



## ★ The Berkshire Creative Economy Report

- sect1**    The Berkshires as a Cultural Destination, *page 3*
- sect2**    Defining the Creative Economy of the Berkshires, *page 7*
- sect3**    Measuring the Value of the Creative Economy of the Berkshires, *page 15*
- sect4**    Creative Economy Opportunities and Challenges, *page 23*
- sect5**    Strategic Initiatives, *page 31*
- sect6**    Balancing Growth and Sustainability, *page 39*
- sect7**    The Berkshire Creative Economy Purpose and Process, *page 41*
- sect8**    List of Interviewees and Focus Group Participants, *page 45*
- sect9**    Acknowledgements / Art Means Business in the Berkshires, *page 47*

# sect1

# Introduction: The Berkshires as a Cultural Destination

## History and overview

For more than 200 years, the living cathedral of the Berkshires—its rural tapestry of forests, hills, lakes and mountains that changes hue with each new season—has attracted writers, artists, musicians, actors, artisans, and entrepreneurs.

Through its network of villages, small towns, and cities stitched into the landscape, the Berkshires has prospered as a source of ingenuity, creating a way of life conducive to artistic expression and cultural enterprise.

In America's Gilded Age, it was a destination of choice for the wealthy, creating a legacy of mansions, cottages, and gardens. Many of the architecturally significant buildings created by the country's turn-of-the-century industrialists have been conserved or adapted for the contemporary wellness industry or maintained as house museums. Zenas Crane founded Berkshire Museum, the County's oldest museum, in 1903 to provide a "window to the world," to the region's residents.

Ventfort Hall, an Elizabethan-style mansion, was built in 1893 for Sarah Morgan, the sister of J.P. Morgan, and is now the home of the Museum of the Gilded Age. Bellefontaine Mansion, built in 1897 as a copy of Louis XIV's Petit Trianon, is now the Lenox home of Canyon Ranch health resort. Writers attracted to the bucolic setting, such as Edith Wharton and Herman Melville, who wrote *Moby Dick* while looking out his window overlooking Mount Greylock, leave a legacy not only of their written work, but of their homes and gardens – the Mount and Arrowhead respectively. Tanglewood, where Nathaniel Hawthorne and his family once resided as renters, now serves as the storied summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The region has a diverse cultural heritage. Native American and African American history run deep

through the Housatonic Valley. Statesman W.E.B. DuBois was a native of Great Barrington and wrote the *Souls of Black Folk* in 1903. The Underground Railroad took safe haven at the site later to become Jacob's Pillow. The Stockbridge Indians held an historic meeting at the Mission House in Stockbridge, now a museum to early American life and a property of the Trustees of Reservations.

The Berkshires became the location of Jacob's Pillow, which continues its roots as an institution in the vanguard of contemporary dance. The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown was created in the 1950's, with its 140-acre campus at the base of Stone Hill. Its two-year graduate program in the history of art, run in partnership with Williams College, has graduated hundreds of students, many of whom have gone on to become curators and directors at the nation's leading museums.

The Norman Rockwell Museum, the repository of some of the country's most recognized and revered images of American life, expanded dramatically over the last 10 years, moving from a modest colonial house in the center of Stockbridge to a multi-million dollar contemporary museum building. Its influence and reach includes a robust education program for children, and a traveling exhibition program with shows on American illustration that reach audiences across the country. Its success has been a primary driver of the town of Stockbridge's economic prosperity since its inception in 1969.

Hancock Shaker Village, the most comprehensively interpreted Shaker site in the nation, with the largest cultural campus in the Berkshires, was the result of a large-scale historic restoration which pre-dated current national conservation and restoration standards. This work inspired a

generation of preservationists who embraced and codified the work done on the site to become the canon for historic preservation work in the United States still in use today.

Today, the Berkshires continues its legacy as a restful retreat for the metropolitan area wealthy and as an artistic retreat for those working in all branches of artistry, from dancers to writers, visual artists, musicians, sculptors and new media artists. The region's artistic and cultural institutions and creative-based businesses have become the prologue for a potent, new, economic engine.

The creative tension between artist and landscape, survival and success has fashioned a vibrant economic pulse. It has great potential to move the creative economy of the Berkshires. The result is a unique creative sector, one that is helping drive the regional economy towards renewed prosperity in the 21st century and differentiate it in an evolving global economy.

## **CREATIVE SECTOR—DEFINITION**

The enterprises and people involved in the production and distribution of goods and services in which the aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional engagement of the consumer gives the product value in the marketplace.

## **CREATIVE SECTOR—SCOPE**

The Creative Sector in the Berkshires includes non-profit cultural institutions, commercial businesses, and individual artists.

# The changing context

## What is the creative economy?

When asked about the role of arts and culture in their community, many residents and businesses in the Berkshires talk about the region's well-known major cultural institutions. They mention Tanglewood, Shakespeare & Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Barrington Stage Company, Hancock Shaker Village, Berkshire Theater Festival, Jacob's Pillow, MASS MoCA, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and the Clark, to name a few. Some note the recent influx of artists into North Adams and Pittsfield, sparking revitalization activity.

When residents and businesses discuss the economic importance of arts and culture, the focus historically has been on the tourism industry. The region's artistic and cultural institutions are viewed

by some as merely "tourist attractions," discounting their role in the region's economy. Economic development and business attraction strategies have focused on more traditional sectors, such as financial services and manufacturing.

Now, this is beginning to change. Arts and culture have played a significant role in the Berkshires for centuries. They have clearly been important to the quality of life in Berkshire County, and they have certainly contributed to the county's economy by bringing in tourist revenue and selling products to local and regional markets. As arts and culture activities have grown and evolved to what is now called the Creative Sector, their economic importance has increased substantially.

The creative sector is now largely an “export-based” economic sector, in which products and services are distributed and sold worldwide. Artists in Berkshire County sell their work at national and international trade shows, through galleries in the Northeast and in the U.S., and on the Internet to arts consumers all over the world. Creative businesses – both for-profit and not-for-profit in the county are producing art-based goods and services that are sold in the global marketplace. These include traditional consumer goods, traveling exhibitions, training and education programs, licensed products, artwork and derivative products from artistic output. The export-based nature of the creative sector means that more revenues are coming into the Berkshire economy, thereby enriching the County’s economy.

Most importantly, the creative industries have increasingly been recognized as an area of significant growth in the global economic arena. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimates that the global market value of the creative industries has increased from \$831 billion in 2000 to \$1.3 trillion in 2005. Similarly, a United Kingdom study predicted a 46 percent employment growth in the creative economy sector over the next two decades. As Berkshire businesses and residents look to shape the region’s future economic blueprint, the creative sector presents significant opportunity for business development and job growth.

## Why is it important to nurture and strengthen the creative sector?

*Here are the research findings:*

- a strong creative sector translates directly to a strong Berkshires economy;
- individual artists and creative businesses add important economic value to the region;
- the cultural institutions’ economic role in the Berkshires is broader than believed;
- the creative sector has links with and strengthens traditional economic sectors;
- overall, the creative sector includes an estimated 6,100 jobs;
- significant economic potential exists in the development of new cultural products;
- the creative sector creates new jobs in technical areas, in services, and in management;
- the creative sector serves as a tool for revitalizing the downtown area of cities and towns;
- the creative sector serves as an influential amenity to attract other businesses and residents to the Berkshires;
- the activities of the creative sector represent a key product of the hospitality industry in the Berkshires; and
- the growth of the creative sector increases the economic competitiveness of other sectors in the Berkshires.

# sect2

# Defining the Creative Economy of the Berkshires

## Defining the segments of the creative economy

*The relationship of creativity, heritage, and landscape*

The Berkshires as a county—and as a region—stretches from the northwestern tip to the southwestern corner of Massachusetts, traversing the length of the Commonwealth’s north-south boundaries. Its economic footprint spills over the state borders into southern Vermont, northwestern Connecticut, and Columbia County in New York State.

The region is often united in name only, as residents and businesses tend to see themselves as belonging to smaller spheres of influence. Great Barrington in the south, Pittsfield in the center, and North Adams in the north tend to be viewed by residents as separate, distinct cities and towns with little need to interact. The region’s only major Highway I-90, The Massachusetts Turnpike, runs east-west, connecting the Berkshires to Boston and Albany.

What does unite the Berkshires is a shared New England heritage of industrious small town life and a worshipful appreciation of its mosaic landscape of great natural beauty. These qualities have proven attractive to each new generation of artists, artisans, and cultural entrepreneurs. Stewardship of the natural environment has early roots in the first village improvement society in America, the Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge, established in 1853.

The Berkshires has always nurtured a distinctive voice, a vision, and a personal vital force in its economic and artistic activities. Today, across all segments of the creative sector, that tradition of “personal vital force”—the relationship of creativity, heritage, and landscape—is present in a new generation of artists and cultural entrepreneurs who are reshaping the economic landscape of the Berkshires.

The key segments of the creative economy in Berkshire County today include: Media/New Media, Commercial Arts, Design, Heritage and Conservation, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Crafts, and Literary. Manufacturing is a component of several of the creative economy segments -- this is especially true for Commercial Arts and Design, and also for some elements in craft production such as textiles and furniture.. The support system includes business services, education, government, and networks. What follows is a brief overview of each segment, with descriptive examples.

# The Creative Sector in Berkshire County

<b>Media/ New Media</b> film, video, animation, web design, sound studios, TV, radio
<b>Commercial Arts</b> graphic design, advertising, printing
<b>Design</b> architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, home furnishing, gardens, product design
<b>Literary</b> books, newspapers, periodicals, libraries
<b>Visual Arts and Crafts</b> painting, sculpture, photography, crafts, galleries, art museums
<b>Performing Arts</b> dance, theatre, music
<b>Heritage and Conservation</b> museums, historic sites, restoration, preservation
<b>Support System</b> Business services, Education Government, Networks

## Media/New Media

### *The Intersection of Arts and Technology*

*What do Back to the Future, Silent Running, Blade Runner, Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, Judge Dredd, Mortal Kombat, and X-Men have in common?*

They benefited from the special effects and animation talent that migrated to the Berkshires during the 1990s.

When Doug Trumbull, a filmmaker (the director of *Silent Running*) and visual effects pioneer, moved to the Berkshires and started his company, Mass Illusions, some of the most talented individuals in the field followed.

This talent included: Tom Gasek (most recently involved in *Chicken Run*), Joel Heynek, (winner of an Academy Award for special effects for *Where Dreams May Come*), John Gaeta (winner of an Academy Award for special effects for *The Matrix*), John Nugent (special effects for *Lord of the Rings*), Eric Wilson (digital supervisor *Slither*), and Jeff Kleiser (visual effects for *Mortal Kombat*, and *X-Men*).

At one point in the late 1990s, with the development of a number of spin-off companies, there was the hope of a major new media cluster emerging in the Berkshires. However, distance from the west coast and changes in technology have led many of those involved in new media to leave the region.

