through the visual medium, in this still. It is more than an illustration, and shows that both Penn Medicine Listening Lab and Rx/Museum serve as forms of activism rooted in the local Philadelphia community. In their own unique ways, they both are venues to share local stories and make small advancements for patients' rights.



↑ Eugène Grasset's *Morphine Addict*, 1897, from the collection of Cleveland Museum of Art
<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2018.31>. Public domain.

Again, how does this piece make you feel? I feel uneasy and scared. This piece is tilted *Week 30: Morphinomaniac*. The Rx-Museum's authors paired it with a quote from American actress and acting coach Stella Adler: "an addict is someone who uses their body to tell society that something is wrong."⁶ Directly following the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, a morphine addiction erupted across society, and printmaker Eugene Grasset created the "morphinomanes" to document the crisis.¹³ Pictured here is the Morphinomaniac, a distressed woman sticking a needle into her thigh at the height of withdrawal from opioids. Many conclude that this woman has succumbed to her drug addiction through her own fault. However, it is important to consider that the woman may not be completely responsible for her addiction, which is, rather, a result of a disconnected, dismantled society. Drug addiction is a prevalent issue in the Philadelphia community, as seen in districts like Kensington. This image calls into question, as I invite you as the reader to question, too, what would recovery look like if healthcare saw addiction as the result of societal failure rather than individual fault? If society can do a better job of listening to its members, could we prevent people from going down this path? The listening skills cultivated through the Listening Lab, and the social awareness cultivated through artworks stewarded by Philadelphia's cultural institutions, could potentially encourage the local community to think differently about harm reduction and substance use programs—issues under contestation within Philadelphia's new mayoral administration. In these situations, we need to practice deeper listening that goes beyond surface level sound, to include listening with our eyes and ears to truly pay attention to those in our local community who are suffering silently.



What do you feel when you look at this photograph? I feel sad and sympathetic. This piece is titled “Week 42: Morning Ritual,” and it is part of a series following David Lebe and his partner Jack Potter in the mid-nineties. This couple was diagnosed with AIDS, for which there was no effective treatment at the time. The photo pictures Potter injecting his treatment.⁶ In Lebe’s series, the photos became a ritual, just like the injection itself. Hearing the backstory behind this photo makes me smile. At first glance, I assumed Potter was injecting a drug he was addicted to only to later learn he was fighting a disease. This photo radiates the importance of learning more about people’s situations before jumping to conclusions. Again, practicing deep-level listening enhances our understanding of our surrounding community. Penn Medicine Listening Lab and Rx/Museum are repositories through which such everyday stories can inform the local health community and beyond.

By listening to others—even those others in a painting or photograph—can not only foster our listening abilities, but also help us understand others, and ourselves, in a new light.

↑ Dave Lebe, “Morning Ritual No. 29,” photograph, from the Philadelphia Museum of Art: <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/337834>. Used under the auspices of fair use.

From both this book and the PMLL, I have learned just how many different media can reflect, inform, and transform local health communities. I had never previously thought of medicine as an art and medium. Importantly, the same holds true for the opposite: art, whether in the form of a painting or a podcast, can also be healing. Sometimes, we don't need medicine to feel better, but rather a pair of ears and eyes to take some of the burden off the storyteller, whether patient or caretaker. Penn Medicine Listening Lab takes this idea and amplifies the community of listeners, expanding the local audience and reminding everyone to truly open their ears, minds, and hearts.

- 1 Justin Jagosh, Joseph Donald Boudreau, Yvonne Steinert, Mary Ellen MacDonald, and Lois Ingram, "The Importance of Physician Listening from the Patients' Perspective: Enhancing Diagnosis, Healing, and the Doctor–Patient Relationship," *Patient Education and Counseling* 85:3 (December 2011): 369–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2011.01.028>.
- 2 Andreas K. Lauer and Dariah A. Lauer, "The Good Doctor: More than Medical Knowledge & Surgical Skill," *Annals of Eye Science* 2 (July 4, 2017): <https://doi.org/10.21037/aes.2017.05.04>.
- 3 Jagosh, et. al.
- 4 Martin A. Kiernan, Brett G. Mitchell, and Philip L. Russo, "The Power of Podcasts: Exploring the Endless Possibilities of Audio Education and Information in Medicine, Healthcare Epidemiology, and Antimicrobial Stewardship," *Antimicrobial Stewardship & Healthcare Epidemiology* 3:1 (2023): <https://doi.org/10.1017/ash.2023.178>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 "About," Penn Medicine Listening Lab: <https://pennlisteninglab.org/about>.
- 7 Penn Medicine Listening Lab.
- 8 Heather L. Stuckey and Jeremy Nobel, "The Connection between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature," *American Journal of Public Health* 100:2 (February 2010): 254–63. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2008.156497>.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Lyndsay Joy and Aaron Levy, *RX/Museum: 52 Essays on Art and Reflection in Medicine* (Barnes Foundation, 2022).
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.



↑ Photo by bobbsled. CC by-SA 2.0 Deed Attribution-Sharealike 2.0 Generic.
<https://flic.kr/p/6yqsJc>

symbiosis

By utilizing Philadelphia as their advertising ecology, the Phillies anchor their position as an integral portion of the city's identity. For many fans, seeing a reflection of their own interests in their environment can evoke a strong feeling of belonging, as well as connection to those around them. This marketing method of outdoor advertisements "enacts or performs a new connection between people moving around cities and the massed populations of commodities": in this case, commodified sports.² The connection can even extend to many who may not identify as strong followers of the team.

04. Paint the Town Red

Shannon HiFulgo

site Phillies Marketing Media

phenotype Mostly Red. Sometimes Powder Blue, sometimes Phanatic Green. Overtly or covertly, the Philadelphia Phillies are promoted by various lights, signs, and billboards across the city.

seasonality From March until October, the city of Philadelphia transforms into a sea of red to symbolize the collective support for the Phillies baseball team. Launched in Philadelphia in 1883, the Phillies competed with other Philadelphia teams, such as the Athletics, to become the sole Major League Baseball team for the City of Brotherly Love.¹ Philadelphia is a passionate city, and its devotion to the Phillies is palpable in its various displays of supportive media. During the regular season, the city confesses its love with grand displays. Those declarations of devotion are especially effusive if the team reaches the play-offs, a time period lovingly called “Red October” by the city and its fans. When the team is lucky enough to reach its peak with post-season accomplishments, the incidence of advertising media skyrockets all throughout the city. Promotions bloom, and the Phillies are everywhere. This is the most bountiful portion of the season, right before its dormancy during the off-season.

Billboards

<i>location</i>	Alongside prominent highways and major intersections in the Delaware Valley
<i>features</i>	Depicts the Phillies Phanatic, the “P” and various Phillies logos, as well as famous players
<i>access</i>	Drive along I-76 or I-95



↑ Billboard highlighting the Phillies City Connect uniform. Photo by the author.

General

Given their location in a city with two large interstates that are traveled by thousands of commuters each day, the Philadelphia Phillies are wise to invest in many billboards along those stretches, as well as all throughout the city and neighboring counties. Due to their size, billboards can clearly feature an enormous amount of information. Phillies billboards often promote important dates in the game schedule and great accomplishments of the team, or even display notes from players to the commuters driving below.

Player to Fan

A star-studded player the Phillies received from the Washington Nationals for the 2023 season, Trea Turner's first months playing for the team were less than ideal. Phillies fans didn't expect his slump since he was previously so successful. However, they didn't lose their faith in Turner. Fans cheered for him every time he came up to bat. After two games' worth of such encouragement, Turner hit a three-run home run, officially ending his slump. To show his appreciation to the fans, he bought billboards across the Delaware Valley stating: "Thank you, Philly." Such interactions between players and fans—personal messages broadcast at urban scale—boost the morale of many fans in the area (whose enthusiasm can in turn boost the players' morale!). While happy, well supported players often make for a more successful, lucrative team, such interpersonal billboard messages demonstrate that some local Phillies communications can serve primarily to reward fans for their dedication.

Bus Stop Posters

<i>location</i>	Sheltered bus stops, places sporadically throughout the city
<i>features</i>	Posters protected by a glass or plastic cover



↑ Bus stop ad promoting the Phillies. Used under the auspices of fair use.
<https://iseptaphilly.com/blog/rhysboskins>

General

Sheltering from the elements while waiting for the bus creates a captive audience receptive to messages from hometown heroes. The quality of bus shelter posters varies drastically from location to location. Recently renovated bus shelters have a black metal frame, wood-slat bench, and posters featured behind clean glass covers. Older stations have a dark green metal frame; posters covered by slightly opaque plastic, oftentimes decorated with graffiti; and a bench, typically in some state of disrepair.

Player to Fan

A poster that once graced many bus shelters included former first baseman Rhys Hoskins and the caption, “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.” By including SEPTA’s official website URL, “ISepthaPhilly.com,” the Phillies promotional advertisements demonstrate their commitment to the city and its infrastructure, from which both the fans and the team benefit. The inclusion of the classic baseball song, which blasts through Citizens Bank Park every Phillies game, offers the clever suggestion that fans use SEPTA to “take,” or transport, themselves there.

SEPTA Vehicles

<i>location</i>	Front and back LED sign boards of trolleys, busses, subway cars, and other vehicles
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<i>features</i>	Black background, yellow pixelated lettering
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↑ SEPTA Bus promoting the Phillies. Used under the auspices of fair use.
<https://www.iseptaphilly.com/blog/philliesworldserieswatchparties>

General

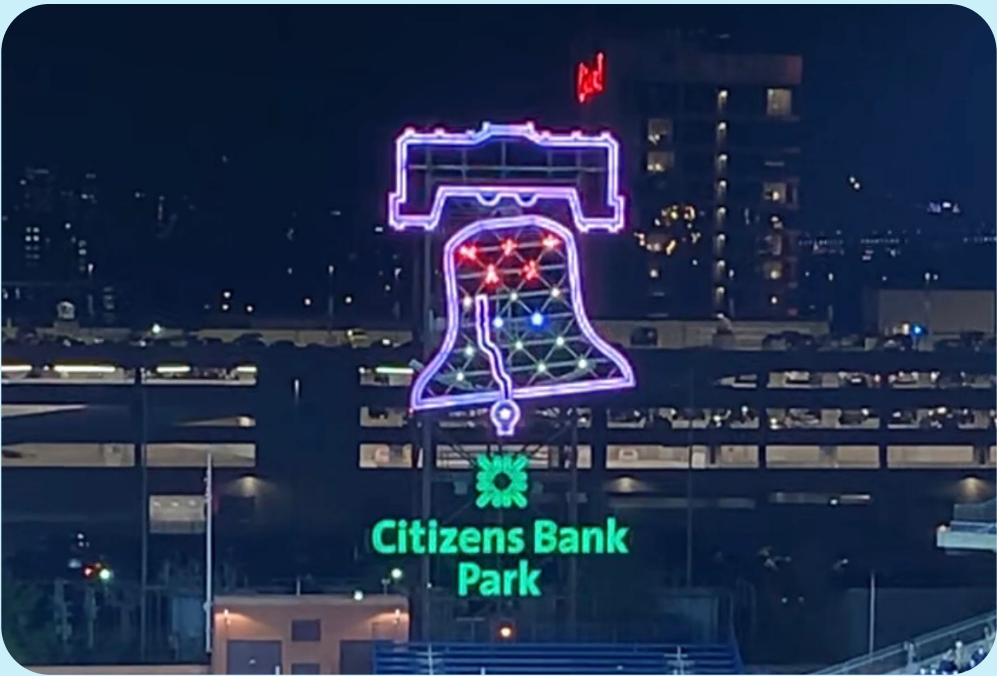
It's important to be able to see identifying marks on incoming SEPTA vehicles, including the number or destination illuminated on the front and back of the bus or trolley. Yet SEPTA still finds the opportunity to represent Philadelphia and project "GO PHILLIES!!!" across the light fixture. The moving phrase temporarily replaces the destination name (not the number), impacting those who need local geographic markers to know whether to go. So, be sure to know the bus number you need, as the Phillies cheer may temporarily erase your geographic markers!

Symbiosis

Serving the people of Philadelphia with underground, ground level, and elevated above-ground modes of transportation, the Phillies advertisements plastered on the SEPTA vehicles penetrate every level of the city. As a patron waits to board their vehicle, they witness the Phillies become one with the motion of the city. Once aboard, passengers join in the city's movement on the bustling roadways, just as the Phillies have through their media.

Stadium Promotion

<i>location</i>	Citizens Bank Park
<i>features</i>	Phillies merchandise, roaring crowd, Phillies posters, smell of hot dogs, a baseball game
<i>access</i>	Phillies merchandise, roaring crowd, Phillies posters, smell of hot dogs, a baseball game



↑ Beautifully lit Liberty Bell ringing in a homerun. Photo by the author.

General

To truly immerse oneself in Phillies advertising media, attending a game at the ballpark is the best way to understand their widespread tactics. Citizens Bank Park, the Phillies' home, contains advertising media in and on most every structure or facade. We encounter 360° of Phillies inside the stadium: walking ads in the form of jerseys and merchandise, the Phillie Phanatic wandering between sections, television announcer dialogue, plaques of Phillies past. Larger-than-life statues and logos appear at almost every turn.

History

As the first ballpark erected for sole use by the Phillies in the South Philly Sports Complex, Citizens Bank Park leaped at the opportunity to meld every feature into the Phillies brand. Gone were the days of fighting for marketing spaces with the Philadelphia Eagles, with whom they shared Veterans Stadium with for the previous 30 years. The Phillies marketing had the chance to be everywhere, permanently.

Unique Feature

Illuminated above the backfield is the Liberty Bell, which rings when a Phillie hits a homerun or the team successfully wins a game. This iconic piece of Phillies media extends both to all those inside the stadium and to those close enough to hear its resounding chimes. For those who are not attending the game, the crowd's cheering and the Liberty Bell ringing creates a beautiful harmony that can be heard well beyond the limits of the stadium's open walls. If you're close to the stadium complex, be sure to tune your ears for the tintinnabulation when the crowd erupts in cheering—it may be the only Liberty Bell you see actually ring.

Building Lighting

<i>location</i>	2929 Arch Street
<i>features</i>	Lights on glass building forming Phillies “P”, red lighting
<i>access</i>	Drive along I-76 or around Powelton Village, or walk near Paine’s Skate Park along Schuylkill River Trail



↑ Featured buildings with viewing space on Schuylkill River Trail in maroon. Image by the author.

Light often reflects life. Life is celebrated with lights—fireworks, birthday candles, light shows. Caring about the aesthetics of a city, as is seen in light displays, works “to increase local pride in neighborhoods and commercial districts.”¹ Extending the lighting of buildings to instill hometown pride nods to another aspect of Philadelphia unity: the Phillies. Now, when the city is illuminated, the pride that many Phillies fans feel compounds with their care for the city. Interweaving these forms of pride promotes interest and devotion into one’s community.

Cira Center

Standing out from the skyscrapers of Center City both phenotypically and geographically, the Cira Center presents a beautiful glass building that can be illuminated in its entirety. The building’s designers embedded LED lights into shadow boxes that are recessed across the building’s facade.² What results from this technology is a building that is capable of broadcasting designs and logos across its exterior.

Boathouse Row

<i>location</i>	Schuylkill River Front behind Philadelphia Museum of Art
<i>features</i>	Red trim lighting on the homes, reflecting in the river below
<i>access</i>	Drive along I-76 or MLK Drive, Walk along Schuylkill River Trail West



↑ Boathouse Row illuminated in red. Image by the author

The boat houses were once trimmed with white lights, but since the implementation of LED lighting in 2005, the installation can support more than sixteen million possible color displays. At various points throughout the season, especially at milestones like opening day and important series wins, the buildings glow red for all those driving along I-76 or MLK Drive to have a beautiful view. Bathed in crimson, the boathouses—a signature setting on Philly postcards and a beacon for those driving down the Schuylkill—become doubly iconic. Boathouse Row was listed in the National Registry of Historical Places in 1987, cementing its immense value to the Philadelphia community and making the presence of Phillies advertisements so special.³ Applying team colors to the buildings’ facades further demonstrates how the Phillies are intertwined with the history of Philadelphia.

- 1 “Philadelphia Phillies: The Official History of the Philadelphia Phillies,” *Baseball Almanac*: www.baseball-almanac.com/teams/phillies.shtml.
- 2 Anne Cronin, “Advertising and the Metabolism of the City: Urban Space, Commodity Rhythms,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24:4 (2006): 615-632.
- 3 Penny Balkin Bach, “To Light up Philadelphia: Lighting, Public Art, and Public Space,” *Art Journal* 48:4 (1989).
- 4 Jennifer Lash, “Cira Center, Philadelphia,” *Architect Magazine* (May 20, 2008): www.architectmagazine.com/technology/lighting/cira-centre-philadelphia_o.
- 5 “Boathouse Row Lights” *Fairmount Park Conservancy*. myphillypark.org/boathouse-row-lights/



↑ “Lots and Lots of Love” mural in Kensington. Photo by Solmaira Valerio.
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05. A Field Guide to Media in Nonprofit Spaces: Building Community

Lorelle Adams

species

Physical Media in Nonprofit Spaces

phenotype

Philadelphia is home to thousands of nonprofits that make up a large portion of the city's local media ecosystem. As a part of their outreach initiatives, many of these nonprofits focus on distributing flyers, stickers, and infographics to the communities around them. To encourage a sense of belonging amongst their served populations, they also focus on circulating the media they produce within their own physical spaces, such as their offices, gardens, and immediate neighborhoods. The physical organization and ambience in nonprofit environments are mechanisms of inclusion for those who walk into their space, empowering them to find resources, create art, and build community with others.