While the promise of this emerging cluster has not yet been fully realized, some of this talent still remains in the Berkshires and continues to work at the intersection of art and technology. Companies such as Synthespian Studios, OOH Animation, Sandbox Pictures, and Powder Keg continue to produce work for commercials, feature films, theme park rides, and computer gaming. One of the more interesting spin-offs from this talent is no longer working in the entertainment field, but in the medical training arena. Eric and Lisa Chamberlain

use their talents garnered in the special effects industry to create custom models for the medical industry. Their company, the Chamberlain Group, headquartered in the Berkshires, builds on the creativity and design required in the special effects industry to produce anatomically accurate medical models that capture the consistency and response of living tissue. This entrepreneurial company represents the potential of combining creativity and technology, as they note: “We blend art and technology to bring innovation to medical education.”

Beyond this specialized niche in the special effects and animation industries, the Berkshires is the home to a number of small firms involved in digital graphics, sound recording, and E-commerce. The growth of MASS MoCA in North Adams has provided a platform for new media explorations into artistic creation. The establishment of a new startup company, WorkshopLive, is another example of how arts and technology come together to create economic value in the Berkshires. The company, headquartered in Pittsfield, provides live music education on the Internet.

## Commercial Arts

### *Looking good in the neighborhood*

The lines between the commercial and nonprofit sector are increasingly blurred in the creative economy. Few visual artists, photographers, or writers are able to earn their livings through their non-commercial art. Many work in the commercial sector as graphic designers, in the advertising industry, creating websites, or working for commercial printers.

The commercial arts segment is one segment of the Berkshire Creative Economy that is relatively weak. While there are some growing entrepreneurial companies, such as Boxcar Media, Zenn New Media, Winstanley Associates and Studio Two, most of the businesses in this segment involve very small advertising and marketing firms (about 15 in the region) and individual graphic artists and photographers

working on a contract basis. Many of these firms and freelance artists and designers are employed by the region’s cultural institutions.

There is one element of this segment, however, that does provide significant employment opportunities in the region. That is the long established printing and paper-making industry which settled into the region’s rivers for making power and providing water for its products. The region is home to about 20 printers, a few of which are very significant players in the creative economy such as Crane & Co., Interprint, Excelsior Press, Studley Press, and Quality Printing. (See Finding in following chapter.)

Film is a growing art scene in the Berkshire creative economy. The Little Cinema at the Berkshire Museum and Image Cinema in Williamstown have long been showcases for foreign and art films. Recently, the Berkshire International Film Festival (BIFF) presented a three-day festival of documentaries and independent film.

## Design

### *The built environment and lifestyle products*

The Berkshires attract a large number of second-home owners from metropolitan areas and, with it, a significant demand for home and garden products. This market stretches across the state borders into Vermont, New York State, and Connecticut. As a result, lifestyle-related products and services have emerged as a very significant part of the creative economy in the Berkshires.

The concentration of second-home owners has, in turn, created a burgeoning network of commercial enterprises involved in architecture, interior design, cabinet making, architectural woodwork, and home furnishings. Mt. Auburn estimates that there are about 30 architectural firms and about 25 interior design companies operating in the region. While many of these firms serve the local market, a number also provide design services outside of the region to a national market.

Horticulture and gardens historically play a very important role in the region's culture and lifestyle, and also provide a "growing" opportunity for the design segment of the creative economy in the Berkshires. As noted by the Berkshire Botanical Gardens, "In the Berkshires, horticulture is the other culture."

There are about 20 landscape firms operating in the Berkshires. One such company, the Lenox-based Cut It Out, creates sculptural house and garden trellises, planters, and arbors. There are also numerous businesses involved in garden supplies, landscaping, masonry, and stone work.

Tom Steir, the owner of Monterey Masonry, a landscape design and stonework company located in Sheffield, said, "Before I was a mason, I was an artist." He described his profession as encompassing "visual artist, craftsman, mason, sculptor, poet and artisan," involving new genres and mixed media. Steir sees that his work will "overflow one category and spill into another."

The Berkshires is home to a new generation of product designers who are creating and exporting innovative, highly designed products for the global marketplace. This trend parallels the emergence of product design as an important generator of economic value. According to a recent Business Week special edition on design, "When people talked about innovation in the 90s they invariably meant technology. When people speak of innovation today, it is more likely to mean design. Consumers, who are choking on choice, look at design as the new differentiator."

Cultural entrepreneurs in the Berkshires such as Annie Selke have developed successful lifestyle-related companies that are using design to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. In 1993, Annie Selke founded Pine Cone Hill, a wholesaler of home goods with a distinctive design that are sold in major home catalogues and in more than 2,000 specialty stores throughout the United States. Selke has expanded her business to

include ceramics and rugs. In 2001, she purchased Potluck Studios, a ceramics firm making high-end pots and dinnerware. Today, the creative design is done in the Berkshires, and 50% of product is manufactured in nine countries around the globe.

Pine Cone Hill is just one of a number of entrepreneurial companies located in the Berkshires that found commercial success in the quality of their product design. Other companies include:

- Sam Kasten, producer of high quality hand made custom textiles for the interior design and architectural trades.
- L'Unique Optique, an eyewear design studio that recently moved from Soho in New York City to Great Barrington.
- Crispina/Fuschia, a home products design studio that produces rugs and other cloth objects that it sells internationally, as well as in its own retail store in Lenox.
- Country Curtains, the nationally successful fifty year-old retail and direct sales curtain design and homegoods company founded and owned by the Fitzpatrick Family.
- Primitive Artisan, a wholesale designer and importer of hand crafted home products from around the world.

## Literary Arts

### *The written word*

Writers have long been attracted to the serene landscapes and lifestyle of the Berkshires. From Herman Melville, Edith Wharton, Catherine Sedgwick, and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the 19th Century to novelists Andrea Barrett and humorist Roy Blount, Jr. today, the region has been home to an informal network of writers and poets. This network is supported by several independent bookstores and writers' workshops that serve as a venue and support system for these writers; organizations such as Inkberry promote literary arts with readings, events, community partnerships and interactive programs. Wordstreet and the Berkshire Writers Room also encourage creativity and provide opportunities for writers to convene and discuss their work. The region's higher education

institutions and public libraries also contribute to this segment through their writing programs and lectures series. With this wealth of talent, the literary arts is a strong, but under-valued, segment of the creative economy in the Berkshires.

The Berkshires is also home to a long established and growing publishing industry. The region's leading media publisher, New England Newspapers, is parent company of *The Berkshire Eagle*, and the *North Adams Transcript*. Monthly journals such as the *Women's Times*, *The Artful Mind*, *Country and Abroad*, and *Homestyle* showcase a rich array of regional authors, artists, graphic designers, and design products and provide a source of income for many of the region's freelance writers. Weekly newspapers include the *Advocate*, *The Berkshire Record*, *The Pittsfield Gazette* and *The Berkshire Business Journal*. Numerous small community newsletters are published in rural towns such as the *New Marlborough Village News* and the *West Stockbridge Local Yokel*.

Recent startups in the region include: *Upstreet*, a new national literary magazine, and *Berkshire Living*, started by Michael Zivjak, which has already won national awards for excellence after its first year in business. *Orion Magazine*, is another long-established independent magazine published by the nonprofit Orion Society, dedicated to sustainable living and environmental preservation. The Schumacher Society, based in southern Berkshire, publishes periodic treatises on sustainable living and community preservation.

Commercial publishers in the region include Laurin Publishing, producers of magazines and directories for the photonics industry; the Berkshire Publishing Group; J.F. Griffin Publishing, producers of hunting and fishing publications; Cottage Press, a small house publisher of books related to the Berkshires; and The North River Press. The only publishing company of significant size is Storey Publishing.

## Visual Arts and Crafts

### *Art for Art's Sake*

Individual artists and craftspeople form the foundation of the creative sector of the Berkshires. They make the Berkshires one of the nation's leading regions in the visual arts, and make a significant contribution to the identity and strength of the creative economy sector in the Berkshires.

The Berkshires has always been the home to world-renowned painters and sculptors. The legacy of some of the earlier generations of Berkshire artists is found in the Norman Rockwell Museum, and the sculpture of Daniel Chester French at his home and studio museum, Chesterwood. Also of note are the more modern works of abstract painters, George LK Morris and Suzy Frelinghuysen, whose home and studios remain open to the public. America's 18th, 19th and 20th century art movements can be experienced in these artists studios, homes and museums.

The southern Berkshire region has long been a fertile bed of artists' studios and galleries. Monument Mills in the village of Housatonic is home to numerous artist studios, galleries, and the AHA artist association. SculptureNOW is an association of contemporary sculptors who stage outdoor exhibitions. The Berkshire Art Association is one of the oldest artist associations in the County. Lenox, Housatonic and Great Barrington are bursting with galleries.

Today, the fresh arts story in the Berkshires is the influx of young artists from around the nation who are migrating to the region to be part of its urban arts scene. This started with the influx of new, contemporary artists coming to North Adams and moving into its new artists' live-work space. North Adams has numerous old mills filled with artists, and it supports organizations such as the Contemporary Artists Center founded by Eric Rudd. MASS MoCA commissions the work of leading international contemporary artists, which has attracted many

other artists who have relocated to North Adams. Pittsfield is following as a desirable location for artists. Through the leadership of artist Maggie Mailer, the Storefront Artists Project, which initially filled vacant store fronts in exchange for free rent studios, has provided artists with low-cost or free studio space. As a result, during the past few years, the communities of North Adams and Pittsfield have created a buzz and are attracting dozens of creative artists and craftspeople looking for affordable space and an environment that is hospitable to the arts community through supportive local government policy, community development incentives and affordable real estate. The often-repeated formula of offering space to artists in depressed downtown locations as a driver of economic development as artists convert the once-abandoned spaces into interesting spots to live and work is well under way.

While the Berkshires are home to number of nationally renowned artists such as Gregory Crewdson, and Walton Ford, for many artists, making a living remains a challenge. A substantial number of artists find employment opportunities in the “wellness” lifestyle segment of the creative economy, e.g., at the yoga retreat, the Kripalu Institute, and alternative therapies, etc. Others work in real estate or teaching, with the income from non-creative economy enterprises allowing many artists to continue to pursue their artwork.

There are also dozens of successful galleries and studios that dot the Berkshires landscape, particularly in southern Berkshire County, showing work of numerous visual artists, from painters to glassblowers and potters. Galleries and studios are an area of growth and represent an undercounted component of the region’s economy. While U.S. official employment data report a total of four art dealers in Berkshire County, our database has information on more than 70 art galleries and craft studios throughout Berkshire County.

While galleries are the commercial venue for showing art, museums are the nonprofit institutional venues. For a small rural region, the Berkshires have one of the richest and most diverse collections of art in the country. Few communities the size of the Berkshires can boast of six major art museums, as well as one of the largest art libraries in the world. With the Norman Rockwell Museum, the Clark, the Williams College Museum of Art, the Berkshire Museum, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, and Shaker collections at Hancock Shaker Village, the Berkshires is a mecca in the exhibition of art.

## Performing Arts

### *All the Berkshires is a stage*

Since its inception, Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra has been driving growth in the Berkshires. As city residents traveled each summer to take in the world’s best performers, and as tomorrow’s generation of conductors and musicians received training, restaurants, hotels, inns, stores and support industries sprouted up around this famous spot. Its magnetic attraction created an environment that has driven a hot real estate market of palatial second home construction for the culturally aware, and has fostered numerous other world-class performing arts organizations, which attract tens of thousands of cultural tourists each year. These include: Berkshire Theater Festival, Jacob’s Pillow, Barrington Stage, Shakespeare & Company, and the Williamstown Theater Festival. This already significant list has been expanded of late with new presenting venues such as the recently renovated Colonial Theater in Pittsfield and the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington.

These are the major performing arts players. The region has more than 100 additional organizations and businesses involved in choral music (including the Berkshire Children’s Chorus and Berkshire Choral Festival), classical music (including the Aston Magna Foundation, the Berkshire Bach

Society, South Berkshire Concerts, and the Albany Symphony Orchestra, smaller theater companies (such as the Berkshire Fringe and Bazaar Productions, and Town Players of Pittsfield), and more contemporary music (including the indie band, “The Books,” as well as the music venue Club Helsinki.).

World renowned musicians James Taylor and Yo Yo Ma make the Berkshires their primary residence. Tanglewood, brings an influx of resident musicians to the region. The regional theatre scene has spawned some of the nation’s top theatre talent such as Joanne Woodward, Blythe Danner and Christopher Reeve. Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis founded Jacob’s Pillow which showcases the best in international dance during its summer dance festival.

All of these performance activities have generated a strong educational economic component as part of this segment. Like Tanglewood, many of the performing arts institutions provide professional training for talent in theatre music, dance and in the business of stage production. Berkshire Music School in Pittsfield has been a leader in training musicians for more than six decades.

## Heritage and Conservation

### *Preserving art’s legacy*

Beyond its art museums and performing arts organizations, the Berkshires have many institutions that celebrate and preserve the region’s history. Its largest, Hancock Shaker Village, is an outdoor history museum of Shaker life situated on 1,200 acres, with 20 original buildings and historic working farm and gardens preserve. Beyond Hancock Shaker Village, a National Historic Landmark, there are another 15 historic sites and houses in the Berkshires that have been formally designated as significant including Trustees of Reservations properties, Naumkeag, Colonel Ashley House and Mission House. There are scores of homes in private hands that have architecturally significant features and contribute to the artistic legacy of the county.

The Heritage and Conservation segment has been recognized primarily through its nonprofit organizations, but there are notable examples of commercial activities tied to restoration. The stylistic architecture of the Gilded Age cottages and mansions has created the need for specialized restoration resources within the region. The work of stained glass experts, such as Diane Rousseau, building on the legacy of the Cummings Company, provides the region with expert conservation and restoration skills. Rousseau has worked on glasswork for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. The Williamstown Art Conservation Center, with about 18 employees, is a world-class center of art restoration serving the conservation needs of 57 member museums in the northeastern and southeastern United States and many private collectors.

Behind the facade, many restoration and preservation companies, fine furniture and cabinet makers, stone masons, historic finishes experts and historic landscape restoration companies are at work providing services to cultural institutions, to business ventures housed in historic facilities and to individual homeowners who are buying, preserving and expanding the county’s stock of old homes.

# sect3

# Measuring the Value of the Creative Economy of the Berkshires

## Measuring Its Value

*The economic importance of the creative economy in the Berkshires*

### **FINDING: The creative economy sector generates jobs and income for many Berkshire County residents.**

The creative cluster is one of the most important economic engines in the Berkshire County economy, providing more than 6,000 jobs.

Traditional economic data do not capture the economic impact of the creative cluster to the Berkshire County economy.

Numerous not-for-profit enterprises are embedded in other clusters, and the employment numbers are not counted. For instance, historic buildings are listed under “conservancy,” the Williams College Museum of Art and new performing arts ’62 Center are listed under “education,” and libraries are considered part of “local government.”

County Business Patterns (one of Mt. Auburn Associates’ data sources) often uses data based on an employment survey taken on March 12th, which does not capture seasonal employment which is at an all time high during the summer and fall.

Many creative activities are classified in manufacturing and warehousing but, in fact, are creative products manufacturers.

A sizable group of business activities classified in “retail” are art studios and galleries.

Most conspicuously absent from the employment count, individual artists and performers are not captured at all.

To compile an accurate measurement of jobs generated by the creative economy sector, Mt. Auburn Associates employed a synthesis of numerous data sources using specific analytical tools.

This analysis of employment data found more than 6,100 jobs generated by the creative economy sector in Berkshire County.

The creative cluster provides a range of job opportunities for Berkshire County residents.

Contrary to what seems to be a common perception within Berkshire County, there are many well-paying jobs across a good cross-section of the creative economy sector. Many of these jobs have been, and continue to be, filled by local residents. Cultural and artistic enterprises are sources of well-paying local employment.

Berkshire Production Resources (BPR), a production-related employment firm founded in 1998, offers a good picture of other kinds of jobs in the county’s creative economy. BPR organizes a network of 25-30 people for jobs in stage lighting, rigging, scenic construction, special effects, and technical theater management, and then places them with performing arts institutions in the Berkshires. The jobs used to be seasonal in nature, but they are now increasingly year-round. Wage rates for these jobs range from \$17.50 an hour to \$30.00 an hour.

A broader look at the wage rates in some of the creative occupations provides further evidence that, contrary to common assumptions, there are many quality jobs in the creative economy.

**Self-employed artists, musicians, writers, and other creative occupations are a key element of the creative cluster and the number of self-employed is growing rapidly in the region.**

The Berkshires has a relatively high level of individuals who earn all or part of their livelihood through self-employment in the creative sectors. In 2004, there were a total of 1,134 individuals who were classified as sole-proprietorships, in other

words, owning a business in which they were the sole employee. About half, 572, were independent writers, artists, and performers. However, there was also a relatively large proportion of self-employed architects, landscape architects, publishers (print and Internet), sound studios, and design services.

The growth of this component of the creative economy has been very dramatic. Between 1997 and 2004, the rate of increase in the number of self employed “creatives” outpaced the total number of self-employed—and the growth in wage and salary employment as well. In actual figures, the number of independent artists, writers, and performers in the Berkshires has grown from 432 in 1997 to 620 in 2004. In all likelihood, this trend has continued or accelerated since 2004, with further in migration of artists to North Adams and Pittsfield.

**Commercial enterprises that produce or distribute creative goods and services are an important, and often overlooked, component of the creative cluster.**

For example, there are a number of small but vibrant music studios in the region—Derek Studios in Dalton and Off the Beat N Track in New Marlboro. Muddy Angel Music in Richmond specializes in spiritual music and the spoken word.

Another commercial enterprise is Karen Allen-Fiber Arts Studio, owned by actress Karen Allen. Allen first came to the Berkshires through her theater work with Berkshire Theater Festival, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Shakespeare & Company. She decided to move full-time to the region. With a degree from FIT, and a lifelong interest in knitting, Allen, working with partner Sara Parrilli, has developed a line of knitted jackets, sweaters, scarves, and hats. She has opened a store in Great Barrington selling these products. In addition, she exports and sells the products in stores throughout the U.S.

**Wages for Employees in Covered Firms, Berkshire County, 2005**

Occupation Title	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage	Mean Hourly Wages	Mean Annual Wages
Architects (except landscape and naval)	\$36.05	\$74,982	\$38.70	\$80,502
Architectural and Civil Drafters	\$19.40	\$40,345	\$20.42	\$42,480
Art, Drama, and Music Teachers, Postsecondary		\$56,395		\$57,089
Archivists	\$19.77	\$41,125	\$19.50	\$40,564
Curators	\$19.24	\$40,020	\$19.29	\$40,132
Museum Technicians and Conservators	\$21.21	\$44,113	\$21.41	\$44,540
Librarians	\$22.30	\$46,386	\$21.71	\$45,156
Library Technicians	\$10.87	\$22,604	\$11.27	\$23,436
Art Directors	\$23.65	\$49,188	\$28.49	\$59,265
Multi-Media Artists and Animators	\$27.50	\$57,199	\$28.72	\$59,728
Commercial and Industrial Designers	\$20.30	\$42,231	\$20.96	\$43,596
Floral Designers	\$10.87	\$22,604	\$11.38	\$23,678
Graphic Designers	\$15.72	\$32,708	\$16.88	\$35,116
Interior Designers	\$19.64	\$40,858	\$19.25	\$40,049
Editors	\$22.63	\$47,069	\$22.11	\$45,998
Writers and Authors	\$20.79	\$43,238	\$25.22	\$52,459
Broadcast Technicians	\$17.12	\$35,601	\$17.04	\$35,443
Photographers	\$31.00	\$64,486	\$27.60	\$57,417

Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development

The three primary markets for creative enterprises in the Berkshires are selling to consumers visiting Berkshire County, selling to consumers outside of Berkshire County, and selling to businesses and nonprofit institutions, such as museums.

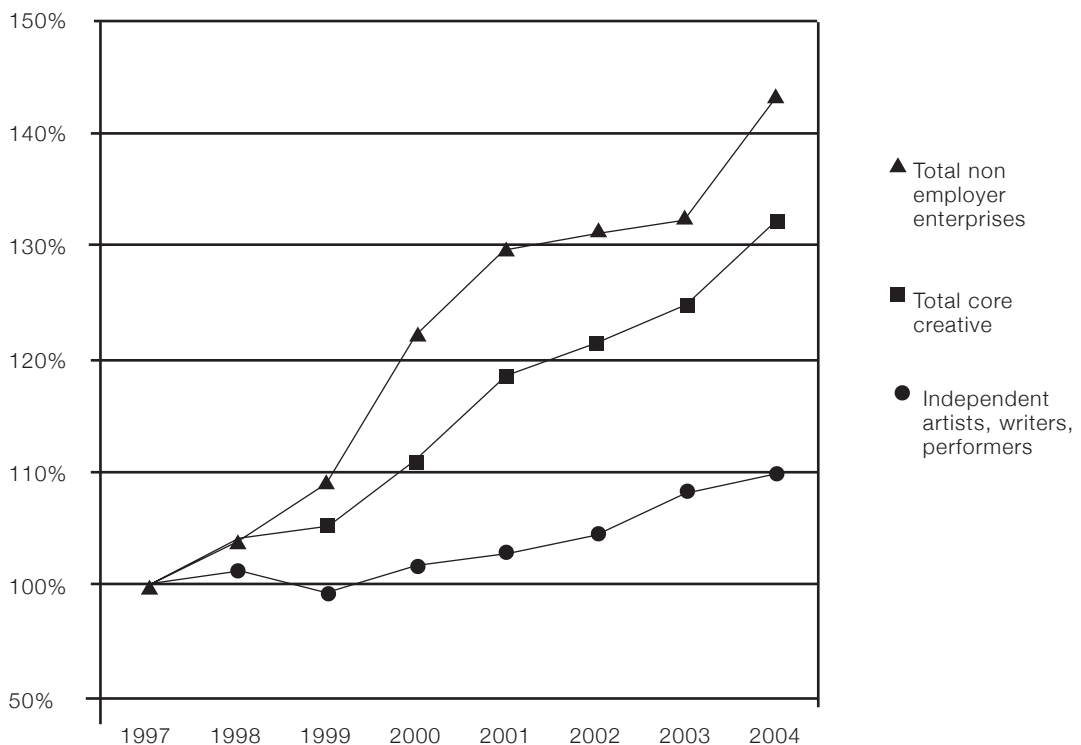
Many, if not most, of the individual artists, writers, and performers who live in the Berkshires make much of their living through selling their work outside of the Berkshires. Export markets include galleries and stores in New York City and elsewhere, Internet sales, commissioned works, touring, etc.