Habitat: KCT

The Kensington Corridor Trust (KCT) maintains a number of physical property spaces in Kensington, which is where their office is located as well. KCT states that one of their central goals is to invest within the community, not only by empowering residents to own local businesses, but also by encouraging financial and legal literacy amongst the community members.¹ Aside from the properties that they work to acquire for the neighborhood's residents, they also have a community garden that is a short walk from their office.

Habitat: YASP

In the Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project's (YASP) office, based in Philadelphia's Chinatown, various art pieces ranging in size span the walls as colorful decoration. YASP explains that art is an integral part of their restorative justice initiatives. In some of the earliest versions of their program, YASP held workshops in Philadelphia jails to create safe spaces for creative expression. This is also how they create community in their office, noting that their workshops help "with re-entry support to keep kids from coming back to jail."²

Subspecies: Murals and Art

Upon walking into KCT's garden space, community members are greeted with a mural titled "Lots and Lots of Love." A caption in the southwest corner of the wall indicates that it was painted by artist J. C. Zerbe, as a part of the city's Mural Arts Program, and in collaboration with sponsors like KCT. The attribution makes viewing this piece more personal; community members are invited to find out more about the artist and



↑ A room with artwork by Philadelphia youth at the YASP Office in Chinatown. Photo by the author.

the movement of creating murals in Philadelphia in a broader context. The mural itself reads “Kensington” across the top and features different elements of artistic creation, with children holding items such as cameras and paint. The mural is self-reflective in this way: it portrays creative expression as a means of community building, it portrays the formation of community through the aggregation of individual creative practices, and the mural itself exemplifies these principles.

In the YASP office, much of the artwork is created by the young residents of Philadelphia that they work with. While these youth are outcast by the legal system, creating an isolating experience for them, this program offers a restorative treatment that aids the youth in finding community and learning more about themselves through creative freedom. The art pictured above was completed by young community members partaking in YASP’s workshops and Healing Futures program, which is a restorative justice diversion initiative.



↑ Glossary of terms at the KCT community garden. Photo by the author.



↑ Pendo Kamau '24 and Max Bolles '25, interns at Kensington Corridor Trust (KCT). Photo by the author.

Subspecies: Diagrams

Returning to KCT's community garden, participants can also find a diagram of important terms not far from the entrance. It describes what words like “Asset,” “Equity,” and “Trust Enforcer” mean, since they are integral to the processes that KCT uses to prevent “wealth extraction” from the neighborhood. In making this knowledge public and accessible, they are equipping Kensington with the resources to sustain both individual and community growth.

Diagrams and other visual organizations of information are not uncommon in nonprofit spaces. For example, YASP's office houses charts that explain what their long term goals and plans are and reference them during team meetings. These charts are displayed on their walls, giving any community member passing by a sense of inclusion and a stake in the wellbeing and development of the program.

KCT has a similar diagram, “Developing Our Vision,” on poster boards; for the interns who created them, these boards fostered the development of creative and pro-

professional skills to support KCT's strategy and models. Diagrams like these demonstrate that media are used by nonprofits to encourage creative expression as a means of legitimate professional development.

Subspecies: Books

In KCT's office space, shelves stacked with books are available for anyone working in or visiting the space to read. Many of the topics covered include different forms of self and communal liberation. One such book is *Steal Like an Artist* by Austin Kleon. This short and witty read is an interesting supplement to the plethora of resources that KCT already provides, such as legal resource guides and pamphlets. The book itself encourages readers to take inspiration from those around them and to use that as a driving force in their own work. It demonstrates that community, along with one's own self expression and exploration, can be an additional motivation in art. Additionally, it demonstrates once more that while a nonprofit like KCT is interested in the professional development of its community, it is equally interested in the community's artistic and creative development, and that it does not consider the two to be mutually exclusive.

Subspecies: Status

While these spaces and their physical forms of media appear to be flourishing, there is a simultaneous movement towards digital/social media, which may complicate or compromise physical media. Instagram, for example, is a popular platform to use for outreach and recruiting. However, with this use come ethical issues and inquiries: can the missions of these nonprofits be

replicated in a social media post? Do the populations they serve consent to being the subject of these photos and media, especially if they have no say in the creative process and end result?

On the other hand, digital media and platforms can also help mobilize the creative aspects of these spaces and offices. For example, YASP has an “Art” section on their website that features the aforementioned art pieces done by the Philadelphia youth that they work with.

Labor is also significant to consider in light of these spaces’ promotion of wellbeing. While art is a common medium for these organizations to express their missions, there is still a notable lack of designers in nonprofits, which is important when it comes to creating resource guides, pamphlets, diagrams, and other forms of media. On a positive note, this lack may encourage something to flourish: the absence of designers in nonprofits allows external, activism-oriented, human-centered design practices to fill that gap.³

For example, the Design Action Collective, which is an anti-capitalist design agency, helps mobilize the missions of programs and people focused on social justice and activism.⁴ This demonstrates that while labor is often an ethical issue, it can also be a means of building community amongst the networks of nonprofits and allied organizations: designers can find common ground and community in using their talents for social change.

Building Community

The choice of many nonprofits to have their spaces decorated and populated by the artwork of the communities they serve reinforces that these spaces are by and for those communities. In spaces like corporate offices and large businesses, the artwork is commonly mass produced and impersonal, but the media and art in nonprofit spaces, as seen with KCT and YASP, are often more personal and intimate. These community spaces are designed and decorated for and by the populations that they serve, which reinforces the bonding that comes with creative expression.

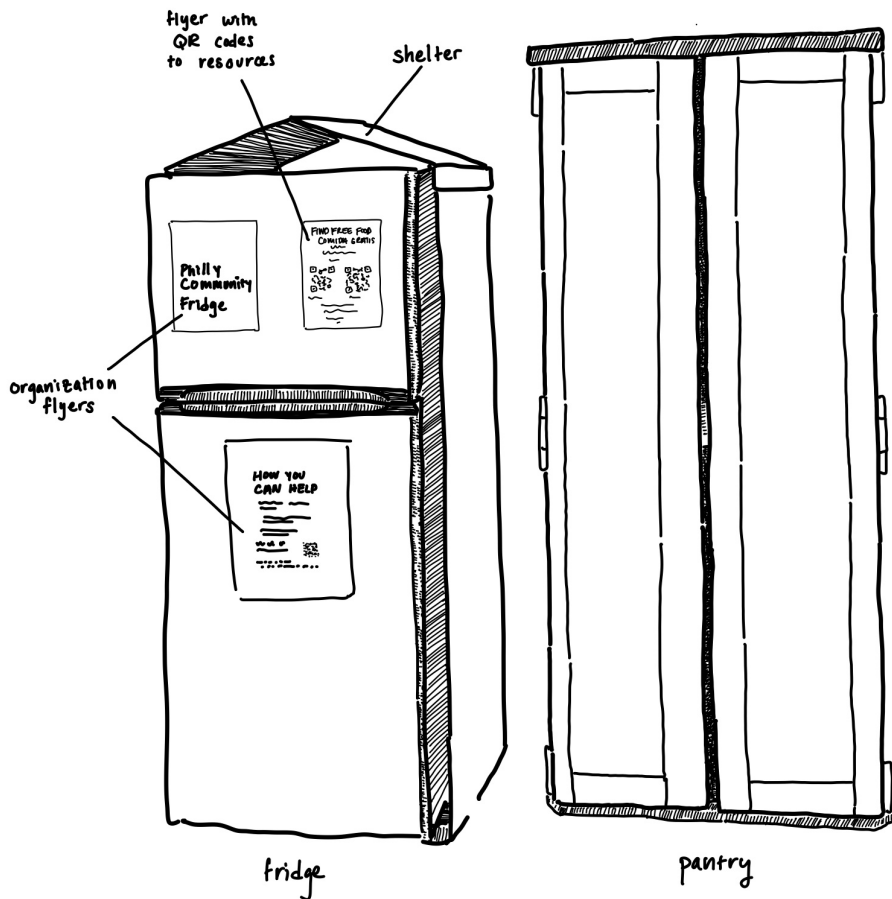
The emphasis on physical media in this field guide highlights the fact that being in person and in community with one another is not easily replaceable by social media. The physical spaces of nonprofits are key to mobilizing their missions and supporting those who are helped by these programs, and who are recruited to help others as well.⁵

- 1 Kensington Corridor Trust: <https://kctphilly.org/>
- 2 Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project: <https://www.yasproject.com/>
- 3 Aletheia Delivre, “Who Designs for Non-Profits?” *Week Notes* (January 19, 2021): <https://medium.com/design-stories-experiments/who-designs-for-non-profits-6046eb06a627>.
- 4 Design Action Collective, “Our Story” (November 3, 2022): <https://designaction.org/about/our-story/>.
- 5 Katie Edwards, Why Nonprofits Should Own Their Own Space,” *The Nonprofit Centers Network* (June 26, 2019): <https://www.nonprofitcenters.org/nonprofit-shouldowntheirownspace/#:~:text=When%20they>.

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

glacies pectus civitatis

H. 70" W. 32" D. 28"



↑ Drawing by the author.

06. Community Fridge Networks

Liana Kaye-Lew

species

Community Fridge

phenotype

A community fridge is a freestanding refrigerator that has been repurposed to hold nutritious, often fresh, food that can be accessed by anyone in its community. These fridges can be refashioned from standard household fridges to large florist refrigerators. A community fridge is typically encased by a metal shelter that protects it from harsh elements like intense rain or snow, and is often accompanied by a community pantry. Both the community fridge and pantry must be secured to a fence to ensure stability against wind and other forces and to protect against theft. Their exteriors are frequently customized with hand-painted decorations, the name of the fridge and/or the organization that runs it, and attached guidelines for how to use it. Their interiors are constantly changing, containing whatever produce and other goods have been stocked at that particular moment in time.

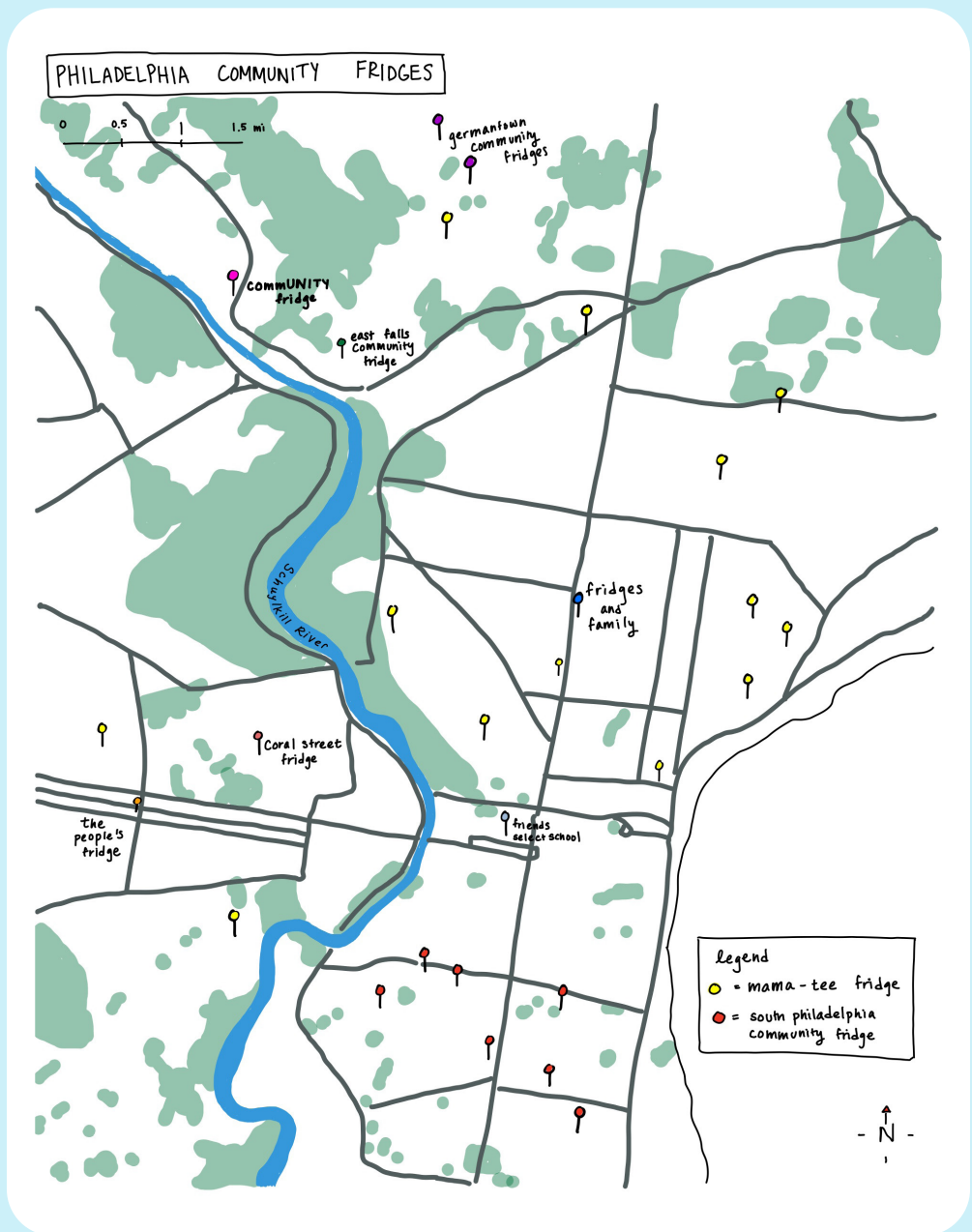
06. Community Fridge Networks

The way community fridges operate can be best encapsulated by their motto: take what you need, leave what you can. Community fridges are a form of mutual aid, or “collective coordination to meet each other’s needs and build a shared understanding about why people do not have what they need.”¹ The idea gained popularity during the pandemic when pressures of food insecurity were heightened; however, community fridges have several features that distinguish them beyond responding to this need for nutritious food. Community fridges address the cultural shame of receiving assistance as they can be accessed at any time and allow people to “remain anonymous and access food at their leisure” without any conditions or documentation for use.² While access to food supplies varies from fridge to fridge and from day to day—whether through purchases made by their organization or the fridge operation itself, leftovers from local restaurants and grocery stores, or individual donations from residents—access to the fridge is open to all and entirely unconditional, making use of the fridge free of any costs (both financial and nonfinancial).

Ḥāḥitat

A community fridge can live anywhere in the neighborhood that it serves. These fridges have been established all across Philadelphia, and are concentrated in areas where food insecurity poses a greater threat to the neighborhood due to factors such as socioeconomic status and environmental racism.

Community fridges are ideally situated in convenient, accessible locations so that community members may collect or donate from them without extensive effort or planning. The placement of community fridges is very intentional with the ultimate goal of building community through the fridge as a “bonding mechanism” among neighbors and between residents and the businesses that support the fridge.³ According to Jes Vasquez from South Philadelphia Community Fridge (SPCF), two blocks is the ideal travel distance to a community fridge, making it accessible to the neighborhood without invading residential areas.⁴



↑ Map of community fridges in Philadelphia as of April 2024. Drawing by the author.
Used under the auspices of fair use.

A visit to the community fridge need not be an event; rather, it can be seamlessly integrated into one's weekly or daily routine. The fridge is stationary after its nesting, but the migration patterns within its networks (those who manage the fridge, those who stock the fridge, those who take food from it) are very complex, fluid, and constantly changing. While it is not impossible for a community fridge to migrate somewhere else if something threatens its original habitat, this is generally discouraged as a community fridge's immobility enables its development into a landmark of the neighborhood it serves.

Symbiotic Relationships

A community fridge requires a host willing to supply electricity to the fridge. The host can be any establishment, from a local restaurant to a church to an elementary school to a hospital. The symbiotic relationship between a community fridge and its host can be commensalistic or mutualistic. In commensalistic relationships, hosts are relatively "hands off" beyond supplying electricity and occasional maintenance to the fridge. In mutualistic relationships, a community fridge acts as a vehicle for centering and connecting the host with the broader community to drive local engagement around issues of food insecurity and food waste. A Germantown Community Fridge (located at 20 Armat Street) is supported by Greene Street Friends School. Since the fridge's placement in the community, teachers have made efforts to bond students with the fridge by organizing class activities to stock it with peanut butter & jelly sandwiches, running a cereal drive for the fridge, and simply educating them about it as a resource and aspect of the community.

A community fridge has mutualistic relationships with local businesses including restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, and coffee shops that will regularly or sporadically donate unsold “end-of-day” goods and items past their “sell-by” date. Not only does this relationship benefit these businesses by helping them curb food waste, but community fridges will also often use their social media platforms to highlight these donors.

Relationships between individual members of the community and the fridge can take many forms. At the basic level, there are individuals who utilize the fridge for access to food, thereby sustaining the fridge by substantiating the need for it in the community. Some individuals serve as volunteers by stocking and cleaning community fridges and running the organizations behind them. Empowered individuals take advantage of their unique local networks to support their community fridge and arrange food drives and fundraisers for their friends, coworkers and customers, and fellow hobby aficionados. Through acts of civic engagement, these individuals are rewarded by the impact of the fridge on the strength of their community. These relationships cannot be boiled down to donor and beneficiary, thus illustrating symbiotic mutualism.

Patterns and Behavior

Once settled, a community fridge begins to take on the individuality of its location. SPCF has started a campaign to stock their fridges with culturally relevant groceries, such as Halal friendly foods and Asian ingredients, depending on the demographics of the neighborhood. In a similar manner, Germantown Community Fridge has a system called “Thankful Thursday Requests” where neighbors can list specific needs, from



↑ Fridge from Mama-Tee Community Fridge Project. Photograph by Aaron Salisbury.
Used with permission.



↑ The People's Fridge. Photograph by Sonia Parikh. Used with permission.