Traditional views held by local residents that cultural institutions depend entirely on tourist audiences, and are thereby not critical economic engines in a community, need to change. Cultural institutions in the Berkshires' creative economy sector export products and import capital. While they receive a significant percentage of their revenue from visitors, they are not solely "tourist attractions." The region's nonprofit cultural institutions sell their goods and services outside of the Berkshires. Traveling shows curated by the Rockwell, Clark, Hancock

and The Berkshire Museum bring income into their institutions and the region. Other export-related activities include the extensive training programs and publications that Shakespeare & Company "sells" in cities throughout the U.S. and to corporate clients. Internet sales from the museum shops bring dollars from outside of the county to the cultural organizations.

This is likely to emerge as a growing important element of the nonprofit revenue stream. The world-class art museums in the region—including The Clark, Norman Rockwell, and MASS MoCA—have the potential to expand their audiences through the development of online curriculum aimed at a worldwide audience. Further, the ongoing efforts to digitize the art collections for web display promise to reap additional economic benefits.

The colleges in the region play two important roles in supporting the creative economy in the Berkshires. One is in the establishment of academic disciplines that support the creative economy. The second is as ambassadors to the region, consciously promoting the creative economy, its



**FINDING: Creative enterprises in the Berkshires are an export-driven industry; they sell their products to consumers and businesses throughout the world.**

## Most of the economic activity in the Creative Economy is export in nature.

### Local

Residents  
Long term  
transplants  
Second home  
owners  
Institutions  
Businesses

### Visitor

Day tourists  
Overnight tourists  
Hotel, B&B  
Weekly, seasonal renters  
Business visitors  
Seasonal workers  
Visiting performers  
Students: youth and adults participating  
in specialized programs

### Global

On-line sales of products and services  
Traveling exhibits  
Traveling productions  
Retail and wholesale channels  
Commercial or corporate customers

18

resources, and its value to prospective students, particularly from Eastern Massachusetts, who remain largely unaware of the cultural resources, talent, and activities in the region.

**Some enterprises in the Berkshires' creative economy sector sell directly to the national creative economy cluster, becoming vendors to the global creative industries.**

A number of companies in the region provide goods and services that serve the national creative economy cluster. For example, Rising Arts Paper (part of Fox River Paper) makes specialty crafted matte board paper for framing used by fine art museums around the country. Chicago Albumen Works, housed in a restored textile mill in Housatonic, also serves the national creative economy market. The company specializes in preservation and conservation of photographic images for museums, private collections, and a variety of cultural institutions throughout the country. Francis Morris, violinmaker, located in Great Barrington, makes, sells to and repairs violins, violas, and cellos for musicians all over the United States and in Europe.

In the special effects industry, LimeLight Production serves the entertainment industry nationwide. Also servicing a national market are Sheffield Pottery (clay and potter supplies), and Buxton Brook Looms, a company that provides products and services around the country.

Many of the products and services in the Berkshires creative economy sector focus on second-home owners.

The home and garden segment in the Berkshires has enormous growth potential, creating employment and enterprise opportunities for interior designers, landscape designers, architects, home furnishing, garden stores, nurseries, etc.

**FINDING: The region's non-profit cultural institutions are a core element of the region's creative cluster; their economic significance extends beyond their direct employment.**

The Berkshires has a number of world-class cultural institutions:

- Barrington Stage Company
- Berkshire Museum
- Berkshire Theater Festival
- Hancock Shaker Village
- Jacob's Pillow
- MASS MoCA
- Norman Rockwell Museum
- Shakespeare & Company
- The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute
- Tanglewood Music Center
- Williams College Museum of Art
- Williamstown Theater Festival

These cultural institutions are an important market for goods and services produced by businesses in the Berkshires. The major cultural institutions spend well over \$55 million annually on the purchase of goods and services from other businesses (this total does not include the spending of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood). According

to the Mt. Auburn survey of nonprofit cultural institutions in the region, approximately 72 percent of this amount, or \$40 million, is spent within Berkshire County. This \$40 million is spent on payroll, marketing, graphic design, printing, fuel, insurance, supplies, advertising, financial services, contracting, maintenance, hospitality, catering, and other services.

Recent vaudeville-era theatre renovations of more than \$30 million resulted in beautifully-restored presenting theatres in Great Barrington, Pittsfield and North Adams with the Mahaiwe Theatre, Colonial Theatre and Mohawk Theatre. In addition, the nonprofits that responded to the survey reported that they plan on spending tens of millions in new capital projects in the next three years.

### **Cultural institutions bring financial resources into the region.**

Donors from all over the nation and the world support the ongoing work of the cultural institutions in the Berkshires. In addition, these institutions attract significant federal, state, and foundation grants to support their cultural endeavors.

Augmenting a long standing tradition of generous philanthropy among the Berkshires' leading families and businesses, a growing number of the culturals' boards and funders are emerging from outside of the Berkshires, bringing net new income into the region. The region has successfully attracted strong federal arts support funding through a supportive federal legislative team. Over the past five years, 26 different cultural institutions in the Berkshires have brought in a total of \$11.1 million in federal grants to the region. These financial resources, particularly endowment dollars, are managed in part by local financial institutions, providing vital business for the county's banks and financial service businesses.

### **The Berkshires' cultural institutions are economic drivers of the hospitality industry.**

The attraction of tens of thousands of visitors and tourists to cultural, theatrical, and musical events in

the region provides a steady stream of customers for the Berkshires' hospitality industry. During the peak summer season in the Berkshires, the "no vacancy" sign is a common sight up and down Route 7, the major north-south roadway. While people are attracted to the Berkshires for many reasons, the region's "brand" in the tourism industry is closely associated with its reputation as a cultural destination. Visitors come to the Berkshires, as overnight visitors or to buy second homes, because they know that the region provides the quality of cultural venues of a major city in a beautiful rural landscape. Few destinations in the country are able to offer this combination of assets.

### **FINDING: The creative cluster is linked to many of the important economic sectors in the Berkshires.**

The Berkshires' creative economy sector has strong linkages to many of the core industry sectors in the region, forging a cross-sector foundation of the regional economy. Industry sectors directly impacted by the creative cluster include: hospitality and tourism; health and wellness, agriculture and natural resource-related entrepreneurs and organizations; technology-based companies; and manufacturing.

Excelsior and Interprint are two prime examples of companies that combine elements of the creative economy with manufacturing. Both companies place a high premium on quality, use of technology, strong customer service, and the infusion of design into all of their products.

Interprint moved into a 175,000-square-foot facility a few years ago on the outskirts of Pittsfield. Since its beginning on Pecks Road, the company has seen explosive growth, increasing its revenues, markets, and the number of employees. The company designs paper to make decorative laminates for flooring, cabinets, countertops, and other residential applications.

Interprint employs more than 130 people who are part of the sales, marketing, and production

systems. It also has eight people in the design department whose job it is to track new designs, meet with customers, attend national and international trade shows, and, in general, keep the design component of the company at the forefront.

Excelsior Printing, which began operations in 1892, developed a specialty printing business. Crane & Co., known for its fine rag paper for US currency and social stationery and for its engraving capability acquired the company. Excelsior was bought in 2005 by David Crane, a member of the Crane family. Excelsior employs 44 workers. Part of the workforce includes in-house artists and designers.

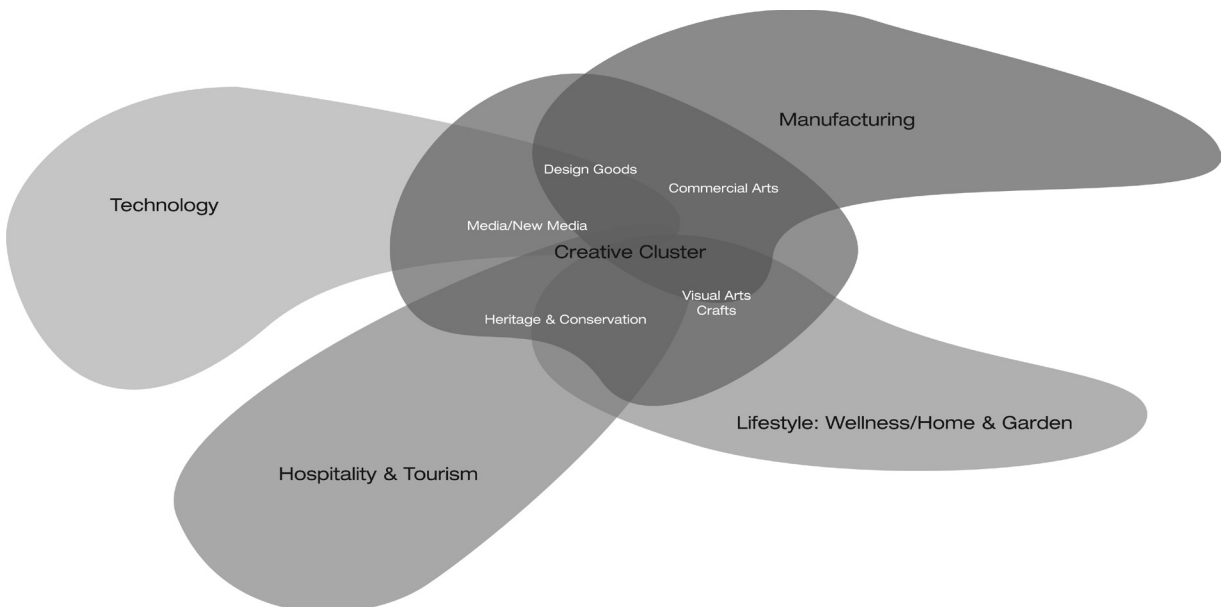
The focus of Excelsior is on custom work for the education, wedding, and birth announcement markets, but the company also produces high-end educational publications, prints and art catalogues for many of the county’s cultural institutions. Studley Press located in Dalton, prints primarily for nonprofit businesses and arts-related organizations throughout the northeast.