06. Community Fridge Networks

diapers to cat food to water bottles, that are relayed to the community via Instagram. The fridge also builds its identity through decoration and traditions birthed from its placement. Local artists, for instance, will volunteer to paint Germantown Community Fridges with full artistic freedom—other than the requirement of integrating Brocci Balboa, the organization’s mascot, into their decoration—so they are bright and visually pop out, making them easier to find and integrating accessible art into the neighborhood. A community fridge can also transform the way a community engages with the physical space they are located in. At one of SPCF’s locations, there is a group known as the “aunties” who take care of their community fridge and have developed a practice of hurling a crisper drawer filled with water to clean it.⁵ During Lunar New Year, the fridge was decorated for the holiday and filled with clementines. Community fridges can become a place for neighbors to gather, especially during restock times. Eventually, a community fridge becomes a landmark of its neighborhood that inspires love and a sense of ownership between the community and the fridge that extends beyond centralizing the sharing of food among its residents.

§ Status

A vast propagation of community fridges appeared during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic when “rates of food insecurity increased significantly in the United States as access to fresh, unprocessed food sharply declined,” according to a 2022 study by the National Library of Medicine.⁶ Declining resources and money, ineffective practices for maintaining the fridge, and lack of organization pose the greatest threats to community fridges’ survival. Thus, only the community



↑ Germantown Community Fridges. Photographs by Shannon Sims. Used with permission.



↑ SPCF's community fridge located at the Bok Building. Photographs by the author.

fridges that have managed to adapt—by building partnerships, actively acquiring help and support, and improving their practices—have survived since their emergence.

There are several inherent threats that put community fridges' survival at risk. A sentiment similar to “not in my backyard” can cause residents to resist the placement of a community fridge near their homes out of fear it may attract undesirable behavior to the neighborhood. This perception is often born out of a lack of understanding of the issue of food insecurity and awareness of the living circumstances of one's neighbors. Another threat is the shame and social stigma of needing to use a community fridge and the subsequent policing of who can use it. In response to these issues, community fridge organizations emphasize that their fridges are for everyone at any time, meaning individuals have complete anonymity (from a conditional standpoint) when it comes to accessing them.

The organizations behind community fridges are fully volunteer-run and rely on inconsistent fiscal sponsorship; therefore, civic engagement and direct financial support are necessary for their survival.

Media Case Study

South Philadelphia Community Fridge

1901 S 9th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148 (Bok Building)

The exterior of this community fridge is adorned with flyers which have simple text and minimal graphics that share additional resources to address food insecurity, instructional information on how to stock the fridge and determine what food is still good to eat, and ways to help the organization. Key information is translated into English, Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and

Khmer. SPCF tries to minimize the amount of information on these flyers and additional print media like posters and business cards and instead prefers word of mouth and social media to raise awareness of their organization and various campaigns.

In addition to documenting their work on Instagram, SPCF uses the social media platform to communicate with prospective volunteers about impactful ways to support the community fridge at that given moment. From “adopting a fridge” to stocking them with after school snacks for students, these campaigns illustrate the crucial role of digital platforms for this “offline” mutual aid activism to fight food insecurity.

I visited this community fridge on a quiet, gloomy Sunday afternoon—notably not a peak time to visit as most donations occur on Saturday mornings—to document its local media. Even within this small window, while conducting my field work, I saw a mother and son pass by and take a loaf of bread, a few individuals grabbing fruit cups on their way, and a woman checking the fridge and pantry so briefly that she did not need to get off her bike. During this period of observation, I was struck by how seamless every interaction was with the fridge for these different individuals from the neighborhood. The idea is so simple, yet it provides one of the most dignified, natural solutions to food insecurity, a challenge that has confronted societies long before the creation of community fridges. We can contemplate how basic human rights, in addition to food, can be maintained by the community rather than the individual.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Jes Vasquez from South Philadelphia Community Fridges and Shannon Sims from Germantown Community Community Fridge.

1 Ferrari, E. "Latency and Crisis: Mutual Aid Activism in the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Qualitative Sociology* 45 (2022): 413-431.

2 Oung, Katherine, "Community Fridges Are Lifelines for the Neighborhoods They Serve," *Vox*, February 17, 2021; Savage, Henry, "Community Fridges Have Served Philadelphians Through the Pandemic. Here's How They're Faring in 2024," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 9, 2024.

3 Wilson, Jillian, "Community Fridges Are on the Rise in Philly, With Local Businesses Lending a Hand," *Eater Philadelphia*, September 10, 2020.

4 Jes Vasquez, interview by Liana Kaye-Lew, April 15, 2024.

5 A crisper drawer is a bin in a fridge for fruits and vegetables.

6 Savage, Henry, "Community Fridges Have Served Philadelphians Through the Pandemic. Here's How They're Faring in 2024," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 9, 2024.



↑ South Philadelphia Community Fridge's various social media campaigns, via the SPCF Instagram. Used with permission.



POSTERS AS PROTEST

by Adeline Brown

07. Posters as Protest

Adeline Brown

species

Wheat paste posters are posters that are “pasted” on walls, buildings, telephone poles, and other public surfaces using a special paste, wheat paste, which is made from a mixture of flour and water. The aim of this medium is to grab the attention of passersby by placing eye-catching visual art in a public setting, which is part of why these posters have become so popular as a form of street art. They typically exist in a sort of camouflage, presenting as pieces of public or street art but oftentimes functioning as forms of disruption and protest. They’re typically difficult to remove, and their tattered, weathered, or partly destroyed condition is often part of their attraction. I am interested in considering how these posters exemplify the use of visual art and design as a form of protest and disruption in the urban setting, as I myself am a visual artist and find myself grappling with questions about the purpose and function of visual art in various settings.

phenotype

Wheat paste posters are born from a recipe combining the simple ingredients of flour and water with the material of the poster itself and the physical labor required to paste it.

By reworking surfaces and interacting with existing elements of the city, street art(ists) have begun to create new modes of vision.

No longer is a doorframe a simple entrance/exit portal; with the application of a poster or stencil, it becomes a portal for reenvisioning the state of the structure and the structure of the state.

The surface, the art, the artist, and the viewer all work in conscious and subconscious routes to create these instants of aesthetic experience.

The environment and the art work in conjunction to silently re-imagine the uses and abuses of city surfaces. The walls of the city meet

the eyes of the pedestrian via the re-imagined presentation of the urban world as street art.

—Justin Armstrong,
The Contested Gallery: Street Art, Ethnography and the Search
for Urban Understanding¹



It is important to note the interactions that wheatpaste posters have with other existing species within the city, as the posters themselves rely on a surface to “host” them. For example, posters that have been pasted onto surfaces such as utility poles or construction barriers can often draw the attention of passersby to notice and pay attention to these sites that typically go unnoticed. Posters become ethnographic writings of sorts as they both absorb and reflect urban movement and document the changes undergone by the visual landscape of the city.

Habitat

Wheat paste posters typically reside in areas of the city that are being disrupted by the presence of corporations and developers, such as construction sites, abandoned or decaying buildings, and transportation hubs. I am focused specifically on wheat paste posters in business and corporate habitats, which are parts of the city of Philadelphia that have been in fluctuation throughout the city’s history. These posters typically reside in places where they will inevitably be seen by various demographics as they commute through the city, particularly in business districts where shops and offices are concentrated in popular neighborhoods. South Street, an iconic and historic Philadelphia street that is home to many businesses and attracts lots of tourists, is a popular venue for wheat paste posters. As businesses across the city have struggled in the years following the pandemic, South Street has become a hub for artists to launch forms of public protest, drawing attention to the fundamental issues and current socio-political climate of the city. Corporate construction sites are another popular site for wheat paste posters to pop up, as city develop-

Wheatpaste Recipe

- * MIX 2 PARTS FLOUR WITH 3 PARTS WATER
- * STIR AND BRING TO A BOIL
- * COOK ON LOW HEAT FOR 30 MIN, STIRRING CONTINUOUSLY
- * ADD WATER TO DESIRED CONSISTENCY

Ingredients:



FLOUR



WATER



ers tend to clash with and misrepresent the wants and needs of the urban population as a whole. Thus, it is not uncommon to find posters pasted onto construction barriers in areas of the city where corporate development is rampant.

Wheat paste posters move through the city by means of the artists who decide where their residences should be, but once they have found a home, they live there permanently until they are “culled” by someone who decides to either remove them or paste something new over them. It is important to note here that wheatpasting is considered to be an illegal activity because it is against the law to put any type of media up on private property without permission from the owner. Because of this, it is necessary to consider the element of risk involved as wheatpaste posters require time and physical labor to inhabit their designated sites.

Status

Wheatpaste posters can be classified as an invasive species because they pop up in places where some, specifically big developers and corporate businesses, don’t want to see them, and they are difficult to get rid of. Their main predators include large corporations and developers whose interests are rooted in capital rather than the welfare of urban residents. Because there can be legal consequences for artists who decide to paste their posters onto public property without permission, wheatpaste posters have the potential to impose harm on corporations as well as poster artists themselves. There exists an element of threat to the corporate environment in the deployment of wheatpaste posters in sites owned by private developers or businesses; unauthorized signage may not reflect the values of the prop-

→ Photo by Streets Dept. Used under the auspices of fair use.



of wheatpaste posters among the new generations of emerging artists in the city, especially after the pandemic when small businesses like the Tattooed Mom itself struggled to stay afloat.²

Case Study: Kid Hazo

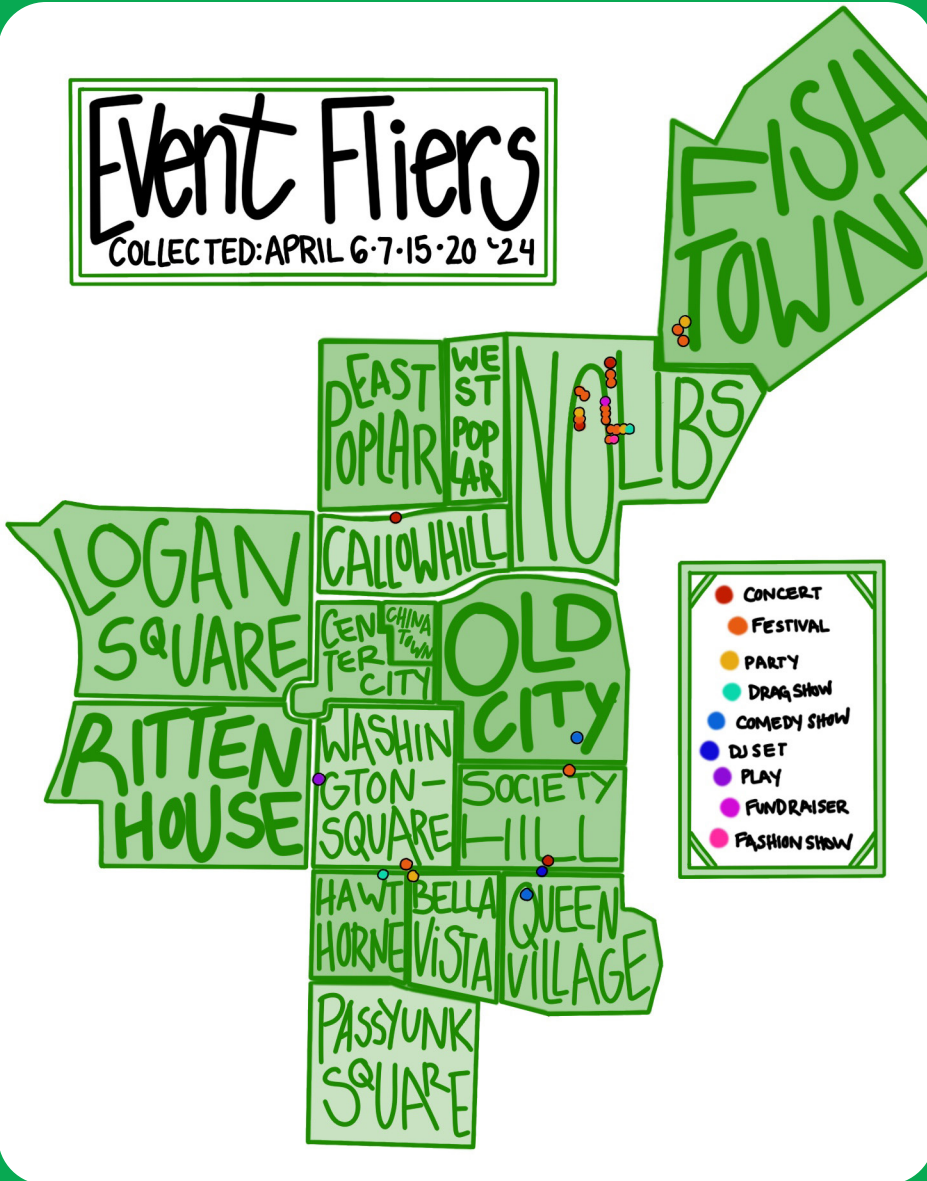
In 2021, a London-based oat milk company called Minor Figures created and pasted wheatpaste posters as advertisements for their brand in various locations around the city of Philadelphia. However, they did so by pasting their posters directly on top of previously existing posters and artwork by local artists, prompting outrage and a response from the community. Many community members were upset by the fact that the work of local artists and muralists was destroyed or obscured. One Philadelphia street artist, who goes by the pseudonym Kid Hazo, responded to Minor Figures with his own installment of wheatpaste posters designed to mock the ones put up by the company. He did this at 7th and Bainbridge Street, one of the locations where Minor Figures decided to put up posters.³ This case study exemplifies the countercultural aspect of wheat posters that I mentioned above; street art is a major part of

Philadelphia's urban culture. The community's response to the corporation's attempt to hijack counterculture for the purpose of advertising highlights the underlying tension between the public and the private, the local and the global.

- 1 Justin Armstrong, "The Contested Gallery: Street Art, Ethnography and the Search for Urban Understanding," *AmeriQuests 2:1* (2005): <https://ejournals.library.vanderbilt.edu/index.php/ameriquests/article/view/46>.
- 2 Kat Zagaria Buckley, "Examining Legal and Illegal Articulations of Protest through Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's Stop Telling Women to Smile Project," 49th Annual Northeast Modern Language Association Convention, Pittsburgh, PA (April 12, 2018).
- 3 Emma Riva, "Tattooed Mom, Philadelphia's Artist Playground." *UP MAGAZINE* (n.d.): <https://upmag.com/tattooed-mom/>.
- 4 Conrad Benner, "Kid Hazo Clowns 'Woke' Oat Milk Company Minor Figures for Destroying Local Art." *Streets Dept* (April 15, 2021): <https://streetsdept.com/2021/04/15/kid-hazo-clowns-woke-oat-milk-company-minor-figures-for-destroying-local-art/>.

Event Fliers

COLLECTED: APRIL 6 · 7 · 15 · 20 '24



↑ Map of Collected Flyer Data and Some Philadelphia Neighborhoods. By the author.

08. Event Flyers of Philadelphia

Anna Campbell

<i>species</i>	Event flyers
<i>phenotype</i>	A rectangular poster in varying size, advertising an event, in legible condition
<i>habitat</i>	Exterior non-building structures, such as utility poles, stoplights, community boards, etc
<i>data collection method</i>	Data walks in the neighborhoods of Bella Vista, Cal-lowhill, Fishtown, Hawthorne, Manayunk, Center City, Northern Liberties, Old City, Queen Village, Ritten-house, Society Hill, and Washington Square. Sites were chosen based on prior knowledge of potential species habitats.
<i>dates of data collection</i>	April 6, April 7, April 15, and April 20, 2024

Walking through Society Hill and Old City, I was in a much more residential and seemingly affluent area. The streets were much cleaner, so I was not very surprised that I did not discover my next flyer until I reached the corner of the Independence Hall greens on Walnut Street South 3rd Street, where the area became more commercial and trodden. Walking through Washington Square towards City Hall, I was surprised that I did not find more flyers, despite the fact that I was in a more corporate business district, in the vicinity of Jefferson Hospital's emergency room. I can understand that corporate areas would be more adherent to the no-signage laws, especially with more vigilant security in the area, but Washington Square, especially close to Market Street, is a haven for all demographics. Its vicinity to a plethora of high-traffic areas such as the Fashion District mall, the TJ Maxx, and many tourist attractions like Reading Terminal Market and the Hard Rock Café would make the area a prime target for event advertising. I was also surprised that, when I reached the Gayborhood subsection of Washington Square, I did not find more flyers. LGBTQIA+ community areas are typically more likely to host events, such as Pride events and drag shows, which contributed to my shock at a lack of signage. However, as I passed through Rittenhouse to end my data walk, I was correct in my assumption that I would not find any flyers in the neighborhood.

My next data collection effort occurred on April 20th, where I focused on the neighborhoods of Northern Liberties, also known as NoLibs, and Manayunk. A resident of the NoLibs area brought me around places where they had seen event flyers, starting at the intersection of North 2nd Street and Germantown Avenue.

In almost every large city in the United States, vestiges of flyer art remain on traffic and light poles, kiosks, the sides of buildings, cramped record store spaces [...] These works, whether intact or ripped, shredded, or faded, embody a living, not-so-secret visual history of a generation.¹

→ “Kaytranada”
event on a stop-
light post, Walnut
& 3rd. Photo by
the author.



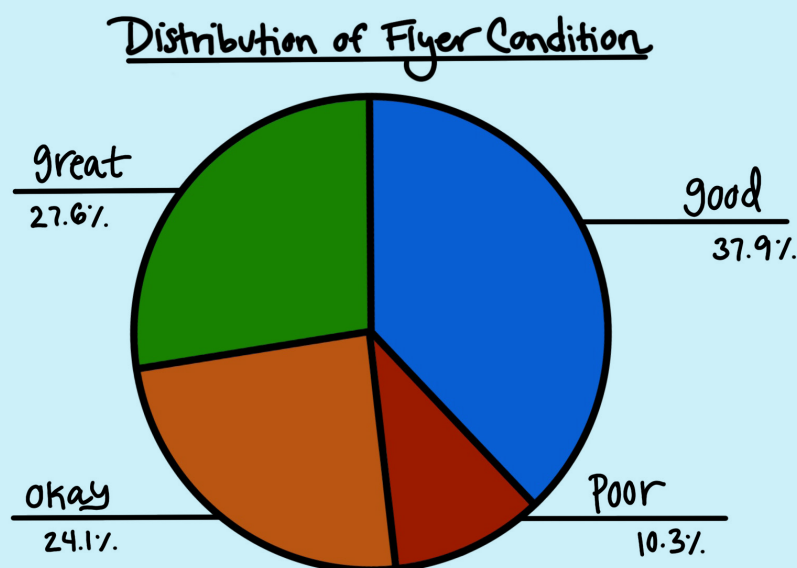


↑ Transcended at Fort Mifflin series, on NL Arts/Walls for Justice wall. Photo by the author.



↑ Flyers on a Utility Pole in front of North Bowl. Photo by the author.

We made our way down to the corner of North 2nd Street and Poplar Street. I noticed that, compared to what I had seen on South St, flyers tended to be collected in greater concentration on various exterior surfaces, sometimes even layers on utility poles and stop lights. Collections of repeated flyers were also seen on a plywood barrier around an empty lot, labeled as part of a collaboration between “NL Arts” and “Walls for Justice.”¹ An event space and bowling alley, North Bowl, had multiple exterior structures with collections of flyers in various qualities, advertising events, apartments, and more. My NoLibs tour guide then took me to Liberty Lands park, which held a public bulletin board on the northwest corner (North 3rd Street and West Wild-eye Street). South of the park stood another event venue, Ortliebs, which had a similar concentration of flyers as North Bowl in front of the establishment. Overall, 16 event flyers were recorded during my Northern Liberties data walk.



← Pie Chart of the Distribution of Flyer Condition. By the Author.

Later on April 20th, I visited the neighborhood of Manayunk to look for more flyers. The neighborhood is locally known as a small town in the big city, as its location is sheltered from the tall buildings of Center City, and most of its attractions are on Main Street. Philadelphia's tourism department describes the neighborhood as one of the city's hottest neighborhoods to visit, even for city locals.² I had visited Manayunk before, not quite attentive to the possibility of event flyers, but its appeal to tourists and locals alike, particularly elder Gen Z and Millennials, led me to believe that the event flyer scene would be akin to that of South Street. However, I found that the street exterior surfaces were devoid of posters and flyers, and that they featured only signage that warned of changes in parking regulations due to that Sunday's StrEAT food truck festival. I was left to draw two possible conclusions from the lack of flyers. First, the area is a very popular and clean tourist attraction, so it may be prone to similar signage cleaning as the business district in Washington Square. Second, I considered the possibility that flyers and community signage may have been removed from exterior surfaces because of the next day's immensely popular food festival.

Data Analysis

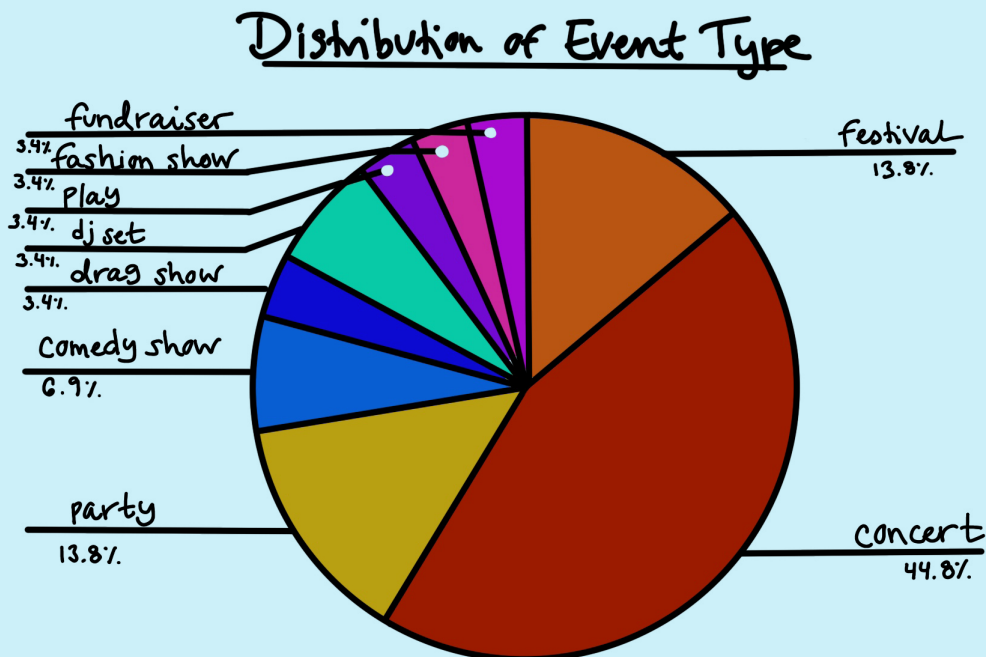
According to Chapter 10-1200 of the Philadelphia Code, "(1) Except as provided in subsection (2), no person shall post or advertise upon any sign on a: (a) utility pole; (b) streetlight; (c) traffic or parking sign or device, including any post to which such sign or device is attached; (d) historical marker; or (e) City-owned tree or tree in the public right-of-way."³ The inhabitants of Philadelphia do not often comply with this section of city code, as witnessed by my data walks.

08. Event Flyers of Philadelphia

The species I studied, event flyers, exists in many varieties, affixed to exterior non-building structures – those which have been outlined in the Philadelphia Code, as well as permitted structures such as community boards. On my walks, I recorded 29 unique variations of the species across 10 of the 11 neighborhoods examined. Sixteen (55.2%) of the flyers were in Northern Liberties, three (10.3%) in Fishtown, and three (10.3%) in Society Hill. The neighborhood of Manayunk was the only neighborhood where no flyers were observed.

Along with the flyer's location, I also collected data relating to the information displayed on the individual subject: Title, flyer Condition, Event Date, Event Venue, Event Type, Event Genre (if applicable), and whether or not the event had occurred as of the date of observation.

↓ Pie Chart of the Distribution of Event Type. By the Author.



For flyer condition, the paper was graded on a scale of “great” (no observable weathering, no rips), “good” (somewhat weathered, minor rips), “okay” (weathered, some rips), and “poor” (weathered/faded, large rips, somewhat illegible). Some of the flyers (37.9%) were in good condition, while great condition made up 27.6% of the observed, and 24.1% of the flyers were in okay condition. Only 10.3% of the flyers were in poor condition.

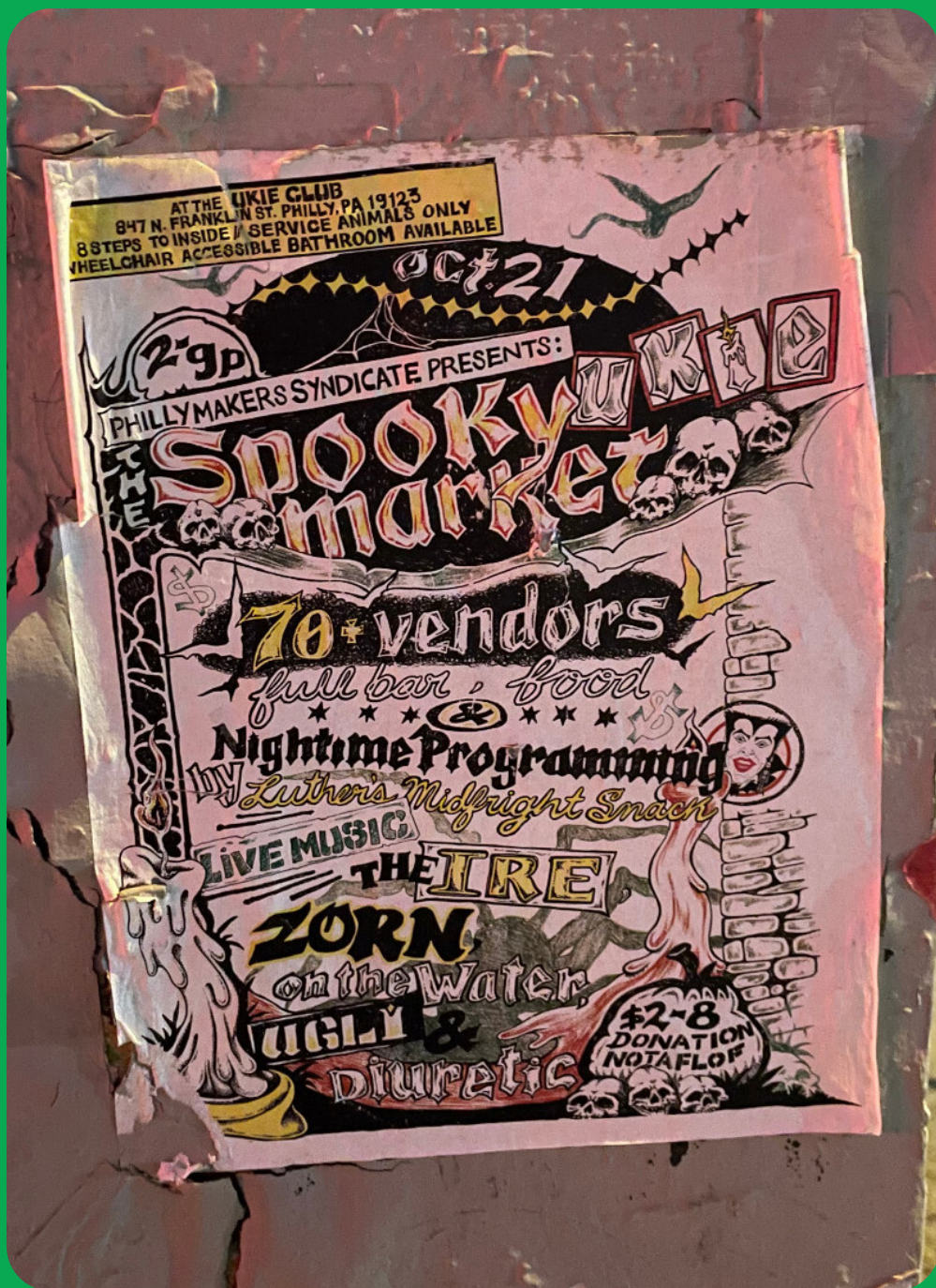
Of the observed flyers, their advertised events took place on dates ranging from October 21, 2023, to May 27, 2024. Two of the observed flyers had no listed date, and one advertised for multiple dates spanning April 2024 to August 2024. The majority (9 of 27) of events are advertised to take place in the month of April, with the next-most advertised month occurring in March (5 of 27). When considering whether or not an event had occurred, I used the date of the flyer’s data collection as the marker. The majority of events (51.7%) had not occurred at the time I had viewed the flyer, while 41.4% of events had already happened. When considering the correlation between flyer condition and whether or not an event had happened, a flyer is more likely to be in good or great condition if the event had not happened yet, while it is more likely to be in okay or poor condition if the event’s date had passed. Because one purpose of an event flyer is to advertise a future event, the correlation between flyer condition and date of event seems to also be connected to the date when the flyer was placed in its habitat: an older flyer is more likely to show more signs of weathering. That being said, there is an outlier of one flyer exhibiting poor condition despite the event not having yet occurred.

08. Event Flyers of Philadelphia

When looking at the type of event advertised on the flyer, I categorized the flyers into nine different categories: festival, concert, party, drag show, comedy show, DJ set, play, fundraiser, and fashion show. Concerts were the most frequently advertised event, with 13 total flyers. Festivals and parties were both advertised with four events apiece, and two flyers each informed about drag shows and comedy shows.

As I compiled the collected data, I assigned concerts and parties to their respective genre, depending on the details given either on the flyer or on the event's web-page. Out of the 29 flyers, 16 of the flyers were given one of 11 genres. The genres I assigned were as follows: EDM, House, Hip-Hop, R&B, Techno, Rock, Alt Rock, Electronica, Folk, Reggae, and various. House was the most popular genre, with four flyers, and various followed with three flyers. Each of the remaining genres was attributed to one flyer. There did not seem to be any correlation between the advertised event's genre and the geographical location of the flyer.

The last piece of data I gleaned from the flyers was the venue listed on the flyer. There were 23 unique venues advertised on the flyers, not including three flyers that were listed as "TBA". Only three venues were listed on more than one unique flyer – Fort Mifflin, Dolphin Club, and The Ukie Club. Two of the venues advertised were not in Philadelphia, but were, rather, in Maryland and New Jersey. When looking at the neighborhoods of the venues, the neighborhood distribution is as follows: Northern Liberties (4), Fishtown (3), Callowhill (2), Airport (1), Carroll Park (1), Center City (1), East Poplar (1), Harrowgate (1), Logan Square (1), Passyunk Square (1), Richmond (1), Rittenhouse (1), University City (1), Washington Square (1), and West Poplar (1).⁴



↑ "Spooky Market" Event Flyer on an old phone booth, Spring Garden & 11th.
Photo by the author.

Discussion of Findings

The event flyer is an organic species of local media, an authentic presentation of local culture, and it offers a glimpse into the media culture associated with the flyer itself, such as event type and event genre. The location of each flyer is a testament to the flyer's habitat – where they can survive and where they cannot exist. The medium of the species, paper, and its habitat, exterior non-building surfaces, allows the flyer to attract the attention of its target audience in a pedestrian city like Philadelphia. Despite the obvious and apparent wealth of Northern Liberties, Society Hill, and Queen Village, the surrounding neighborhoods have low-income populations.⁵ Neighborhoods that were not bordered by low-income land parcels were less likely to have event flyers. This leads to an inference that areas that are highly trafficked near low-income neighborhoods are more likely to have event flyers on exterior non-building surfaces.

David A. Ensminger's meditation on flyering and the punk movement in his book, *Visual Vitriol: The Street Art and Subcultures of the Punk and Hardcore Generation*, offers perspective on Philadelphia's event flyer species. While event flyers have a non-zero success rate at advertising their specific event, flyers also are a form of local media that offer a visual history of the interests of an area's subgroups. "They chronicle technological and cultural shifts in contemporary history", Ensminger writes.⁶ The variety of art styles, from digital collage to professional graphic design to hand-drawn-and-copied, reflect the nature of the event's maker but also that of the people the flyer attracts. Flyering neighborhoods like Northern Liberties and the shopping street of South Street increases the likelihood that your target audience

may see the flyer and be curious enough to look up the advertised event. The act of putting up event flyers is an act of protest and a form of art itself. By flyering an exterior non-building surface, one is directly disregarding the regulations of the city government—yet that very contrarianism represents the nature of the event itself: off-center, subversive. To put up an event flyer is to be Philadelphian.

- 1 David A. Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol: The Street Art and Subcultures of the Punk and Hardcore Generation* (University Press of Mississippi, 2011): <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/stable/j.ctt12f69f>.
- 2 "About Us," Walls for Justice: <https://www.wallsforjustice.org/about-us>.
"Mission," NLArts Community Arts Program: <https://www.nlarts.org/mission>.
- 3 "Manayunk," Visit Philly: <https://www.visitphilly.com/areas/philadelphia-neighborhoods/manayunk/>.
- 4 Philadelphia City Council, Chapter 10-1200, "Posting of Signs §10-1202. Prohibited Conduct." December 16, 2004 sess. (January 25, 2005).
- 5 Philadelphia Neighborhoods, "Interactive Map of Philadelphia Neighborhoods," PhiladelphiaNeighborhoods.com: <https://philadelphianeighborhoods.com/2011/09/24/interactive-map-of-philadelphia-neighborhoods/>.
- 6 "2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer," United States Census Bureau: <https://maps.geo.census.gov/ddmv/map.html>; Aaron Kreider, "Justice Map" <https://www.justicemap.org/>.
- 7 Ensminger.



↑ Street sign taken over by a layer of stickers. Photo by Danny Jarabek.

09. The Social Ecology of Urban Stickers

Hanny Fabarek

species Sticker Art

phenotype 3-6" sticker paper, various hand-drawn/digital
drawing styles ranging from screen printed to
stenciled, collaged, stamped

site Urban Milieu

epicenter Tattooed Mom

Sticker art is a subgenre of street art that's become this international phenomenon because of the low barrier to entry... You have this small canvas that's affordable—priority-mail sticker paper is free at the post office—and portable, and therefore easy to share, all of which make the medium extremely accessible.

—Tattooed Mom owner and Characters Welcome founder Robert Perry

Sticker art as an artistic medium (and form of local media) is a subsection of larger formats of street art that exist in urban settings, including very prominently in Philadelphia. In contrast to larger formats like murals, stickers encourage even greater speed for both artist dispersal and pedestrian audience consumption. In addition, the accessibility of required sticker-making materials allows for the art form to be widely practical to veteran and amateur artists alike, fostering a true open-door creative environment. One attractive characteristic of stickering is the overlap between its ease of mass production/distribution and the semi-permanence of its “sticky” material application to urban surfaces. With a DIY and democratic attitude, stickers are seen as something easy to tag with significant longevity in contrast to other formats such as graffiti or wheat pasting which are more likely to be removed and pose greater risk of policing during the action itself. Often slow to fade and difficult to forcibly remove, the most potent manifestation of stickering is its proliferation en masse, demonstrating a “wilding” disposition within the urban milieu. This disposition is primarily defined by stickering as an act of rebellion with a disregard for the standardization and officiality of its host infrastructure. The sticker becomes a new layer, or “skin,” coating the pedestrian scale of the city, often with political affiliations and social attitudes in mind.