The relationship of these companies with the cultural institutions continues to grow. The companies are creating new products and designs

with several of the nonprofit cultural institutions in Berkshire County based upon the culturals’ artistic holdings and intellectual property.

**FINDING: The creative cluster in the Berkshires has strong linkages to neighboring communities in New York State, Connecticut, and Vermont.**

The Berkshires as a region is defined by its landscape and is not perceived as being confined by state or county boundaries. Northwestern Connecticut and Columbia County in New York fully consider themselves to be part of the “Berkshires.” Homeowners and visitors in those areas shop in the Berkshires and are an important part of the audience and patrons for many cultural venues in Berkshire County. Publications cross the state line, employees cross the state line, and markets cross the state line.



# Federal Grants 2001-2006

Cultural Institution	Totals Federal Grants
Barrington Stage Company	\$25,000
Berkshire County Historical Society	\$9,000
Berkshire Museum	\$318,000
Berkshire Theater Festival	\$4,486
BSO/Tanglewood	\$135,000
Chesterwood	\$445,508
The Clark	\$488,370
Colonial Theatre	\$400,000
Frelinghuysen Morris House	\$6,370
Hancock Shaker Village	\$754,677
Inkberry	\$10,000
Jacob's Pillow	\$350,000
Lenox Library Association	\$5,000
Mahaiwe Theater	\$2,150,000
MASS MoCA	\$168,000
MCLA	\$103,278
Norman Rockwell Museum	\$764,478
Rev. Harrison House Museum	\$246,322
Shakespeare & Company	\$433,245
Sheffield Historical Society	\$16,370
Stockbridge Library Association	\$10,000
The Mount	\$2,865,000
Ventfort Hall	\$10,000
Williams College Museum of Art	\$402,500
Williamstown Theater Festival	\$30,000
TOTAL	\$ 10,150,604

**sect4**

# Creative Economy Opportunities and Challenges

## Opportunities

### The Educational Infrastructure

*A core creative economy asset in the Berkshires*

#### Higher Education

The four higher educational institutions in Berkshire County will continue to be training grounds for the origination of creative content, the distribution of content, and the development of artistic and creative economy skills. Through their facilities and venues, they also serve as destinations for creative economy commercial activities. Faculty (and their spouses) also serve as a valuable component of the region's cultural resources. Following is only a brief overview of some of the colleges' programs and cultural resources:

#### **Bard College at Simon's Rock has emerged as a key institution in the creative economy.**

The innovative early College has a broad program in the Arts and Aesthetics division— courses are offered in art, art history, dance, music, studio arts, and theater. The new Daniel Arts Center is a centerpiece of the College's art programs. It includes a 350-seat main stage theater, the 100-seat Patti Liebowitz Studio Theatre, the Beckerman Dance Studio, classroom facilities for all arts courses, as well as studios for sculpture, 3-D design, and staging. The Kellogg Music Center is a location for the College's music programs and productions. In addition to faculty-based arts productions and performances (e.g., the Simon's Rock Chorus and Chamber Orchestra), the College also brings in exhibits and concerts by nationally-known artists, writers, and photographers. Faculty are also active in organizations like the Berkshire Bach Society, Barrington Performing Arts, and the Berkshire Composers Concert Series.

**Williams College students, faculty, and facilities are all key elements of the Berkshire creative economy.**

Williams College is one of the leading liberal arts colleges in the country, and its programs, resources, and leadership in the arts are profound, both in the art world in general, and in Berkshire County as well. Only a very brief overview of Williams' role in the arts will be provided here.

Undergraduate programs are offered in art (history and studio), theatre, and English (writing). The College has a Master of Arts degree program in art history, a joint program between the College and the Clark. Courses and programs are also offered in dance. The College's undergraduate programs draw on an extraordinary set of resources, many of which are either open to or available to the public. The College has the Visual Art Resource Center, a digital and online collection of films, videos, photographs, artwork, and books. The Music Program presents more than 100 concerts a year at one of several facilities—Chapin Hall, the Bernhard Music Center, and Thompson Hall Chapel. Students, faculty, and guest artists all perform in the concerts, which include the Berkshire Symphony Orchestra, the Williams Chamber Choir, and the Jazz Ensemble.

The Theatre Program is housed in the '62 Center for Theater and Dance, a new facility with classroom space, rehearsal space, studios, and performance venues. Music and dance also make use of the facility, and it is the home of the Williamstown Theater Festival as well. The Master of Arts Program is a two-year program that brings in students from

around the world. The Program makes use of the Clark, the Williams College Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, and the Chapin Library. The Chapin Library has more than 50,000 rare books and 40,000 manuscripts, including a display of the Founding Documents of the United States.

The Williams College Museum of Art has more than 12,000 works that cover much of the history of art. The Museum's strengths are "modern and contemporary art, photography, prints, and Indian painting." It has one of the most noted collections of American Art from the 18th century to the present. Special exhibitions by staff, faculty, students, and guest curators are held at the Museum and, as noted elsewhere, the Museum is one of several partners on programs like Kidspace and the Berkshire Conference.

Williams is also the home of the Center for Creative Community Development, a collaboration between the Department of Economics and MASS MoCA. The Center is involved nationally in research, education, and training on the role of arts in community development.

The College has played a very important role in the development of MASS MoCA, and its involvement in arts education throughout the Berkshires has been extensive. Finally, its graduate and strong network of alumni is a critical source of entrepreneurial energy and resources in the Berkshires.

**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) has played an increasingly active and strategic role in creative economy of the Berkshires.**

The College's activities are quite diverse. It recently created a new undergraduate program in Arts Management, a complement to the other arts-related degree programs—English (writing, broadcast media, and film studies), and Fine and Performing Arts. Music, theater, and dance performances are held throughout the year at both the Venable Hall and the Church Street Center. Gallery 51, a relatively new art space in North Adams, has become a focal point for

some of the arts infrastructure in downtown North Adams. It is operated by MCLA and hosts exhibits and lectures by local and area artists. The Berkshire Hills Internship Program (BHIP) is another resource that MCLA brings to the creative economy. The program matches students who are interested in arts management with many of the major performing arts and cultural institutions in the county—the students get a hands-on apprenticeship in how arts institutions are run. MCLA also has initiated other programs like the Desk Project and launched the new Center for Robotic Arts, a collaboration between a College faculty member and a local sculptor. It also offers non-credit adult enrichment courses, such as the Horticulture Certificate Program in conjunction with the Berkshire Botanical Garden, aimed at professional and aspiring professional gardeners. Finally, MCLA has been an important source of support for projects like the Berkshire Cultural Resource Center and artSTART.

**Berkshire Community College offers a wide range of programs and services in the arts.**

BCC prepares art students for further academic study through its Fine Arts programs in music, theater, animation, and visual arts. The Koussevitzky Arts Center houses the Boland Theater and the Koussevitzky Art Gallery, where the works of faculty and students are on display. The College offers workshops, seminars, and certificate courses in the arts, some through the Berkshire Institute for Lifetime Learning. Some arts faculty members are professional and accomplished in their own right—composers, writers, playwrights, actors, and painters. And, the College works with other entities in the creative economy, e.g., WorkshopLive, the Storefront Artists Project, the Berkshire Music School, and the Pittsfield Cultural Development Office, to name a few.

Through the newly created and innovative Berkshire Compact, the educational institutions in the region are collaborating to provide all local

high school students the opportunity to attend an institution of higher learning. This represents a major investment and commitment in the student population of the Berkshires. (Berkshire Compact for Higher Education, March 2006.)

### K-12 System

Students in the region's public and private schools have benefited from the rich arts and cultural environment in the Berkshires. Many of the schools have on their faculty instructors who are professional artists and musicians or have worked in professional theater and have moved to the Berkshires to pursue their creative careers. The schools also have benefited from the high quality and diverse offering of arts programming that the region's cultural institutions have brought directly to students. There are also specialized schools such as the Berkshire Art & Technology Charter School, a middle and high school that integrates arts and technology in all of its core studies. The region has a wealth of private primary and secondary schools.

The Berkshire Wireless Learning Initiative, which is providing wireless laptop computers to more than 2,000 middle-school students and teachers in North Adams and in Pittsfield, is changing the paradigm of learning in the Berkshires. The initiative is supported both by state investments and \$1 million raised in donations from businesses in the region.

In short, Berkshire students in K-12 have extraordinary access to high-quality arts and cultural education, state-of-the-art computer learning, and technical training.

In order to fully capitalize on these assets, the county must continue to invest in arts education at both the elementary and secondary school levels. It is through arts education where the next generation of county residents begins to understand the possibilities of creating cultural content and becomes aware of employment and career opportunities in arts and the creative sector.

### Specialized Cultural Education Programs Serving a National Market

In addition to the organized curriculum, there are numerous special programs, ones that attract people from both a regional and national market that have been established in the Berkshires.

Collectively, they are an outstanding mix of programs in artistic skill development, cultural education, art appreciation, and academic enrichment in the arts. These programs include:

- Berkshire Choral Festival;
- an internationally renowned violin repair program at MCLA;
- the Clark's Research and Academic Program, with scholars from around the world coming to Clark to study and complete research in the arts;
- specialized classes offered by local institutions, such as IS183, Northern Berkshire Creative Arts, Tanglewood's Days in the Arts, Berkshire Music School, Becket Arts Center, Housatonic Valley Art League, as well as many individual artists and musicians offering training and classes in their home;
- specialized instructional programs at cultural institutions like Hancock Shaker Village, Jacob's Pillow, and Norman Rockwell Museum; and
- exported learning products offered by Shakespeare & Company, WorkshopLive, and Piano Kids.

### The Geography of the Creative Economy

#### **OPPORTUNITY: Knitting together the creative sub-regions within Berkshire County.**

In large measure, today's Berkshire Creative Economy had its start in the southern Berkshire region of, Stockbridge, and Lenox. As noted earlier, from the early 1800s and throughout the Gilded Age of the mid-late 1800s, this part of the Berkshires became home to many of this country's most noted writers and poets. During the same period, the region attracted John D. Rockefeller, Emily Vanderbilt Sloan, Andrew Carnegie, George Westinghouse, and other wealthy captains of industry who made South County their home.

Their summer homes and mansions, known as “cottages,” laid the foundation for much of the horticulture and architecture that are so integral to the region’s cultural assets. By the time the Boston Symphony Orchestra held its first concerts in 1936-37 at Tanglewood, the region was well on its way to being a world-class cultural haven.

Today, the Berkshires’ southern region is literally dotted with art galleries, studios, museums, and old mills that have been converted into arts uses of varying kinds. South County remains a rich and vibrant part of the county’s creative economy.