Stickering Culture

Smaller in scale and quicker in delivery than other forms of underground street art, a sizable culture has formed around stickering and sticker art in Philadelphia. We can trace sticker art’s presence in Philly back to some of its earliest practitioners, such as ‘El Toro,’

A few square inches are enough to carry an image or a phrase that can encourage action or create a sense of cultural belonging that lasts long after the person who posted the sticker moves on.

—Melanie Friedrichs, *Semiotics of Sticker Art in Providence*¹

‘Bob Will Reign,’ ‘Nosego,’ ‘Under Water Pirates,’ ‘Ticky,’ ‘Soma,’ and ‘Question Josh.’¹ Many of these artists, and others, have achieved notoriety in public art subcultures for the frequent presence of their sticker tags around the city. Due to the small-scale and material properties discussed in the description, these artists are able to spread their work over large areas with minimal effort.² This proliferation generates a culture, or social ecology, that exists in multiple relationships: artist to artist, artist to public, and public to public.

Artist to artist relationships generate a community that develops in spaces where like-minded creators can freely discuss and share their work (to be described further in the Habitat section). Artist to public relationships exist in the space between the placement of a sticker and



↑ Street sign covered in stickers suggesting a public call to action. Photo by Danny Jarabek.

its reception by the pedestrian audience. Stickers may not always have a political or social position, but when they do, stickers even have the power to make public calls to action. Lastly, public to public, the discourse from connoisseurs of street art in the city create a vast online network for stickering to have a digital footprint that serves to publicize the work as well as archive its history.³

Habitat

The habitat of stickers in Philadelphia radiates from an epicenter that physically and ideologically spreads the act of stickering throughout the city. The epicenter, a South Philly bar and restaurant, Tattooed Mom, colloquially known as Tmoms, is a large contributor to the sticker culture that has evolved in Philadelphia. The venue has made its interior surfaces a hyper-covered canvas. This unconventional and inclusive space embraces the non-curation of visiting artists who may come for a drink and leave behind a piece of their work. Tmoms is an institution for Philly's artist community, becoming an unofficial museum of street art, but also the host for events and programming that promotes poetry, comedy, drag, and much more.⁴ One of these events is an annual celebration of stickers that brings in artists from around the world called 'Characters Welcome' that significantly contributes to the artist to artist community in Philadelphia. Thousands of stickers are donated, bought, and sold at the event where all proceeds go to local youth arts programs.

The event showcases the work of sticker artists from all over the world to provide a space that celebrates the work and the artists behind the sticker. The show has grown every year with more stickers, new artists, and exciting new work that pushes the boundaries of art on a piece of paper with a sticky back.

—Tattooed Mom Owner and Characters Welcome
Founder Robert Perry

The second habitat invites the more prominent format for urban stickering, and is the primary focus of this study. The non-curatorial, anonymized nature of this more “wild” habitat cultivates a rebellious social ecology. In this format, the act of stickering helps to gather and create social ties between the human agents who “pollinate” or “germinate” stickers and the message, or imagery, of their stickers across the city. Wild stickering is located on all forms of streetside infrastructure scattered throughout the city. From utility poles, lampposts, and street signs to newspaper boxes, fire hydrants, and guardrails, stickers ranging from 3” to 6” in size are often plastered in spotty layers as a form of semi-permanent underground street art. This then becomes a new layer or “skin” of ornament, decoration, or

surface relief to otherwise standardized infrastructure. The shedding of this skin occurs through long-term weathering or short-term maintenance removal.

Current Status

Stickering as an urban art form has a rich history largely due to the democratization of printing technology in addition to the wide accessibility of adhesive substrates that can often be acquired for free at local post offices. In addition, stickering in many urban locations has become attached to subcultures with social or political affiliations, and for whom the adhesive products are a lo-fi form of quickly and quietly disseminating messaging into the urban milieu.

The status of stickering in Philadelphia, specifically, varies by context. While its representation in the city is unquantifiable, there are contexts within the city that are more or less robust due to variables such as neighborhood demographics, urban population density, and frequency of infrastructural surfaces. Additionally, the activity level of city maintenance crews and building property staff may contribute to the limiting of sticker presence. In this way, its status can be attributed to a “flocking” sensibility with city hotspots that generate increased or decreased zones of proliferation based on these variables. This assemblage, or accumulation, is one variable by which the status of stickering can be weighed, especially in Philadelphia where street art enthusiast Eric Dale says sticker art is found on every corner and turns the city into a large-scale scavenger hunt.⁵

Another variable to weigh is the temporal quality of stickering through long-term weathering and short-term removal. Zones of stickering activity face higher or

→ 'Bob Will
Reign' sticker
freshly adhered.
Photo by Danny
Jarabek.



→ 'Bob Will
Reign' sticker
weathered on
post office sticker
paper. Photo by
Danny Jarabek.





↑ AFSM sticker on a fire hydrant. Photo by Danny Jarabek.



↑ Utility pole hosting a variety of stickers, including Iffy Books. Photo by Danny Jarabek.

lower degrees of maintenance interference where pressures from city control, through policing and street art removal, vary. In neighborhoods where physical removal by maintenance isn't a factor, stickers are often left to the conditions where they will slowly fade and weather over time.

Local Media + Case Studies

Stickering can also serve as a form of local media through its potential as a form of guerilla advertising. This is seen in one of our case studies, Iffy Books, whose distribution of stickers, in combination with flyers, has led to a significant presence of its characteristic bubble letter iconography in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood since the shop moved to its new location at 404 South 20th St.

Case Study 001: Anti Flower Show Movement

A case study illustrating the social ecology of urban stickering in Philadelphia is an anonymous group of artists collectively called the 'Anti Flower Show Movement.' The group in recent years has mass distributed street art stickers depicting a grainy black and white photo of a young girl.⁶ Though no political or social affiliation can be discerned from the group's activity, their intentional inscrutability has added an air of mystery and intrigue to Philly's street art scene in recent years. The vague photo is often accompanied by text stating "for the betterment of society," but the significance of the claim is unclear. Furthermore, discussants on the subreddit forum r/Philadelphia claim that their only goal is to sell sweatshirts as part of a guerilla mar-

Once I had the idea, making the plaques in a visual language that was recognizable to my neighbors and Philadelphians as a whole seemed like a good way to make people stop and notice. I also thought that creating a parody of the real Pennsylvania historic plaques was a good way to examine storytelling and history-making as a whole.

—Interview with Plaque To The Future: The Sticker Artist
On A Mission To Remember Philly's Micro Histories

keting campaign.⁷ This case study then suggests how commerce may collide with public art. In turn, the Anti-Flower Show Movement highlights the entanglement of anonymous creativity and commercialization within the social ecology of stickering.

Case Study 002: Plaque to the Future

‘Plaque to the Future’ is a Philly artist who contributes to the stickering skin of the city and, at the same time, creates new local media that support local storytelling. He gathers what he calls “microhistories” of local, individual stories, hyper-distinct to a specific place and time in the city, and turns them into mini “history markers” that mimic the official signage.⁸

Conclusion

Looking to the future of stickering in Philadelphia, it is important to recognize the significance of its presence as a second skin to the city—as well as the communities and cultures deeply entrenched in its vitality and proliferation. From spatial places for artists to gather (Tmoms) to anonymous formats linked to commerce and ambiguous social politics (Anti Flower Show Movement) to remembering the micro histories of the city (Plaque to the Future), the format breeds a significant network of social ecologies. With the city increasingly painting over, scraping, and removing street art through ‘buffing’ practices, many individuals lose access to their preferred artistic format.⁹ Not just an act of subversion, stickering is also an act of self-expression, and one that should be preserved and valued in the city of Philadelphia.¹⁰

- 1 RJ Rushmore, "BEST OF PHILLY STICKER ART: Part One," Vandalog A Street Art Blog (March 6, 2011): <https://blog.vandalog.com/2011/03/06/best-of-philly-sticker-art-part-one/>.
- 2 Alice Clough, "Combating Urban Disengagement? Stickers as a Form of Street Art," *UCL Working Paper* No. 09/2011 (April 22, 2014): https://www.academia.edu/1541190/Combating_Urban_Disengagement_Stickers_as_a_Form_of_Street_Art.
- 3 Sabina Andron, "Framing Transgression. the Role of City Surface Structures in the Placement of Street Art," in Slavko Kacunko, Ellen Harlizius-Klück, and Hans Körner, eds., *Framings* (Logos Verlag, 2015): 299-320.
- 4 Melanie Friedrichs, "Semiotics of Sticker Art in Providence," *The Polis Blog* (August 30, 2012): <https://www.thepolisblog.org/2012/08/sa.html>.
- 5 Conrad Benner, "How Did Philadelphia Become Home to One of the World's Best Sticker Shows? A Chat with TMOM's Robert Perry," *Streets Dept* (September 4, 2019): <https://streetsdept.com/2019/09/04/how-did-philadelphia-become-home-to-one-of-the-worlds-best-sticker-shows-a-chat-with-tmoms-robert-perry/>.
- 6 Daniella Fishman, "'The Gritty City': The Art Enriching Philadelphia's Streets," *Jetset Times* (December 30, 2020): <https://jetsettimes.com/street-art/the-gritty-city-the-art-enriching-philadelphias-streets/>.
- 7 Layla A. Jones, "The 'Anti Flower Show Movement' and the Black and White Photo Sticker All over Philly Streets," *Billy Penn at WHYY* (January 17, 2023): <https://billypenn.com/2021/02/19/street-art-philadelphia-sticker-anti-flower-show-movement-grainy-photo-young-girl/>.
- 8 "R/Philadelphia on Reddit: I've Been Seeing These 'for the Betterment of Society Anti Flower Show Movement' and Butter and Salmon (Not Pictured) Stickers All over the City-Anyone Know the Origin?," Reddit, accessed April 30, 2024, https://www.reddit.com/r/philadelphia/comments/msr3an/ive_been_seeing_these_for_the_betterment_of/.
- 9 Conrad Benner, "Interview with PLAQUE TO THE FUTURE: The Sticker Artist on A Mission to Remember Philly's Micro Histories," *Streets Dept* (February 18, 2022): <https://streetsdept.com/2022/02/16/interview-with-plaque-to-the-future-the-sticker-artist-on-a-mission-to-remember-phillys-micro-histories/>.
- 10 Fishman.
- 11 Elisa Caldarola, "Elisa Caldarola, on Tags and Conceptual Street Art," *PhilArchive* (January 1, 1970): <https://philarchive.org/rec/CALOTA-7>.



Sharon

West Wynnefield • 6w •



Hello everyone. I'm currently looking for a reliable, reasonable and trustworthy handyman for some home repairs like drywall and plumbing. Any recommendations would be greatly appreciated.



4



20



Share



Filtered comments

George

Upper Darby, PA • 6w



I can help u [267](#) call me anytime



loja'sinc 32

515 Larchwood ...

Fave

Like

Reply

Share



Deb

Lafayette Hill, PA • 6w



Give Dean a call. He's honest, reliable and affordable. Does very clean work and offers a senior d... [See more](#)

Like

Reply

Share

Alize

Philadelphia, PA • 6w



Contact [@phillymobilefix](#) [@267](#)

Like

Reply

Share

← Post about drywall and plumbing. Screenshot by the author

10. Virtually Out and About: Nextdoor

Lori Ho

site

Nextdoor is a social networking platform. However, unlike other social networking sites that often encourage interaction on a global scale, Nextdoor is specifically designed to connect individuals with their immediate community and/or neighborhood. In the article “How Local Outlets Are Using Nextdoor to Connect with Their Communities,” Anna Altman highlights how “Interactions are limited by neighborhood, and the bounds are narrow; users in Washington, DC, where I live, can’t see posts from West Virginia, and a resident in the northwest neighborhood of Columbia Heights won’t see what’s posted in Capitol Hill.”¹ The platform’s design allows locals to share information and connect on local events, businesses, and concerns, and to share interests (such as hobbies) with each other. Users are able to share local information with each other and are enabled to engage with, gain advice about, and stay informed about their neighborhood and community. Users have the ability to post questions and/or concerns or to search for posts. Whether they are looking for a reliable handyman, learning more about recent construction projects, or searching for a new restaurant to frequent, users are easily able to find the answers that they need by posting on Nextdoor. Furthermore, Nextdoor’s “Chat” feature also allows neighbors to create private group chats and to message each other privately.



Leslie

Schuylkill • 5w •



We are looking to replace our front door and transom. Referrals of reasonably priced contractor are much appreciated. We live near Naval Square.



1



4



Share

Michael

Girard Estate • 5w



Make sure you're sitting down when you get the price.

Like

Reply

Share

Bob

Queen Village • 5w



Home Depot and Lowes



Home Dep... 146

1651 S Columbu...

Fave

Like

Reply

Share

Jack

Noodland • 5w



323

3D construction is the best



3D construc... 8

1692 Clements ...

Fave

Like

Reply

Share

Lorena

E. East Passyunk Cros... • 4w



Andres Soto 267

← Post about replacing the front door and transom. Screenshot by the author.

Additionally, local organizations and local outlets also heavily utilize Nextdoor to gauge interest and to learn about the range of opinions on various topics that are relevant to the community: Anna Altman highlights the various ways local outlets, such as advertisers and news outlets, have been able to use Nextdoor as a tool to connect with their local communities. For instance, police departments utilize Nextdoor to share information that may be of interest to residents, while news organizations share local news stories and gather tips and/or anecdotes from Nextdoor users.² Additionally, in “Neighbors Are Reaching out on Nextdoor,” John Herrman highlights how locals utilized Nextdoor to disseminate important information and to connect with each other during the height of the pandemic. For instance, Herman states, “A librarian at the New York Public Library has used Nextdoor to spread the word about a group she started called Corona Couriers, through which bike couriers—some professionals, some just people with bikes and time—deliver essential goods to people in isolation all over New York.”³

Phenotype

Neighborhood-based Networks

As previously mentioned, Nextdoor is a “hyperlocal” social networking service that connects individuals that are within a specific geographic area; this is done by users having to verify their home address.

Furthermore, users can modify the locale of the posts that they can see by selecting what “locations” (subdivisions and nearby towns) they would like to see posts from or about. These various features allow users to interact with a large number of locals that they would otherwise have found it difficult to interact with and/



← Nextdoor Home Page. Screenshot by the author.

or to solicit other locals' advice. In "Tensions in Scaling-Up Community Social Media: A Multi-Neighborhood Study of Nextdoor," Christina Masden et al. note that Nextdoor fills in needs for local information that is not sufficiently met through the utilization of other social media platforms.⁴ Additionally, the article also highlights how there is a low barrier to access hyper-local information when using Nextdoor in comparison with "more formal civic groups [such as joining a local Rotary International or local Toastmasters International club] or neighborhood associations."⁵

When users open up the app via their mobile device, they are greeted by the home page, which shows posts that have been posted recently as well as advertisements that are targeted specifically towards the community. There are four features that users can utilize across the top app bar. The first feature that users can utilize is their profile page where they can view their profile, add a picture to their profile, add a business page, open up the settings, or access the Nextdoor help page. The second feature that users can utilize is the search bar; this allows users to search for posts. The third feature is the "my neighbors" function; this feature allows users to invite their neighbors to the Nextdoor app as well as view neighbors that are in their contacts that are also on Nextdoor. The final feature is the "chats" function; this feature allows users to privately message each other.

09. The Social Ecology of Urban Stickers

Tags

Nextdoor has tabs along the bottom of the app that allow users to more easily navigate the site. The “Discover” tab includes a map and list of local businesses as well as a list of upcoming local events. The “For Sale” tab directs users to an online “marketplace” where users can browse items that neighbors are selling and/or giving away; the items are also categorized by tags such as “Appliances,” “Furniture,” and “Toys & Games.” Users can also post items that they are looking to purchase by using the tag “In Search of.”

Crime and Safety Alerts

Users can post about suspicious activities, share camera footage, and get alerts from law enforcement agencies about crime and safety concerns in their community.

Items for sale/Free Items

Much like Facebook Marketplace, Nextdoor also has a platform that allows users to buy, sell, and give away items to community members. This feature can also be accessed through the “For Sale” tab as well.

Tags

Nextdoor has various “tags” that sort conversations and/or posts into different discussion boards. Some examples are lost and found, recommendations, and events. To expand, Nextdoor’s interface and design encourages users to use various tags (such as “recommendations” and “events”) to categorize their posts and conversations so that users with similar interests can find and participate in posts that are of interest to them through searching in the search bar.

Emily

Yeadon • 2w • 🌐

←

⋮

I think our chimney is leaking with all this rain (water spots on the ceiling above the fireplace) I'm wondering if it's our flashing- who would I ask for help or answers? A roofer? A chimney expert? A gc? A handyman? Ready for this rain to clear out!

❤️ 6

♡

💬 16

➦ Share

Frank

Philadelphia, PA • 2w

⋮



Licensed insured
Pa 174404
Estimates are free
267

❤️ 1

Like

Reply

Share

Lovefelia

Yeadon • 2w

⋮

Frank I am having the same problem but it's over my kitchen

Like

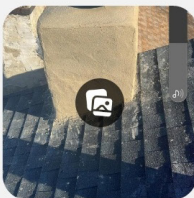
Reply

Share

Frank

Philadelphia, PA • 2w

⋮



<https://www.homerenovationsllc.net/>

❤️ 1

Like

Reply

Share

L

Add a comment...

Notifications

Nextdoor also has notification settings that allow users to customize what posts they would like to receive a notification about; some of the categories are “Public agencies,” “For Sale & Free,” “Popular everywhere” (which refers to trending posts), and “Events.” Users can customize what categories of posts that they receive notifications on through a push notification on their phone, email, or through both a push and email notification.