In Northern Berkshire, Williams College, the Williamstown Theater Festival, and the Clark have historically been the principal arts and culture institutions, giving that part of the Berkshires an international arts reputation. In recent years, the Eclipse Mill, MCLA, several new art galleries, the Contemporary Arts Center, new media firms and entrepreneurs, and MASS MoCA have significantly embellished the region’s visibility. These institutions and new artists, but especially MASS MoCA, are giving North County an edgy and hip feeling. The attraction of a younger arts population is critical to the county’s cultural and artistic development.

At the geographical center of the Berkshires, Pittsfield is striving to emerge as an arts and culture destination of its own, knitting together the region as a countywide creative economy sector. New and existing cultural venues, the affordability of housing and buildings, new municipal and cultural leadership, as well as the Storefront Artists Project, are all making much of this possible (one interviewee sees the Storefront Artists Project as the yeast for Pittsfield’s cultural bread). The strategic role that Pittsfield could play in developing stronger relationships between the sub-regions and enhancing the Berkshires’ creative sector is a pivotal opportunity for the region.

Addressing both chronic and long-term transportation and high speed communications issues can play a supportive role in overcoming

the inertia of isolation of sub-regions to see themselves in a larger framework.

### **OPPORTUNITY: Exploiting market opportunities in surrounding regions.**

The economic footprint of the Berkshires extends beyond the boundaries of county and state lines. In particular, the relationships with the Litchfield Hills in Connecticut, Columbia County the Hudson River Valley and Rensselaer County communities in New York State (where there are many second homeowners) offer new markets and opportunities for artists and cultural entrepreneurs in the Berkshires.

Relationships can also be strengthened with neighboring markets in the Albany region, the Pioneer Valley, Southern Vermont, and Northwestern Connecticut, as well as New York and Boston.

### **Creative Infrastructure: Facilities and Support Organizations**

#### **OPPORTUNITY: New facilities and venues are strengthening the Berkshires creative cluster.**

The growing number of new and renovated facilities and arts venues in the Berkshires has the potential of turning the creative economy sector into a year-round economic driver. These include: the Colonial Theater in Pittsfield, the renovated Mahaiwe in Great Barrington, the new Barrington Stage, the Williams College’s ‘62 Center, Bard College Daniel Arts Center at Simon’s Rock and the recent expansion of the Norman Rockwell Museum.

There are also plans to expand both The Clark and the Berkshire Museum. The Massachusetts Legislature’s newly-created \$13 million Cultural Facilities Fund promises to make an important difference in supporting these and other improvements to the region’s arts and cultural infrastructure. Operating revenues alone cannot support the investment in facilities essential to the livelihood of the region’s premiere cultural institutions, many of which preserve the region’s distinguished architectural heritage. Additional private investment will be needed.

**OPPORTUNITY: Strong support organizations are helping to build the region’s creative economy.**

Berkshire County has a strong network of organizations that are directed to supporting the work of artists, arts institutions, and arts entrepreneurs, and to making linkages between the artist and education communities. These organizations are found throughout the county, but they have more of a presence in Northern and Central Berkshire (many of the organizations in North County trace their lineage to MASS MoCA, Williams College, and MCLA). Following is a brief description of some of these organizations.

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition runs an initiative called CommUNITY Arts, a writing, music, and performing arts program for teens. The Berkshire Cultural Resource Center, a collaboration of MCLA, MASS MoCA, and the city of North Adams, provides training, management, and marketing assistance to artists and arts entrepreneurs. The Center also oversees the artSTART website, a listserve that highlights and promotes the art work of individual artists, by segment, in Northern Berkshire County.

Northern Berkshire Creative Arts (NBCA) is an organization that runs arts studio classes in visual arts, theater, dance, and music for students of all ages, toddlers to senior citizens. NBCA offers more than 20 programs throughout the year, many in partnership with other arts-related organizations in North County. The Contemporary Artists Center (CAC) is a nonprofit arts organization that was founded in 1990 by “working artists, for working artists.” The Independent Studio residency is one of the core programs that the CAC operates. It brings in artists to North Adams from around the country to deepen and broaden their artwork. The CAC also runs Gallery Exhibitions of eclectic art work from all over the world. There are numerous gallery events throughout the year—films, music, performance art, etc.—that helps give the CAC its

“arts edginess.” Workshops on different kinds of art making are also held in the summer.

The Pittsfield Office of Cultural Development is a focal point for arts activities in the city. It operates a website, Cultural Pittsfield, which provides a weekly snapshot of arts and cultural events in the city. It also runs art shows and exhibits at the Lichenstein Center for the Arts; it provides resources and support for the work of individual artists at the Center and in the downtown; it sponsors art classes and workshops; it coordinates arts-related development projects with the city’s Office of Community and Economic Development; and, it is in the process of preparing a Cultural Plan for the city.

The Storefront Artists Project (SAP) was initiated in late 2003 and early 2004 to address the problem of storefront vacancies in downtown Pittsfield, and to provide working and exhibition space for local artists. Building on its success in this effort, the Project continues to be an important intermediary among artists, property owners, arts organizations, and the city. It also serves as an organizing vehicle for a wide range of arts-related projects throughout Central Berkshire. The Project works with more than 30 artists to help with exhibitions, gaining access to new markets, and connecting artists with the arts education programs in the region’s public schools. The Project, according to most observers, was a key catalyst in jumpstarting the revitalization of downtown Pittsfield.

Beaux Arts is a project organized by a local artist. It organizes dinners, lectures, book signings, and other social events for artists and arts supporters in Central and South regions. Beaux Arts gives artists and their supporters an opportunity to network and help enhance the arts infrastructure in the region.

IS183, Art School of the Berkshires, located in Stockbridge, and CATA, Community Access to the Arts, headquartered in Great Barrington, are powerful artistic forces in the southern Berkshire region. Each employs a network of artists who

offer instruction and art experiences to all levels and ages of abilities. CATA's primary audience is developmentally disabled individuals throughout the Berkshires. AHA, the Association of Housatonic Artists supports and promotes the work of numerous Housatonic-based artists. The Lenox Gallery association serves hundreds of Berkshire artists and the Norman Rockwell Museum provides exhibition and education for regional and national illustrators in the visual communication arts. The Housatonic Art League located in Sheffield, MA (formerly the Sheffield Art League,) is an exhibition and membership organization for visual artists. Berkshire Pulse and Kripalu offer instruction in movement and healing arts.

There are 21 active local Arts Councils in Berkshire County. The Councils, for the most part, are volunteer arts organizations that receive funding, principally though not exclusively, from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). They provide support for community arts events, arts in the schools programs, plays, music, dance, and theater performances by some of the county's noted cultural institutions. The Councils also pay particular attention to making the arts accessible to diverse audiences. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Arts Councils in Berkshire County received a little more than \$616,000 from MCC.

## Challenges Remain

### You can't eat the scenery

In spite of all the opportunities noted above, the creative economy in the Berkshires does face a number of challenges. Following are some of the more important challenges.

**CHALLENGE: The business and economic development community has not fully understood the economic importance of the creative sector.**

The business and economic development community is often viewed as not understanding the depth, breadth and potential of the creative economy sector, neither in terms of its contribution through innovation and its direct commercial activity nor in its vast economic importance to the Berkshire economy.

Through the Berkshire Blueprint and the Berkshire Creative Economy Project, there is a growing awareness of the potential of the creative economy sector. The emerging collaboration between the cultural and traditional business community leaders, the importance of the creative sector to the health and well-being of other leading economic clusters, and renewed engagement with elected officials are positive growth strategies.

**CHALLENGE: Some fragility with the cultural sector remains.**

As strong as the major cultural institutions in the Berkshires are in attracting a steady stream of visitors and residents, they remain vulnerable to disruptions caused by severe weather, a steep rise in gasoline prices, disruption of airline travel, and competition from the Internet and other modes of leisure entertainment. An unanticipated drop in attendance often translates into deficits in the operating margins of these institutions, which, in turn, are felt all along the creative economy sector's "food chain." This points to the importance of the need for economic diversification and integration into the region's commercial activity.

**CHALLENGE: Collaborative activity is not as strong as it could be.**

Until the Berkshire Creative Economy Project, there has not been a formal way to bring the movers and shakers of the cross-industry creative economy sector in the Berkshires to the same table for discussion. There is sometimes still a lack of comfort in the collaborative process as bridges are built between diverse industries. The challenge for the community will be to maintain the dialogue and to find new avenues for cooperation and collaboration once the project has ended.

**CHALLENGE: Making a living remains a challenge for many artists.**

Artistic endeavor often provides only minimal, secondary or supplemental income. Large numbers of artists and artisans depend on income and benefits from supplemental jobs, such as teaching, work in real estate, construction, and wellness fields.

**WANTED: Influx of artists and young people.**

Historically, the programming of many of the major cultural institutions has been viewed by some as targeted to an older and wealthier demographic, and not toward low-income and working residents of the native population. While the cultural organizations have embraced the importance of presenting a diverse and accessible program for all audiences, both local residential and tourist, more remains to be done to publicize the existence and presentation of new work, new programs and highlighting relevance of offerings to the residential community.

Young, hip, single artists and entrepreneurs are being attracted to Berkshire County, but not nearly enough is being done to cultivate, support, and attract this demographic, and to make it an integral part of the creative economy sector.

**sect5**

# Strategic Initiatives

## Creative Economy Vision

The overarching goal of the creative economy sector in the Berkshires is to:

- Create economic opportunities for Berkshire residents,
- Strengthen the competitiveness of existing creative enterprises, commercial and nonprofit,
- Create new jobs, and,
- Foster a business environment that is friendly and conducive to creative enterprise.

Following are goals and recommendations in four key areas: Creative Business, Creative Marketplace, Creative Work, and Creative Collaborations. The recommendations include suggested steps for implementation.

## Creative Business Initiative

### *Goals*

- To enhance the design segment of the Creative Economy, including the manufacture of products.
- To attract Creative Economy businesses to Berkshire County.

### *Recommendations*

#### **Create a Berkshire Design Showcase Initiative.**

1. Explore the potential for locating design-related artists and small firms in a single, multi-tenant space/facility. The facility would allow new and emerging designers to share the costs of space and, conceivably, services. Concentrating design activities in such a way could help grow this segment of the creative economy.
2. Organize and display, physically and online, the design products and services that currently are embedded in local artists, entrepreneurs, and firms in the Berkshires. An organized display would provide the opportunity for promoting and enhancing the visibility of this important segment of the creative economy. These markets would be particularly appropriate for second homeowners in the county as well as the New York and Boston markets.
3. Establish the Berkshire Design Laboratory, a virtual team of designers who would come together and collectively address design problems or opportunities for homeowners, corporations, cultural institutions, and public sector institutions.

This kind of collective and creative problem solving approach on design issues would bring new customers and clients to existing designers, and also raise the profile of Berkshire Design.