Habitat

Nextdoor “resides” online, alongside many other social networking services. It is unique in that the posts a user can see on Nextdoor will contain information that is “hyperlocal” to their communities. In “Nextdoor v. the Community Network Literature: Do Nextdoor’s Uses Match the Potential Envisioned for ComNets,” authors Jonathan Lillie and Matthew Achhammer find that Nextdoor users largely share “their own public articulations about community issues and/or to engage with the articulations of other community members that live near them,”⁶ facilitating community engagement.

It is stationary as it resides in a specific geographic area: each Nextdoor “network” is limited to a user’s immediate neighborhood and/or community. At the same time, Nextdoor is a thriving global network of local instances; it operates as an international company serving multiple countries and neighborhoods, and many users utilize the platform to connect with their neighbors. In the US alone (as of 2018), Altman notes, “it now covers 180,000 neighborhoods and about 90 percent of the 25 largest cities in the US.”⁷

In 2019... The referendum failed, and it failed badly. And when they [the district] were looking at why that happened, they realized that a lot of people had been talking about it on Nextdoor. And those discussions had been dominated by a few really loud voices who were anti-district and anti-referendum who felt that this referendum was just a scam to extract more money from taxpayers...

[In 2020 the district] deputized some of the advocates of the referendum to go on Nextdoor. They gave them talking points... They got tons of engagement. They were one of the most popular topics on our local Nextdoor network. And this time when the election happened, the turnout was an all-time record, and it passed by a landslide.⁸

Users are able to access Nextdoor through a desktop or through a smartphone app. Users post and interact with posts from their homes, when they are out in the neighborhood, and even when they are out-of-town! Nextdoor is crucial in shaping users' perception of their local communities, fostering a sense of belonging to their permanent addresses. Where users are located as they interact with Nextdoor oftentimes shapes how users engage with the service. For instance, users may post about a local event that they are enjoying or about a car accident that occurred nearby when they are outside.

Nextdoor also plays a critical role in shaping the social habitats in which it operates. For example, Nextdoor can have a significant impact on local politics. In "With Local News Struggling, the Nextdoor App Is Shaping Local Politics," Audie Cornish from NPR discusses with Will Oremus from OneZero about how Nextdoor serves as a hub that shapes local politics. In the conversation, Oremus presents a specific case study involving the Christina School District and their referendum to raise money. Oremus notes,

It's also important to note that in some cases, Nextdoor can also play a role in promoting the suspicion of one's neighbors and racial profiling. To illustrate, in "Building the Digitally Gated Community: The Case of Nextdoor," Rahim Kurwa writes, "In a 2015 expose of the neighborhood social networking service Nextdoor, journalist Sam Levin (2015) writes that residents in Oakland, California 'frequently post unsubstantiated "suspicious activity" warnings that result in calls to the police on Black citizens who have done nothing wrong.' Often posted on the extremely popular 'crime and safety' section of the application, these warnings seemed to be a ubiquitous condition of living in the neighborhood."⁹ In other instances, Nextdoor plays a role in strengthening

community ties and serves as a vital resource for local news, especially in news deserts. Oremus mentions that “the decline of local news was bound to leave a vacuum of some sort, and something was bound to fill it. Recently, the emergence of Nextdoor has given people a way to get local news from social media in this sort of engaging format.”¹⁰ Nextdoor, with its “hyperlocal” nature, is uniquely positioned to fill the void left by the decline of traditional local news outlets, providing users with updates that are relevant to them and their community. In essence, while it is clear that Nextdoor has the ability to connect neighbors with each other, it also has the ability to further strain relationships and cause angst and/or anxiety among neighbors and locals.

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- 2 Altman, “Local Outlets.”
- 3 John Herrman, “Neighbors Are Reaching out on Nextdoor,” *The New York Times* (March 25, 2020): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/25/style/nextdoor-neighbors-coronavirus.html#:~:text=Homebound%20city%20dwellers%20are%20turning,other%20without%20risking%20physical%20contact>.
- 4 Christina Masden, Catherine Grevet, Rebecca Grinter, Eric Gilbert, and W. Edwards, “Tensions in Scaling-Up Community Social Media: A Multi-Neighborhood Study of Nextdoor,” *ACM* (2014): doi:10.1145/2556288.2557319. 3244.
- 5 Masden, et. al.: 3243.
- 6 Jonathan Lillie and Matthew Achhammer, “Nextdoor v. the Community Network Literature: Do Nextdoor’s Uses Match the Potential Envisioned for ComNets,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 29:4 (2023): 914, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565231174595>.
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- 8 “With Local News Struggling, the Nextdoor App Is Shaping Local Politics,” *NPR*, February 4, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/04/964172254/with-local-news-struggling-the-nextdoor-app-is-shaping-local-politics>.
- 9 Rahim Kurwa, “Building the Digitally Gated Community: The Case of Nextdoor,” *Surveillance & Society* 17, no. 1/2 (March 31, 2019): 111, <https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v17i1/2.12927>.
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↑ The street view of Woody's shop from the Bryn Mawr and Lebanon corner.
Photo by the author.

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop: The Cultural Significance of Black Barbering in Philadelphia

Madison Gordon

site

Woodard's Barbershop

phenotype

On the corner of Bryn Mawr and Lebanon Ave, next to Fairmount Park and Wynnefield Heights is Woodard's Barbershop. It is at the bottom of a three-story brick building, and the outside of the shop is painted white with stones surrounding the windows and front door. A concrete parking lot houses three cars and an arrangement of small flower pots. A metal gray fence surrounds the shop and sits along the corner of the street. A white sign stands above the roof of the shop and reads:

Woodard's
BARBER SHOP
Natural Hair Control Cap
"PATENTED"
NO CHEMICALS
HAIR STYLED TO FIT THE SHAPE OF YOUR FACE

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

Inside Woodard's Barbershop

You walk in and immediately see a wooden podium behind which Woody may often stand to greet new and returning customers. The podium is lined with the classic red, white, and blue barber colors and decorated with outdated calendars, pictures of Woody's family, and various models of cars, small structures, and different animals. A pillar stretches out farther into the shop where you can see articles Woody has written, more pictures of his family, a digital clock, and small stuffed animals. To the edge of the pillar sits a note from one of Woody's children and a mug decorated with the sentence "I am a Dad, what's your superpower?"

The shop's walls are lined with posters, framed newspaper articles, notes from customers, and acknowledgements of Woody himself. These pieces acknowledge the achievements of people close to Woody and highlight the thriving culture of the Black Community in Philly and beyond. A large cutout of Barack Obama's head hangs on one of the walls. Mobile and spinning red leather chairs with silver metal detailing sit in front of four mirrors with an attached sink for cleaning tools. Each mirror holds a shelf with hair products, brushes, hand-held fans, and storage boxes. All mirrors, except for the first, have black and white oil pastel paintings of Prince, Muhammed Ali, and Tupac resting on them. All of the walls with mirrors are lined with wood and reach up to long rectangular shaped lights filled with long cylindrical bulbs. At the front of the store you can see two of the classic red, blue, and white barber poles mounted on the ceiling.



↑ The wooden podium that sits at the front of Woody's shop. Photo by the author.



↑ Posters and articles that line the walls of the barbershop. Photo by the author.

Woody's shop is extremely welcoming. The mix of his interests and values that are present in the shop serve to encourage conversation between him and his customers. The podium alone, as a customer's first introduction to the shop and potentially Woody, represents the variety of conversations one could expect to have there. It is obvious that Woody is more than eager to get to know his customers as he stands above them and does his work. It all depends on whether the customer is willing to explore new areas of themselves with Woody.

Community Discourse

Walking into a silent barbershop is rare. There may either be a speaker playing the chosen 'oldies' for the day or a TV screening a rerun of a classic Black sitcom... or both. One could expect to hear numerous conversations bouncing around—about the recent Philadelphia sports win or loss, changes made by the Board of Education, or a recent and heavy death that has affected the widespread community. Like Woody, Richard Bougere, who runs his own barbershop, Tailored Cuts, in San Francisco, serves as a clear example of a Black man significantly impacted by the discourse that occurs inside his shop. To Bougere, barbershops are a place where “you can get exposed to views and opinions that will teach you more about your own identity, as well as the world around you. And you can see how the Black men around you present themselves to the public and how they take pride in themselves.”¹

Because of the varying ages of individuals found in a barbershop—after all, everyone needs their hair cut—barber shops serve as hubs from which wisdom can be spread and where advice can be sought. “These locations are important for the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of Black men and women.”² The environment within a barbershop can often be therapeutic due to its intimate nature and its creation by familiar faces.³ People learn to be empathetic within barbershops; with patient and tolerant barbers it is easy for Black men to recognize that the patience granted to them is something they must also consider granting to others.

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

Nick's First Haircut

My younger brother, Nickel, got his first haircut two years ago at the age of four. I remember my mother facetiming me in the middle of the school day so that I could join them both at her barbershop in Kingston, Jamaica. We had been speaking about this moment for weeks leading up to the event. My mom was nervous. This was a huge milestone for her as a Black parent, but more importantly it was a huge milestone for my brother. Getting his hair cut signified his first step into Black boy culture. Instead of letting his hair have a mind of its own, he was now taking initiative in controlling his appearance, at least as much as a four year old could. He was sitting in the smallest chair in the shop. Andrew, my mother's barber, was setting down the clippers and guards to prepare for what he realized was an important moment. My brother looked nervous. His eyes were darting across the room as he was obviously overstimulated from the basketball game on the TV, the music blasting from the speaker in the corner, the numerous voices asking about the requested cuts and spewing family drama, and laughs that bounced off of every wall. I couldn't do anything but smile. Although I've never sat in a barber's chair, I knew that my brother was stepping foot into a world that he will eventually come to love. Despite the many tears that fell as the clippers brushed his head, or the reach for my mother's hand as the scissors almost nicked his right ear, he sat in that small chair at the end of his cut with the biggest smile—as Andrew held a blue mirror in front of his face.

Ancestry

Barbering has been a prominent custom within Philly, and specifically its Black culture, since the 18th century. Between then and now, the practice has experienced numerous transformations in terms of where the act happens, who does and receives the service, and the social impact of and on the communities who have con-



↑ The entrance of Woody's shop when looking from the inside. Photo by the author.



↑ Example of the black and white pastel paintings leaning on the mirrors in the shop. Tupac was the only painted figure with colored detail. Photo by the author.

nections to the practice. For the most part, barbering has historically been dominated by Black men. They found few white competitors in the trade during the 19th century despite the fact that many of their customers were white. Many barbers capitalized on this in Philadelphia by running shops that served white men only.⁴ A significant example would be Joshua Eddy's shop that sat on Chestnut Street. This shop made Eddy Philadelphia's wealthiest Black barber at the time.⁵

Philadelphia barbering experienced a shift in the middle of the 19th century as Black barbers faced heavy competition from German immigrants. In addition, sentiments within society about the presence and touch of Black individuals began to influence how white people felt about Black barbers. This caused Black barbers to shift towards Black clientele, and thus was born the notion of Black barbershops being "the Black man's country club": a space for Black men to not only get their hair cut but to also socialize, congregate, and organize.⁶

Barbershop "Talk"

Philadelphia has almost 4000 barbershops, one of which is Woodard's. The shop is owned by Robert "Woody" Woodard, who taught himself how to cut hair until he attended Tri City Barber School in the 70's.⁷ Woody is a living example of some of the shifts that occurred in Philly barbering. In his first job, when he worked for another shop owner, he met with only white customers. But when he opened his own shop in the 80's, he made it clear to anyone who came by that he cut any type of hair. After Georgie Woods, the radio broadcaster and his first Black customer, set foot in Woodard's barbershop, the shop became a place for Black men, women, and boys to comfortably spend their time.⁸

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

The shop has been open for the past five decades. When barbering became a practice done by Black men for Black men in the 20th century, most of the shops had either moved to South Street, Seventh Ward, which was heavily Black at the time, or North Broad.⁹ However, the majority of barbers now establish themselves in their own neighborhoods, which are predominantly inhabited by Black residents, instead of established barbers relocating to these areas.

Consider Penn, for example. Around 300 Black boys begin to demand haircuts in an environment with which they are initially unfamiliar. This is why student barbers working out of their dorms or off campus homes begin to hold significant value within college environments. They pop up when necessary and stay due to their social and cultural significance. Barbershops are safe havens for Black men and families.¹⁰ They serve as spaces where Black people can be vulnerable with one another, get advice, seek mentors, gossip, and take breaks from other factors in their lives. College students are able to build relationships with each other and make new friends through barbering. Although they may not receive advice and wisdom from an older practitioner, getting their hair cut can be a mental break from focusing on school and an opportunity to bond over shared experiences while finding comfort amongst peers.

Barbershops were extremely relevant in the Jim Crow era because they provided safe spaces for Black men to congregate. They are almost comparable to the support provided by the Black church, which is known to be significant in the lives of many Black individuals.¹¹ Even now, "Black barber shops continue to thrive in the present day as a meeting place for Black men from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Affluent Blacks, including business executives, professional athletes and politicians, will still return to inner-city neighborhoods for a haircut in a Black-owned barber-shop,"¹². To Black men barbershops represent comfort and also familiarity. They allow Black men to be unapologetically them-



↑ Graphic of one of Woody's articles for Barbershop Talk. Pictured are Michael Jackson and Woody inside Woody's car after he cut Michael's hair. Photo by the author.

selves. They open up space for discussion and activism. They are hubs for the mediation of local discourse and sharing of local information.

As of recently, barbers have allowed community organizations to develop resources for Black men in their shops. Because of the role it plays as an outlet and forum, the barbershop has served as a non-traditional source for educating the community about chronic disease prevention. Prostate cancer, HIV, and diabetes have been some of the most significant diseases addressed within the barbershop community for Black men.¹³

The Barbershop Talk Human Family Day Foundation Incorporated was founded in 1995 by Woody himself. As a community based organization, the purpose was to use the barbershop as a forum for dialogue about an array of topics heavily focused on the experience of being human.¹⁴ The program ran for five years and aimed to uplift the experience of all humans with differing backgrounds. The foundation also collaborated with different organizations, professionals in different fields, and educational institutions in search of participants and sponsors for their radio presence as well as for representation during their Barbershop Talk Family Day events.¹⁵ Their program aired from 9pm to 11pm

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

on Thursdays on the WURD Radio Station and brought widespread attention to Woody's efforts and the barbershop. It provided Philadelphia communities with insight into Woody's values and his shares of wisdom, while also catching the attention of communities around the country.

Woody has also released an array of articles about topics he deems important in local Philadelphia newspapers, including *The Philadelphia Tribune*, a historically Black paper, and *Philadelphia Rowhome Magazine*. For example, he released an article in 2018 that offered his perspective on significant changes occurring in Philadelphia communities.¹⁶ It is obvious that Woody holds a significant position in his community, both from a political perspective and from the perspective of a social actor. Barbershops and the people who work in them are undoubtedly influential within the communities they inhabit and more importantly the communities they work in (if they are not the same). Their social position helps to establish strong foundations and connections amongst the people who directly use their services and those who are adjacent as well.

My Visit to the Corner of Bryn Mawr and Lebanon

During my visit to the shop, Woody sat my friends and me down to listen to one of his poems about our relevance as living beings on earth. He begins with "we live on earth and earth lives in space. Where are we?" This first poem sparked an hour and a half of conversation between my friends, Woody, his current customer Michael, eventually Woody's daughter and grandson who stopped by the shop, and myself. Woody and Michael both gifted the three of us with numerous words of wisdom about how we understand ourselves, how we present ourselves throughout our lives, and most importantly how we can preserve the kid version of ourselves that unconsciously keeps us stable. He asked us to ask ourselves "who is the me that I am" and to recognize that attempting to change who we are cannot prevent us from embracing the core



↑ My father cutting my grandfather's hair in our kitchen, after it was too late for him to go to the barbershop, December 2023. Photo by the author.

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

of ourselves. He explains that “you must go back and re-examine yourself in the time of when you were purely your little self; they have all of the answers.”

Woody's words of wisdom come from a genuine place, and he recognizes the impact that barbershops have on the Black community and the individuals who come in for shape ups or trims. Michael asked him to tell my friends and me the story about the classic red, white, and blue barber pole. He begins by saying that “the original colors of the pole were red and white – which stood for bandages and blood. America decided to throw in the blue but it is not the history of the pole at all.” He continues to explain that barber shops used to be like the hospital. The barber's pole signified to people that if they needed help, they could walk into the shop and get it. Barbershops are tied to health: in multiple senses of the term.

Barbering in an Evolving Landscape (Condition)

It's important to note that many shops have popped up around Philadelphia since the beginning of Woody's career, and he faces increasing competition as the years go by. Today, Woody is the only barber in his shop. He often interacts with clients who have been getting their hair cut by him for years. New clients appear occasionally, but he is not in the position to rely on them in the same way that he relies on his long-time clients.