#### **Develop a “Design It Here, Make It Here” campaign.**

1. Explore the interest in and capacity for manufacturers in the county to take on the production of “creative products.” Likely candidates would be those companies that manufacture plastics, metal, fabrics, and wood products, as well as those involved in printing.
2. Selectively target some of the arts and design publications in the New England and New York areas. Place ads in some of the publications to test the potential for product designers to manufacture their products in Berkshire County.
3. Develop profiles of existing manufacturers of creative products in Berkshire County and use the profiles to promote the advantages of manufacturing creative products in Berkshire County. The profiles should be targeted to publications in art, design, and manufacturing.

## Creative Business Models

### **DesignBox: Raleigh North Carolina**

The DesignBox is both a facility housing creative talent in a variety of design disciplines, as well as a “gathering” place for design professionals throughout the region. The concept is that by co-locating and working together each week to discuss each other’s projects, across disciplines, all the companies involved will benefit. The Facility also opens its doors as part of Raleigh’s Friday night Art Walk.

### **401 Richmond: Toronto**

401 Richmond is a commercial property located in downtown Toronto, and is home to a thriving community of 130 cultural producers and micro-enterprises. A century-old tin factory has been restored to include a courtyard, arts-enriched early learning center, café, and roof garden. 401 Richmond is the recipient of a 1999 Award of Merit from Toronto Heritage for outstanding adaptive reuse of a historic building.

## Creative Marketplace Initiative

### *Goals*

- To create new products that capitalize on the unique character of the Berkshire Creative Economy.
- To increase market access for existing creative products, particularly those of individual artists.

### *Recommendations*

Develop two new creative products, one in Artistic and Cultural Learning and one in the Literary Arts.

1. Package the wealth of Artistic and Cultural Learning that currently exists in the Berkshires and develop a new “cultural product.” Organize the key institutions, and market and promote their programs” to the same extent that music, theater, dance, and museums are marketed and promoted.
2. Organize a Berkshire Writers’ Conference. A Berkshires Writers’ Conference would provide an opportunity for these literary assets to be appreciated and draw national investment and interest. The region’s higher education institutions,

### **Ideasmart: Glasgow, Scotland**

The National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Screen, and Scottish Enterprise have developed Ideasmart to provide financial and business support at the seed-investment level for entrepreneurs in the creative industries. The program provides seed financing, mentoring, and business assistance for high risk ventures in the creative industries.

### **Creative Entrepreneurs Club, Scotland**

The Creative Entrepreneurs Club was established in September 2001 and is the network for the Creative Industries in Scotland. The Club offers a unique way for people in the Creative Industries to keep up-to-date with the sector and the issues that affect it. The Club provides a forum for discussion and the cultivation of contacts. It is also a place for people within the Creative Industries to meet colleagues from a variety of disciplines and spark new business ideas.

in conjunction with individuals in the Literary Arts, would be appropriate sponsors of the event.

**Organize a “Berkshire Marketplace” initiative—there are four components.**

1. Publish, in electronic and print format, a Berkshire Creative Marketplace Directory of the work and products of local artists. The directory should be countywide and include artists from all categories. The directory should provide easy-to-access contact information, a visual display of artists’ work, and pricing information.
2. Create an institutional relationship with the Berkshire County Board of Realtors. Realtors have indicated an interest in better promoting the work of artists to new homeowners and businesses.

3. Work with the Berkshire Visitors Bureau to promote and publicize the work of local artists. The Visitors Bureau has expressed support for the idea of getting local artwork in the lobbies and on the walls of some of the hospitality businesses.

## Creative Marketplace Models

### Campus Provincetown

“Campus Provincetown is a set of educational programs offered year-round by almost a dozen, world-recognized Provincetown, Massachusetts, institutions in the arts, theater, and environment. Some of these programs are workshops, some are field studies, some are stage productions. In some cases college credit can be earned. All of the programs are hands-on, and they are all for artists, scientists, teachers – certified or budding – and others who never want to stop learning.” An online catalogue provides information on the full range of course offerings at institutions in the region. Organizations involved include: Cape Cod Community College; Cape Cod Photo Workshops; Castle Hill; Center for Coastal Studies; Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown; Provincetown Art Association and Museum School; Provincetown Chamber of Commerce; Provincetown Film Festival; Provincetown Public School System; and Provincetown Theatre Company.

### Santa Fe Design Week

Santa Fe Design Week, “a celebration of design as process, product, priority, and place” was first held in 2005. The second Design Week was held in October 2006. Santa Fe Design Week 2006 will spotlight the region’s finest and most innovative designers, materials, projects, ideas, and approaches and will also “stage events examining how to apply aspects of design to resolve environmental, social, and economic problems.” Also as part of Design Week, three delegates from each of the nine UNESCO Creative Cities will arrive in Santa Fe for a three-day Planning Summit to

4. Organize a cooperative approach to getting Berkshire artwork into some of the high-end and national art shows. A cooperative effort, with some financial assistance, would make it possible for more artists to gain access to a wider market.

lay the groundwork for an International Summit on Creative Tourism to be held in Santa Fe in 2007 or 2008. According to the promotional material:

“The City of Santa Fe, collaborating with the professional design community and local businesses, will employ Design Week as an illustration of how the design, fine arts and creative communities are an engine to promote Santa Fe’s economic sustainability. Design Week will include events that consider and illustrate how an economy largely based on the creative endeavors of individual designers, artists, artisans and craftspeople can fuel economic development. A fashion show mounted by a recently-organized trade association of fashion designers, a competition among the State’s craft furniture builders, and a national architectural competition mounted by American Institute of Architects are among some of the events.”

### City Showcase: London

City Showcase is a not-for-profit company that works with musicians, performers, designers, artists, producers, directors, games developers, and talented people in all creative disciplines by providing networking opportunities, workshops, information, and showcasing opportunities. The Showcase was launched in 2003 and hosts an annual event called City Showcase – Spotlight London, an annual festival for new music and fashion attracting international audiences and buyers from the music and fashion industry.

### Style Week: Austin

Tribeza Magazine in Austin has an annual event that focuses on fashion and products designed in the city. There is a designer showcase that gives local designers and merchandisers the opportunity to display their products at the City’s Design Center. The Magazine just completed its third annual showcase event.

# Creative Work Initiative

## Goals

- To give Berkshire County residents a better understanding of the diversity of jobs and careers that exist within the creative economy.
- To enhance the relationships between the creative economy (artists, institutions, and businesses) and students in the county in public schools.

## Recommendations

34

### Develop a “Work of Art” program targeted to residents of Berkshire County.

1. Work with the appropriate partner organization to develop a profile of the jobs and occupations within the county’s creative economy. Include designations of the various occupations, wage ranges, and skill requirements. Publish the profile and distribute it widely. Approach each of the newspapers in the county to do a feature story on the “Work of Art” in Berkshire County. The profile would be the basis of the story, perhaps in addition to interviews with Berkshire County residents who work in the creative economy.

2. Expand MCLA’s Berkshire Hills Internship Program to include Berkshire County adults. Additional resources will have to be secured for this effort and a pilot program or small-scale effort would have to be undertaken at first. Nonetheless, this would give county residents an opportunity to have firsthand experience working in the Creative Economy.

### Organize the Berkshire Arts Education Initiative in the County’s K-12 Public School system.

1. The Initiative should start by organizing a leadership team from the county’s public school system and a leadership team from the creative economy. The two teams should develop a plan and a set of strategies for the schools to more fully exploit the extraordinarily rich cultural learning embedded in the county’s creative economy. The challenge here is to move beyond the sometimes ad hoc and under-funded nature of programs that currently exist.

2. The Berkshire Compact for Higher Education is the logical organization to oversee and support the initiative. The Compact is working on a number of different programmatic levels on education in the county, one of which should focus on the creative economy.

3. The Compact, with the two leadership teams, should pursue a higher level of funding than currently exists for public school arts education programs.

4. New degree programs should be established. Design and Preservation have become fast growing and important segments of arts and culture, and the creative economy. The higher education institutions in the county should give consideration to creating new degree and/or certificate programs in these areas. Design is becoming a fundamental part of many of the key economic sectors in our economy, and its strategic importance will only continue to grow. Preservation has slowly emerged in importance as historic restoration and conservation have become priorities for cities and towns—the goal is protecting historic buildings and facilities and incorporating them into culturally-driven revitalized downtowns.

## Creative Work Model

### **Creative & Cultural Skills: UK**

Creative & Cultural Skills is an industry-led sector skills council for Advertising, Crafts, Cultural Heritage, Design, Music, Performing, Literary and Visual Arts. One of its programs, Creative Apprenticeships, is designed to help young people to choose from a number of creative

career pathways such as design, music business, cultural heritage, and performing arts. The first 50 apprenticeships were announced in September 2006. An innovative component of the program is something called the Creative Learning Accounts. Students use the money in their account to pay for their arts-related occupational training from a network of preferred courses and suppliers.

## Creative Linkage Initiative

### *Goals*

- To develop more cohesion within the county's creative economy artists, organizations, and businesses.
- To bring about more strategic partnerships within the creative economy, especially those that lead to revenue generation.

### *Recommendations*

**Develop more formal and informal networking opportunities within the county's creative economy.**

1. Taking a cue from the environmental community, which organizes social networking and cocktail hours called "Green Drinks," organize similar networking opportunities throughout the county. Something along the lines of "Art Drinks" or "Cocktails and Culture" would be appropriate.
2. A similar kind of networking activity should be organized between people, institutions, and businesses in the creative economy and their counterparts in other key economic sectors of the Berkshire economy, notably healthcare, plastics, the environment, lifestyle, and financial services. The intent here is to introduce leaders and people in these other sectors to the creative economy and vice versa. This could open up communication among the major segments of the economy, and possibly lead to market opportunities for artists. Designate one-day as an "Arts Open House for the Berkshires." This would be an opportunity for all county residents to experience the artwork,

historic sites, museums, galleries, theaters, and businesses that make up the creative economy. On the one hand, this kind of activity could give some County residents a much better appreciation for the Creative Economy's depth and diversity. On the other hand, it could help nurture the audience and market among the County population.

**Create a fund that would provide financial support for new strategic partnerships in the creative economy.**

3. The funds should be very deliberately focused on the creation of new "cultural products" that result in new sources of revenue for artists, cultural institutions, and commercial businesses. Organize an oversight board for the fund that would take responsibility for securing the funds, developing the criteria for eligible uses of the funds, and for the distribution and tracking of funds. Create the board through an existing business or economic development organization.

## Creative Linkage Models

### Creative Santa Fe

Creative Santa Fe was formed in 2005 and grew out of a larger economic development strategy prepared for the city in 2004. Its mission is “to promote the prosperity of Santa Fe’s creative economy by elevating its creative industries in terms of status, opportunity, capability, and economic potential.” The organization was instrumental in having Santa Fe designated as a Creative City by the United Nation’s Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Another project related to arts and cultural economic development in Santa Fe is “Tickets Santa Fe” at the Lensic, which enables all cultural organization to sell tickets to events, which helps them save on administrative and marketing expenses. Also, a new web portal, [santafeculture.org](http://santafeculture.org) has an extensive calendar of cultural events, links to Tickets Santa Fe, an Online Magazine, a Culture Map, an Online Marketplace for local made arts and crafts, and a free classified ad section for jobs, housing and studio space.