It would be inaccurate to say that barbering as art or as a means for social cohesion is endangered. Even though Woody's shop may have seen better days, the wisdom that he shares lives on through his kids, his grandchildren, and now my friends and me. Barbering as a committed profession, however, may be facing casualties. In *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barber-shops in America*, Quincy T. Mills interviewed numerous barbers who began the practice in the 50s and 60s. He found that many of them felt that younger barbers may not be treating the profes-

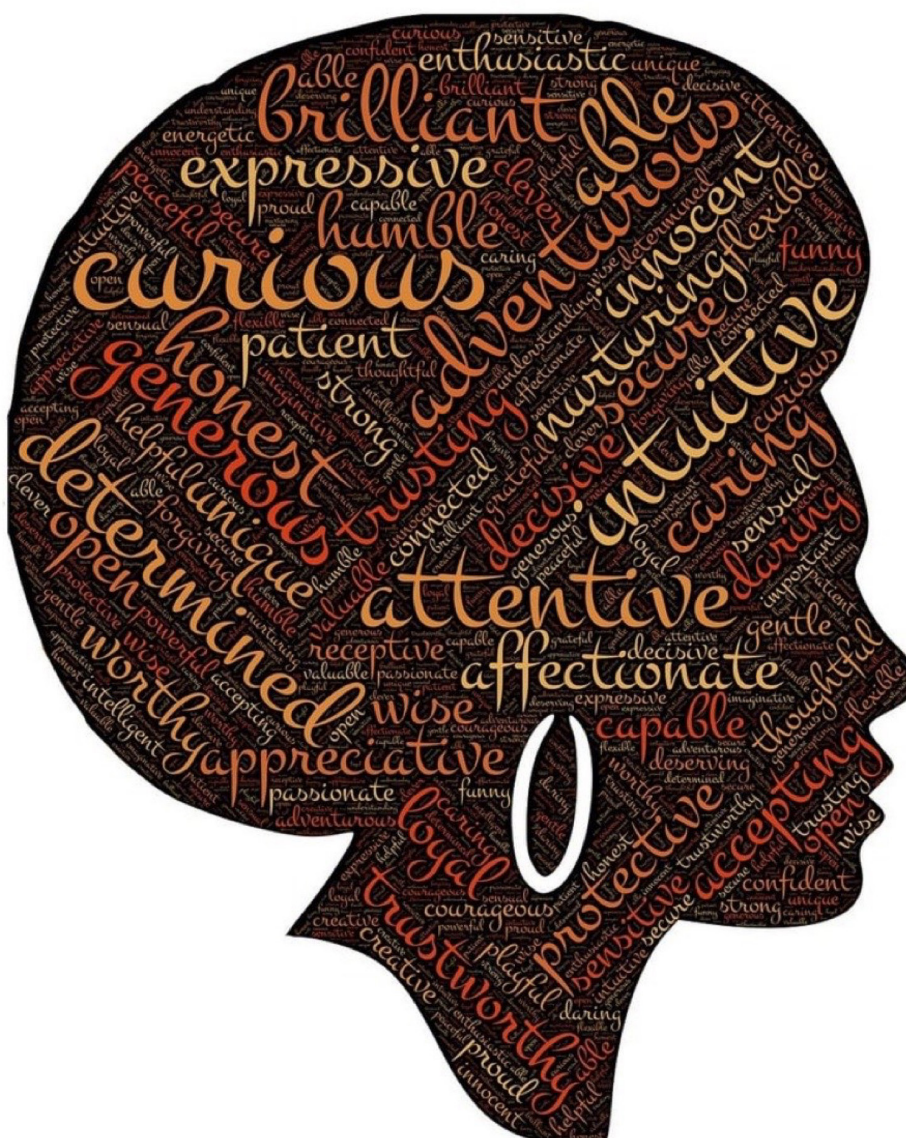
sion as a “business instead of a side job.”¹⁷ To them, they felt that the nonchalant approach that these younger barbers had taken to barbering, even if it was their main source of income, was in direct contrast with the commitment exhibited by their predecessors in the field. This concern is understandable. It can cause many to question whether the social benefits of barbershops can live on if their practical uses begin to fade.

Barbershops, however, have been a subject really relevant to me when it comes to my mother, father, brother, other members of my family, and my friends. Although I don’t personally go to barbershops, since the styles I prefer tend to do with adding hair to my own, I share many sentiments as someone who gets my hair done around five times a year at salons or braiding shops. I experience the distribution of information, gossip, and life advice that comes from the person doing hair as well as the other people getting their hair done.

Barbering isn’t going anywhere. When I consider the moments my father and grandfather have shared, the practice is transmissible through so many different avenues. When my grandfather can’t make it to a shop, my dad sets up in the middle of our kitchen with his own clippers as my grandfather sits in one of the dining room chairs. My dad wouldn’t consider himself a barber, but he knows that if needed he can fill in the space so that my grandfather can feel presentable as he leaves home the next day. Their conversations don’t often stray away from their classic sports or Jamaican news topics, but every once in a while their conversation sparks a memory for my grandfather from before my father was born, and they both go down a rabbit hole as they recall different moments from when they still lived in their childhood homes.

11. A Journey Through Woodard's Barbershop

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↑ The head of a black woman with hoop earrings and different affirmation words sprawled throughout the head, July 2016. Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication license, via Pixabay: <https://garystockbridge617.getarchive.net/media/woman-african-american-female-beauty-fashion-f691b9>

12. Local Media in the Beauty Scene

Ἥλια Τὰ εὐὰ Ἥλις Ἰαδδὲν

<i>site</i>	Home-based Philadelphia beauty technicians
<i>phenotype</i>	These technicians utilize Instagram as their mode of communicating with clients to showcase their work and to garner new clientele. Their Instagram pages are structured to showcase the technician’s personality and the aura of their physical spaces.
<i>nomenclature</i>	To protect their anonymity, the technicians discussed in this field guide will be given a fake Instagram handle: the hairstylist @Kstyles, the eyelash technician @Alashtech, and the nail technician @Nailbar.

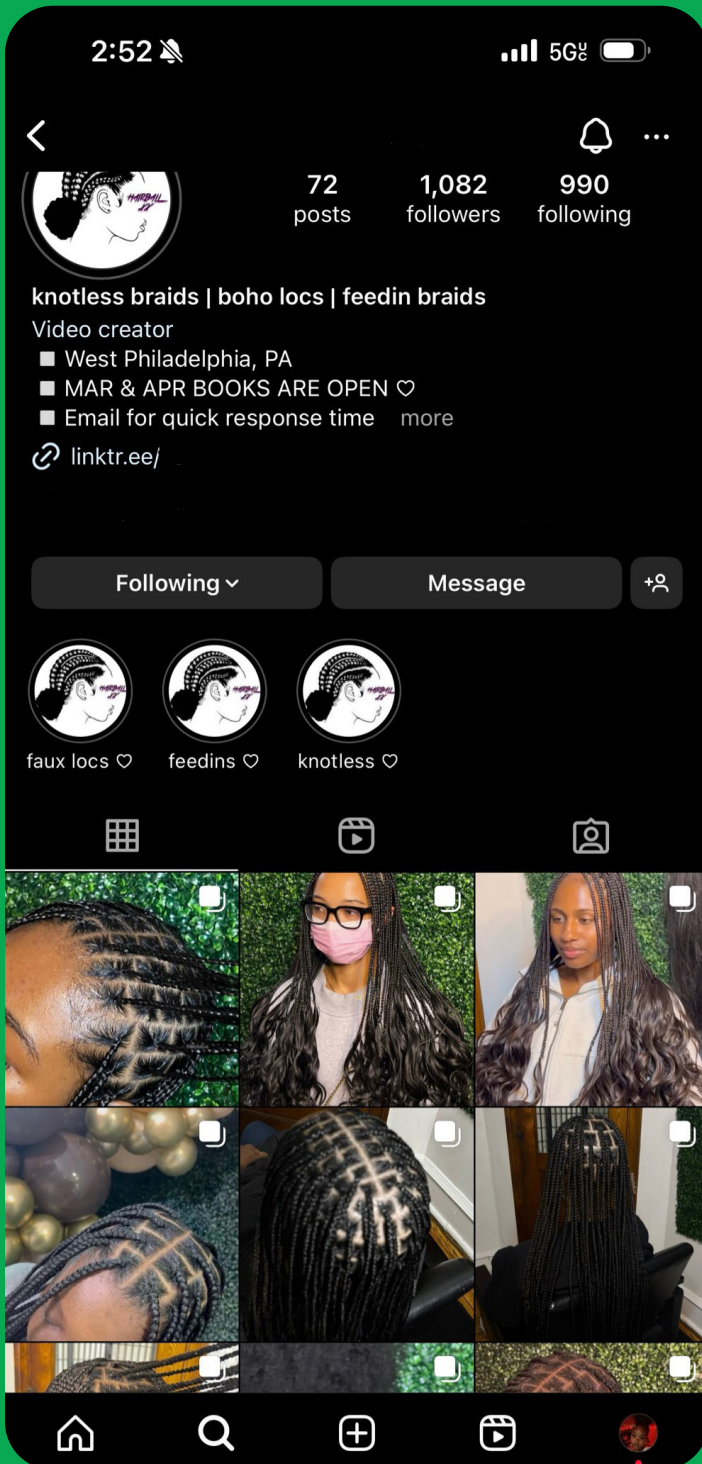


↑ The albumen prints depict an unidentified woman and an unidentified girl seated on the open doorstep of a log building. The girl's head rests in the woman's lap. The woman looks down at the child with her hands in the child's hair. O. Pierre Havens, "An Hour's Hunting," 1876-88, albumen and silver on paper on card mount. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift from the Liljenquist Family Collection. No known copyright restrictions. https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2016.166.6?destination=/explore/collection/search%3Fedan_q%3Dhair%26edan_fq%255B0%255D%3Dmedia_usage%253A%2522CC0%2522%26page%3D1

~~What~~ What are local media in the beauty scene?

When we talk about “local media,” we’re referring to media outlets and communication channels that operate at the community, city, or regional level within a specific geographical area. This form of media is all about the interests of a particular community, its events, news, and more. But there’s another type of local media that takes a physical form and can reach a specific community within a larger one, making it hyperlocal. In this case, we’re talking about home-based beauty technicians, specifically hair stylists, nail technicians, and eyelash technicians, who serve as a space for local mediation within Philadelphia. They’re not just providing beauty services. They’re fostering community, serving as gossip and information hubs, and advertising these purposes through their social media accounts.

Barbershops and hair salons have always been more than a place to get a haircut. They were, and still are, spaces where black people could escape the racial discrimination of daily life and find a safe haven in their community. They were also significant political and social gathering spaces. As Shane Quanista Weaver points out, “Churches, barbershops, and beauty salons were scrutinized by United States authorities as suspected headquarters of Black organizations and activism. These places also served as sites where people explored communal freedom.”¹ This underscores the profound role that hair and beauty spaces have played in our community, far beyond being mere gossip centers.



← Instagram page of @Kstyles with posts of different clients' finished hairstyles. Screenshot by MaTaeya McFadden, April 23, 2024.

Recently, due to financial constraints and the effects of COVID-19, beauty technicians have turned away from formal salons and toward their homes. Yet there are older roots of the home-based practice. I, along with many other black Americans, grew up getting our hair braided outside on the porch. As depicted within the above image, children getting their hair done outside has a deep history, and many times it was used as a means of communication when black people were trying to escape slave plantations.²

Overall, hair is a huge part of black culture, and “while clients may come to get their hair cut, they may also frequent the barbershop or beauty salon to vent to the barbers/beauticians about their job, family, seek life advice, gang involvement, and other conflict in their lives.”³ Recently, many mental health professionals, knowing the therapeutic space hair salons can create, have been training hairdressers on how to ask open-ended questions and spot signs of distress.⁴ This leaves me to ask how other home-based beauty technicians continue to foster this sense of community, create safe space, and constitute forms of local media—and more importantly, how do they advertise these purposes to clients to gain a following and clientele?

~~What~~ to look for in a hairstylist

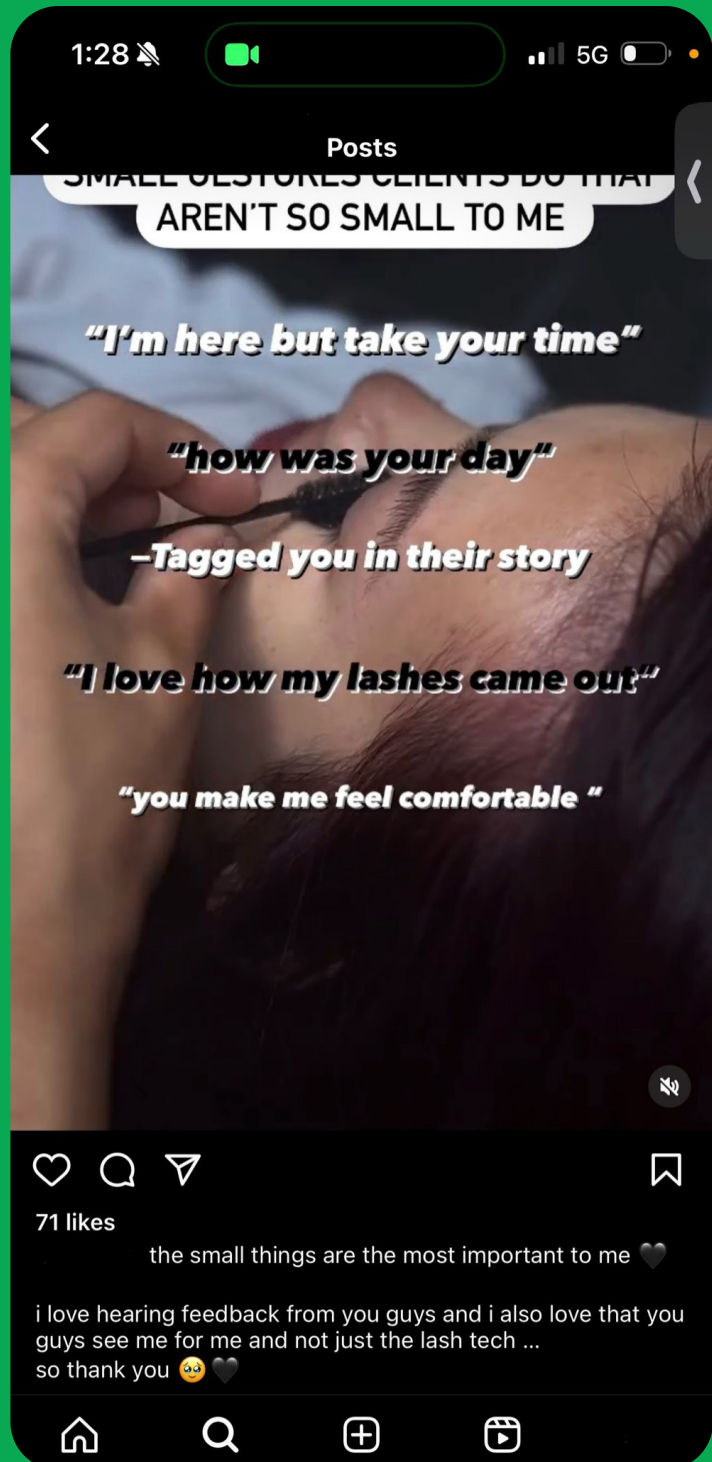
This hair page is run by a 21-year-old college student, who we will call Kstyles, who also attends UPenn. At first glance, one can immediately notice the location of the services listed in her bio, which is very important depending on the clientele that the stylist is trying to acquire. In Philadelphia, many home-based beauty technicians heavily advertise their place of business as being

12. Local Media in the Beauty Scene

close to all the college campuses. The page also highlights some of Kstyles' services and her booking link, along with further details and instructions on what to expect when one visits. One of the first things I look for when deciding if any hair space will be appropriate for me is the background of each post showing the technicians' work (Please also see "Guide to spotting a scam beauty page" at the end of this entry). The background can tell you whether or not the page is a scam—inconsistent backgrounds suggest that the page's purveyor has likely pilfered images from a range of other providers—and give you a sense of the business's physical atmosphere and comfort level. Based on this particular page, the background wall of greenery and leaves creates a sense of peace and tranquility, which can draw in clients and create a peaceful environment inviting venting/ destressing.

Kstyles is a close friend of mine. She does people's hair physically on campus in her dorm or at her parents' home, which is close to what is known as University City in Philadelphia. She uses social media to cultivate locality in the geographic sense, and the shifting of locations between on-campus and off based on the client and what's more convenient for them further fosters place-specific community. Additionally, this space serves as a vast gossip and information hub, especially considering it is on campus. Multiple times while getting my hair done, another student or friend would come in and watch a movie with us or gossip about school drama and vent about issues. As studies show, "Customers are often more comfortable and open in their own homes, so it's a place where quality bonding can happen. Bringing positive social interactions and friendship into people's lives is what makes at-home beauty something that changes lives for the better."⁵

→ An Instagram reel on the @ Alashtech page is titled "Small gestures clients do that aren't so small to me." Screenshot by MaTaeya McFadden, April 23, 2024.





← An Instagram reel, on @Nailbar's page, of nails with flowers on them, titled "5 Things that make me different from other nail techs." Screenshot by MaTaeya McFadden, April 23, 2024.

What to look for in an eyelash technician

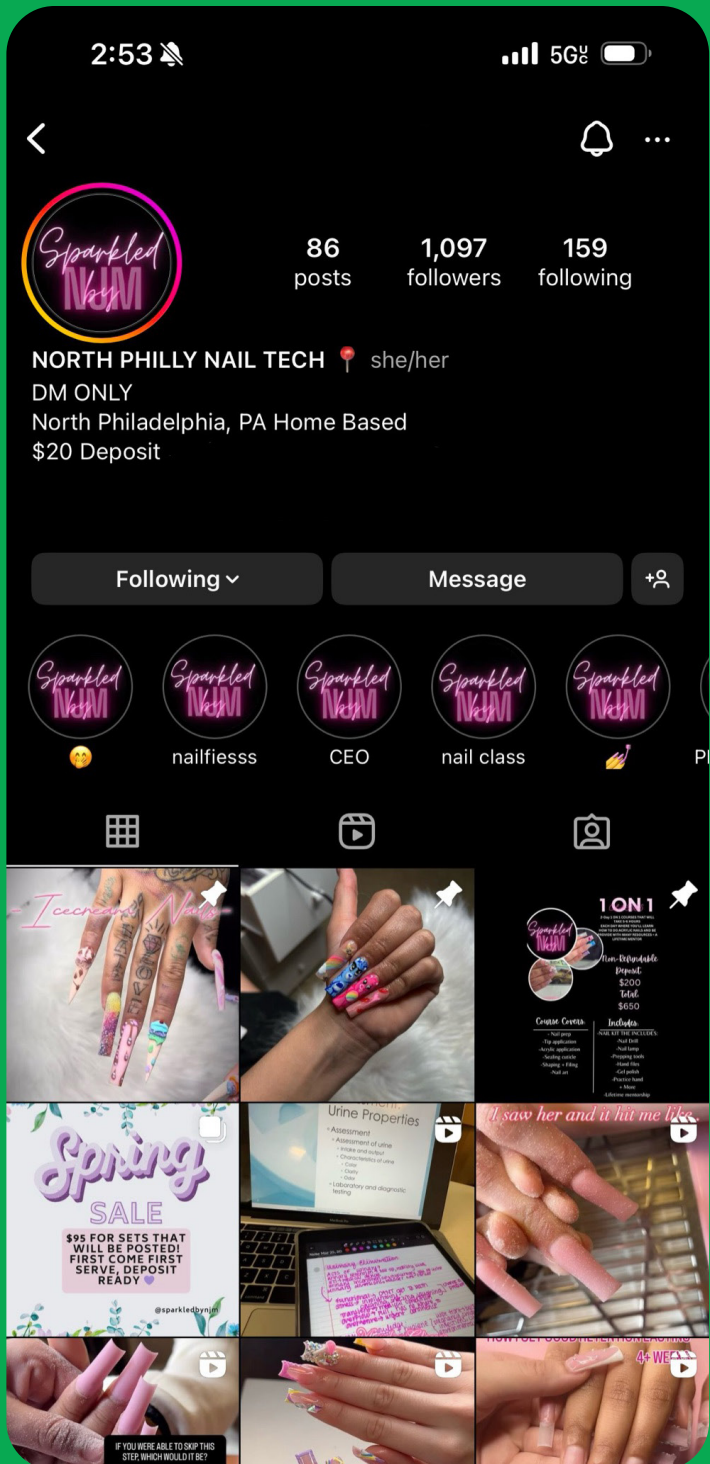
Alashtech actively advertised within her Instagram bio that she is located in the Temple University area, immediately catering to college students. Furthermore, she makes posts that foster community by reassuring and establishing client relationships. Specifically, within the caption of this post, she states that she loves hearing feedback from her clients and that she is not “just the lash tech.” This phrase is critical to what it means to be a local mediator: she encourages a deeper relationship and comfort level than just a service provider between her and her clients. She creates a space where they can hold each other accountable, which carries critical restorative value, and where they can share any information they desire.

In my experience, even the physical space promotes a sense of community and comfort. There is a reclined chair and blanket for clients to use while being serviced, music can be played, conversation can be held, and snacks can even be provided upon request. When one has as much ownership over their place of business, they can curate a calming environment and create mutual respect and community. Alashtech even has a close relationship with Nailbar, whom we’ll meet below; they service each other and help each other with exposure, advertisement, and content, which showcases the community that the technicians have created with each other and each other’s clients.



← An Instagram reel, on @ Nailbar's page, of pink nails titled "my clients & their zodiac signs." Screen-shot by MaTaeya McFadden, April 23, 2024.

→ Instagram page of @Nailbar with boxes displaying the different nails the technician has produced, along with promotions for their one-on-one classes, etc. Screenshot by MaTaeya McFadden, April 23, 2024



12. Local Media in the Beauty Scene

What to look for in a nail technician

This post is an Instagram reel of multiple nail designs that Nailbar has done, and in the caption, she talks about what makes her different from other nail technicians. In her posts, the stylist emphasizes the importance of creating friendships with her clients, as well as being understanding and communicating when things happen that are out of our control: allowing grace for the clients if they are a few minutes late, stating that she hangs out with some of her clients outside of services, and supporting them on their personal pages are among the ways Nailbar serves as a local mediator. Such actions increase the trust between the client and the service provider, which opens the sessions up for gossip, information sharing, hanging out, and creating community, which are among the key functions of many beauty spaces.

She has many interactive reels and reposted Tiktok's, like this one, on her Instagram page, where she guesses some of her clients' zodiac signs based on their conversation and the nails they get. Such online activity engages the audience and attracts new clients because it is clear that she treats her clients like friends and family where you can joke around and discuss random silly things and more serious matters. This is a perfect example of how beauty spaces can serve as a local media hub and, specifically, how these home beauty spaces help us maintain community and local connection, etc.

Yet, in recent years, some Black women have complained about the home-based hairstylists being unprofessional and unreasonable with their requests. For example, some may charge an astronomically large amount, and there are severe late policies, but no policies hold the technicians accountable for any reschedules or tardiness on their part. However, “there are many Black hairstylists who do prioritize professional, pleasurable experiences for clients. All stylists shouldn’t be lumped together with a few bad apples.”⁶ Nailbar does a fantastic job demonstrating how professional and community-oriented home-based technicians can be. Personally, I have engaged in wonderful conversations with Nailbar about my career goals, etc., and her complimentary goody bag at the end of the service makes you feel welcome, appreciated, and more than just a client. She even posts pictures from her clients’ personal pages of accomplishments they’ve done outside of getting serviced by her or if they just look nice wearing the nails she created.

12. Local Media in the Beauty Scene

How to spot an invasive species

An invasive species is a beauty page that advertises other people's work they find on the internet to get people to book with them so that they can charge a huge deposit and then sever all communication. They're parasites. Usually, when booking with a hairstylist, you either click the booking link in their bio and then choose the date, style, and time you want for your appointment, and then proceed to send a deposit of around \$10-\$20 that will go towards the total of your service and secure your appointment. You can also directly message the stylist on Instagram and work out all the details, including the deposit, from there. If the price for the deposit is more than \$20, nine times out of ten, you have encountered an invasive species. Because this system is built largely on trust, many people take advantage, which is how an invasive species can scam you.

One fundamental way to spot an invasive species is by looking at the background of each final product post. An official beauty page will have a common background where they take pictures of their work, unlike a scam page, where they most likely will have a variety of backgrounds because they are assembling real technicians' work from different pages. Nailbar is a perfect example of an actual technician page because not only are all the backgrounds similar, but she also has a section of the page that showcases her face, titled "CEO." An invasive species will, 95% of the time, never put a face to the product.

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Please beware of these
invasive species and utilize
these tips to encounter an
authentic local home-based
beauty space.

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↑ Exterior of Social House Eatery and Cafe. Photo by the author.

13. Critical Media Incubators: Local Philadelphia Coffee Shops

Gerardo Ramirez

site

Philadelphia Coffee Shops

phenotype

Often presenting cozy, inviting atmospheres, local coffee shops in Philadelphia range from quaint, book-lined cafes to modern, art-filled spaces. These establishments are distinct from large national and international chains, as they serve their immediate local communities and emphasize quality and uniqueness over uniformity. Each is a distinct fixture in its neighborhood, but common features include varied seating options, thoughtfully-chosen decor, bulletin boards—with flyers, local business information, and event calendars—and other amenities like outlets and wifi. To stand out visually and engage the senses, creative signage, inviting greenery, and the emanating aroma of freshly roasted coffee are also commonplace on the exterior of these businesses.

Behavior

Designed to support a blend of activities ranging from work to lingering and social interaction, the features of coffee shops cement them as key “third places” in their ecosystems. Introduced by Ray Oldenburg, this concept proposes that such spaces—bars, libraries, bookshops, parks, and restaurants, among others—foster informal, public socialization and the exchange of information outside of structured settings. The concept of “third places” specifically identifies three important places in humans’ lives. The home and the workplace are the first two, respectively, while the third place refers to spaces that are different and removed from the first two. These are public spaces that center conversation and are neutral, inclusive, and accessible to all, typically providing a sense of comfort and support that enhances community well-being.¹ Such can be the function of the coffee shop. Daily operations in these spaces reveal a web of “third place” interactions. Morning rushes are common, with a mix of regulars and newcomers grabbing coffee on their way to work, making quick yet meaningful conversation with staff or other customers. Afternoons offer quiet respite, ideal for meetings, freelance work, or moments of contemplation and reading. Social events are also frequently planned in these establishments (though some coffee shops are more social than others), making the coffee shop a versatile space-system that adapts to the needs of its community throughout the day and thus an essential “third place.”

But coffee shops are not merely conversation pits or places for recess. Valuable information is regularly exchanged in these spaces. Relationships that are formed among and between patrons and other locales inside of coffee shops allow for these exchanges and demon-

strate their role as “information grounds.” These are environments that are temporarily formed through human interaction, where a social atmosphere that facilitates spontaneous and informative exchanges emerges.² Local coffee shops form mutualistic relationships with nearby businesses, artists, and suppliers. They often feature products from local bakeries and dairies, display art from nearby galleries, and host events like book signings and music nights. Some coffee shops engage in initiatives co-created with consumers that facilitate connections.³ Rich information landscapes are created as a result and visitors to coffee shops have the potential to be “in the know” about the goings-on of their surroundings while providing patronage and word-of-mouth promotion.

This successful, temporal exchange of information is in part due to how local coffee shops function as key “incubators” for local media. That is to say, coffee shops are key spaces for the creation and dissemination of local media. This extends beyond casual information exchanges to include the creation, collection, display, and distribution of printed and digital media. From community event flyers and local business advertisements to newsletters and platforms for mutual aid, the media in local coffee shops is abundant, and each coffee shop showcases a mix of media that is relevant culturally and geographically, as will be evidenced by The Last Drop, Social House Eatery and Cafe, and Peddler Coffee, all local coffee shops in Philadelphia. As such, these establishments shape and reflect the cultural and informational landscape of their communities.



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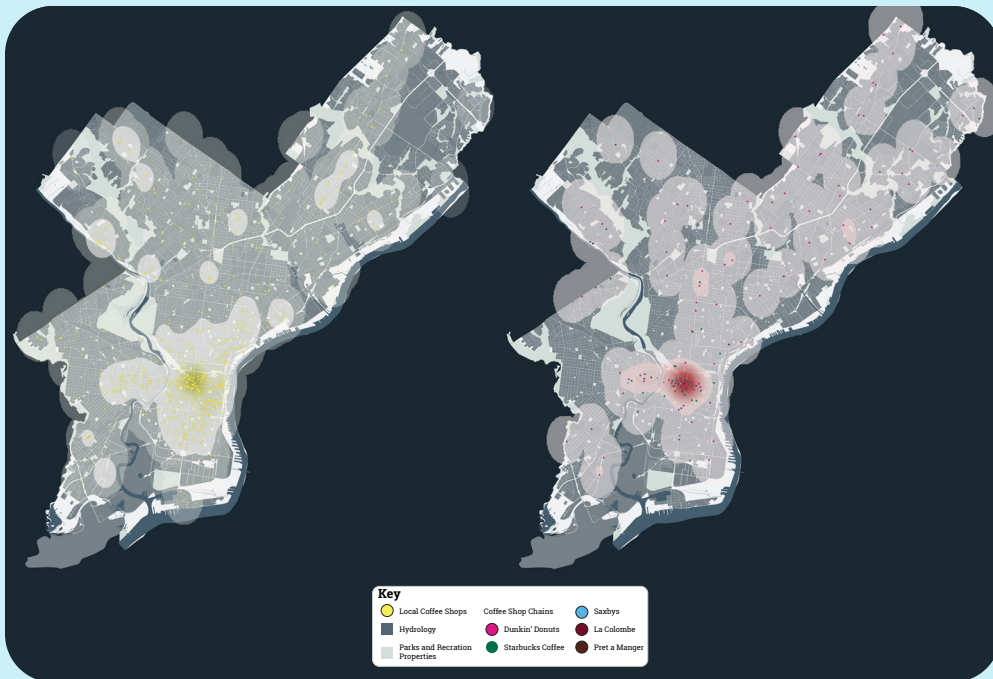
Coffee shops thrive in diverse urban settings, from bustling city corners to quieter residential blocks. Their placement is strategic. To maximize accessibility and visibility in their environments, coffee shops often settle near other local businesses, libraries, and parks, which helps integrate them into the daily routines of residents. These businesses also tend to prefer commercial floors of Philadelphia rowhomes. The large, street-facing windows typical of these floors not only invite the gaze of passersby (potential patrons) but also provide a display for those within, allowing the exterior to enrich the experiences of customers seated inside. Corner locations, which can provide increased exposure to pedestrians and cars alike and access to wider sidewalks that can accommodate outdoor seating, are also valuable locations for coffee shops. Conditions that allow for enough visibility to help them stand out without clashing with their surroundings certainly make it easier for coffee shops to survive, but they do not necessarily ensure their success.

↑ The Last Drop, with its corner entrance at Pine and 13th Streets. Photo by the author.

Range

Despite their importance in circulating local media, the range of local, native coffee shops in Philadelphia has been in decline for years, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and continued by the surge of larger, predatory chains that contribute significantly less to their immediate environments.⁴ Today, only a few hundred establishments can be found throughout the city of Philadelphia, and the survival of local coffee shops in the city is threatened by coffee chains like Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, and Saxbys, among others.⁵ These chains can overshadow small businesses through their scale and marketing power. A review of active Food Preparing and Serving and Non-Permanent Location Food Establishment business licenses published by the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections (L & I) shows a large number of permits issued to big chains, underscoring the competitive pressure faced by smaller establishments.⁶ Geocoding these business licenses demonstrates further cause for concern; some neighborhoods like Brewerytown and North Philadelphia are almost entirely underserved, with few local coffee shops in their vicinity.

Franchises and larger coffee shop chains, though not inherently detrimental since they can still be considered “third places”, still lack the unique community value local alternatives provide. Large chains present themselves phenotypically across borders as homogenous entities, with no room in their design DNA or brand identities for the alternative or diverse experiences of different communities; they miss opportunities to engage deeply in local culture, and neighborhoods with significantly lower amounts of local coffee shop businesses suffer as a result.⁷ Shops like Alif Brew & Mini



Mart and Avenues Café, for instance, use their space to introduce customers to traditional practices and celebrations. The traditional buna tetu or coffee ceremony at Alif Brew is not only a cultural event but also a session for community dialogue, where topics like family, community challenges, and personal stories are shared. This practice transforms the shop into a forum for cultural exchange and oral storytelling, serving as a medium for passing on heritage and personal narratives.⁸ Throughout the city, many other coffee shops offer similar cultural connections, particularly in immigrant and BIPOC communities. These establishments offer their space not just for selling coffee but for promoting cultural engagement through various forms of media, and their success hinges on community support, the quality of their offerings, and their ability to serve as essential social and cultural outposts.

↑ Heatmaps showing the locations of local vs chain coffee shops in Philadelphia. Map by the author.

→ Community bulletin board at the entrance of Social House Eatery and Cafe. Photo by the author.



Case Studies

The following are a few of the many cafes in the city that exemplify characteristics expressed above. These locations are not incredibly diverse geographically, but they still cater to different demographics and provide, aside from very tasty coffee, access to a number of local resources.

Social House Eatery and Cafe

Located at the intersection of South and 21st Streets, in the Graduate Hospital neighborhood of Philadelphia, this cafe space demonstrates the potential of coffee shops in Philadelphia to bolster local economics. The community bulletin board featured at its entrance is



← Important resources, like a WOAR - Center Against Sexual Violence 24 hour hotline, offered at The Last Drop. Photo by the author.

dense. Advertisements from other local businesses litter this board, from mobile landscaping services to mom and pop nail salons. The range of businesses and postings gives patrons a glimpse of the local commerce and, in a meaningful way, also serves as a physical manifestation of the cafe's commitment to supporting and promoting local enterprises. The exchange of information is succinct in this cafe; when not occurring in conversations or meetings, it can begin with something as simple as a person asking the staff whether they can add their own print outs to the board and continue with another person silently snapping a picture of a useful service hours, days, or weeks later, when their lawn or new puppy has become too unruly.



↑ Peddler Coffee's condiment bar and candle shelf. Photo by the author.

13. Local Philadelphia Coffee Shops

The Last Drop

Like the Social House Eatery and Cafe, The Last Drop is a corner cafe in Philadelphia's Washington Square West neighborhood, near the Gayborhood, nestled underneath a Philadelphia row home at Pine and 13th Streets. Thoughtful decor and a variety of artwork welcome passersby. At its entrance, stickers and flyers alike signal to potential customers that it is a safe and inclusive space for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Newspapers on a bench near the entrance detail the latest in the LGBTQ+ community, and an assortment of movie DVDs, books, and CDs sit in piles under a piece of paper taped to the wall that reads "Free Stuff"—forms of information exchange in their own right. On a table leading to the ordering bar, media curated by the shop's staff invites customers to local comedy events, nightclubs, and theater shows, as well as a number of other political and social activities/ opportunities. Some of the most personally appealing events were the \$5 comedy show at Glory and the call for part time workers at the Farmers Market. As with Social House Eatery and Cafe, the information on local resources that can be displayed is diverse, but it is clear, from the occasional tidying by staff, that great care is taken in their selection to ensure that the resources are, if not community-specific, then at least community-relevant.

Peddler Coffee

At the corner of Spring and 21st Streets, Peddler Coffee opens its doors to the Logan Square neighborhood of Philadelphia. Like the others in this list, Peddler Coffee sits underneath the residential floors of a row-home, with its corner entrance facing outward onto the intersection. The shop boasts large panes of glass on

either side lined with seating. Though unassuming, its condiment bar features a small collection of print media about local events and services/ businesses, and it is flanked on its right by a series of shelves with merchandise from Arch Street Candles, a “one man” business created by a local Philadelphia resident, again promoting local commerce.

As these case studies show, local coffee shops in Philadelphia are more than just places to grab a cup of coffee. They are crucial cultural and informational centers within their communities. Supporting them is not just about sustaining small businesses but about preserving the community value they hold.

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