### Highland & Islands Theater Network

Highlands & Islands Enterprise is a government-sponsored development agency that oversees economic development for the Scottish Highlands. This agency has focused a great deal of effort on building the region’s creative industries. The Highland & Islands Theater Network was created in 2001, and a development officer was hired to work for the network. The mission is to “ensure a more stable and viable environment for the creation and presentation of professional theater in the Highlands.” The role of the development officer is to: improve perceptions of the Highlands externally through new marketing initiatives, better branding, and new networking; research and apply for new funding for its members; and promote other cooperative activities such as learning and training opportunities for youth and adults.

Currently the four major projects of the Network are:

- Northern Connections - development of collaborative projects between artists working in rural communities of Scotland and Sweden. Three day theater workshops are being held in both countries.
- Festival of Theaters in the Highlands – as part of the Scottish Year of Highland Culture, the network is proposing a festival of contemporary theater and dance. The Festival will be held in October 2007 and biennially thereafter.
- Marketing support – development of video clips of each of the theater companies, a website, and a collaborative marketing effort.
- Theater Masterclass Training Program – which brings in internationally recognized theater practitioners to present intensive weekend training programs in all theater disciplines.

## **Chattanooga Museum Collaborative**

The Creative Discovery Museum, the Hunter Museum of American Arts, and the Tennessee Aquarium have developed a partnership that has involved collaborative activity in five areas: human resources, finance and accounting, information technology, marketing, and retail buying. In terms of human resources, the Aquarium has played a leadership role, actually fusing the three separate staffs under one Human Resource Department. The result is better and more cost-effective employee benefits, and greater HR capacity. The smaller institutions have also benefited from the Aquarium's greater capacity in accounting and information technology. The institutions are also involved in joint purchasing for their retail activities – a savings that has been a win-win for all three museums. The CEO of the Aquarium noted, “The best thing about this partnership is that each of the involved institutions gets more time and money to spend on their mission.”

**sect6**

# Balancing Growth and Sustainability

Remote and protected by isolated geography and limited modes of transportation from the major northeast urban centers, the Berkshires exist in a delicate balance of harmony with its natural environment and the pressures of growth in the modern world. Old world culture, new technology and contemporary society can collide to stress or conjoin to sustain the delicate balance that nurtures a unique quality of life that is regularly and universally celebrated in the Berkshires.

## **The region is experiencing significant strains:**

- pressures of land development on regional family farms and the environment,
- issues of affordable and market rate housing as a new crop of “gilded” cottages, today’s “McMansions,” spring up on hillsides and abandoned farms,
- disparate extremes of wealth of second home owners and rural poverty of the region’s hilltowns,
- lack of diversity and,
- migration of youth and loss of population.

Left unattended, these issues threaten the delicate balance of the Berkshires’ quality of life and the underpinnings vital to a successful creative economy. The Berkshire Blueprint and Berkshire Creative Economy Project offer a road map to invest in the region’s strengths and shore up its weaknesses. Careful planning and a cohesive countywide vision will be necessary to steward the region’s environmental and cultural gifts.

The Laurel Hill Association, still active today, articulates a vision of art and nature entwined: “We mean to work till every street shall be graded, every sidewalk shaded... every nook and corner beautified – in short, till Art combined with Nature shall have rendered our town the most beautiful and attractive spot in our ancient commonwealth.” (Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment, 2002.) Land Preservation continues under the strong leadership of Berkshire Natural Resources Council and numerous local Land Trusts. The Nature Conservancy has preserved a large area of rare wetlands in Sheffield. Thousands of acres of state forests are protected and preserved as well. Rural farms are an important part of the regional economy and scenic beauty of the region. Rising land values and development pressures threaten the bucolic farm landscape. Berkshire Grown, a consortium of local growers, works to sell local product to area restaurant, stores and farmer’s markets. Sustainability is a regional challenge.

**sect7**

# The Berkshire Creative Economy Project Purpose and Process

## **The goals of the Berkshire Creative Economy Project are to:**

- elevate the status of the creative economy sector as an economic engine within the Berkshire County economy;
- integrate the leadership of the creative and cultural communities into the economic and business leadership base within the Berkshires;
- increase awareness and develop a better understanding of the creative economy sector's role among Berkshire County residents;
- generate greater awareness of the economic value of the Berkshires' creative economy sector among Boston-based and other state legislators; and
- develop a strategic plan with at least a 10-year lifespan.

As an integral part of Berkshire Blueprint, the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation initiated the Berkshire Creative Economy Project to research and develop a strategic plan and report, working with leaders from the region's cultural and artistic institutions and the region's business community.

The research, conducted between April and October 2006, was undertaken by Mt. Auburn Associates, financed through a grant from the John Adams Innovation Institute, the economic development division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative.

Mt. Auburn Associates is a leading national consulting firm whose pioneering work with New York City, the state of Louisiana, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the New England Council has established the benchmarks for defining the economic importance of the creative economy sector. Mt. Auburn has developed quantitative and qualitative methods for measuring the economic significance of the creative economy sector, as well as developing workforce and economic development strategies to further linkages with traditional economic sectors.

In developing its strategic plan and report, Mt. Auburn employed a combination of methods. These included: quantitative data collection and analysis; focus groups with all relevant stakeholders and constituencies in the Berkshires; interviews with artists, leaders of arts organizations, owners of arts-related businesses, state legislators, business and economic development executives, and leaders in the education and workforce system; and research on the creative economy investments and competitive strengths of other states and regions.

One of the key tools was organizing a broad-based Creative Economy Steering Committee, which met on a regular basis to review and comment on the ongoing work and to endorse the final recommendations. In August, following discussion and deliberations by the steering committee on preliminary findings, the dialogue was captured and shared in an e-broadcast sent to more than 4,000 recipients, both in the Berkshires and around the state.

# The Berkshire Creative Economy Project Recommendations

The specific recommendations outlined are programs and projects designed to strengthen the creative economy in the Berkshires. They are intended to lead to new markets for artists, arts businesses, create new products, create new jobs and careers, and generate new revenue-enhancing opportunities. In order to make sure that these programs and projects succeed, and have their full economic impact, we suggest that the following actions be undertaken.

## Secure a unified brand for the Berkshire Creative Economy

- The current brand needs refinement and consistency of message, broadened to include the diversity of the creative cluster.
- The emphasis should be on the world-class nature of the creative economy and define its many facets.
- A consensus on the messaging should be secured from all appropriate stakeholders in the county.
- The collective research that has been undertaken for the Creative Economy Project and the Berkshire Strategy Project should be used—very little, if any, new research is needed.
- A marketing/branding consultant may be useful.

## Develop leadership and organizational capacity

- Integrate the Creative Economy Project with the Strategy Project's efforts.
- Create segment-specific working groups, where appropriate, for the Creative Economy, in order to move the Recommendations forward.
- Work with existing arts and culture organizations where appropriate identify specific roles/tasks for these organizations.

## Make a significant investment in the Creative Economy

- Create New Creative Product Seed Fund.
- Develop web page and marketing materials.
- Fund a Berkshire Biennale as signature event.
- Secure financial resources for organizational capacity.

## Educate the Berkshire community about the economic potential of its creative economy sector

- Produce and distribute a four-color creative economy overview piece.
- Identify key stakeholder organizations, public officials, and business associations, and hold creative economy briefings and discussions with each of them.
- Develop a media campaign and a message that can help facilitate an understanding of the creative economy in the county.
- Design and produce a creative economy E-newsletter, similar to that created by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative at the start of this project. On a periodic basis, send the E-newsletter to residents, the creative economy, and all related stakeholders.

# The Members of the Creative Economy Steering Committee

Michael Conforti, *the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Vice-Chair, Creative Economy, BEDC*

Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Norman Rockwell Museum, Co-Chair*

Ellen Spear, *Hancock Shaker Village, Co-Chair*

David Bissailon, *Berkshire Chamber of Commerce*

Ethan Berg, *Lenox Athenaeum*

David Crane, *Excelsior Printing*

Don Dubendorf, *Grinnell, Dubendorf & Smith, LLP*

Peter Dudek, *Storefront Artists Project*

Nancy Fitzpatrick, *Red Lion Inn*

Michelle Gillette, *poet, author, and educator*

Mary Grant, *Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts*

Erik Hoffner, *Orion Magazine*

Lola Jaffe, *Mahaiwe Theatre Board Chair*

Mark Jones, *Shakespeare & Co.*

Sam Kasten, *handweaver*

Jeffrey Kleiser, *Synthespian Studios*

Maggie Mailer, *Storefront Artists Project*

Sienna Patti, *Sienna Gallery*

Suzanne Salinetti, *The Studley Press, Inc.*

Annie Selke, *Pine Cone Hill*

Stephen Sheppard, *Williams College*

Eugenie Sills, *The Women's Times*

Kevin Sprague, *Studio Two*

Joe Thompson, *MASS MoCA*

Kelley Vickery, *Berkshire International Film Festival*

Larry Wallach, *Simon's Rock College*

Megan Whilden, *Pittsfield Cultural Development Office*

B. Carter White, *Berkshire Theatre Festival*

Bill Wilson, *Berkshire Visitors Bureau*

Tracy Wilson, *Berkshire Music School*

Sandra Zink, *Interprint, Inc.*

Michael Zivyak, *Berkshire Living Magazine*

State Rep. Daniel Bosley,  
*MA House of Representatives, ex-officio*

State Rep. Denis Guyer, M  
*A House of Representatives, ex-officio*

State Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli,  
*MA House of Representatives, ex-officio*

State Rep. Christopher Speranzo,  
*MA House of Representatives, ex-officio*

State Senator Andrea Nuciforo,  
*MA State Senate, ex-officio*

Congressman John Olver,  
*U.S. House of Representatives, ex-officio*

Rhonda Serre,  
*Congressman John Olver's office, ex-officio*

William Ennen,  
*John Adams Innovation Institute, ex-officio*

## **Mt. Auburn Associates**

Michael Kane, *Mt. Auburn Associates*

Beth Siegel, *Mt. Auburn Associates*

Devon Winey, *Mt. Auburn Associates*

## **Berkshire Economic Development Corporation Staff**

Tyler Fairbank, *BEDC*

Michael Supranowicz, *BEDC*

Stephanie French, *BEDC*

Beth Larrow, *BEDC*

**sect8**

# List of Interviewees and Focus Group Participants

Pamela Art, *Storey Publishing*  
Lesley Ann Beck, *Berkshire Eagle*  
Blair Benjamin, *MASS MoCA*  
Ethan Berg, *Lenox Athenaeum*  
Peter Bergman, *Writer*  
Dan Bosley, *State Representative*  
Sandra Brown-Burton, *Williams College Dance*  
Sandra Carroll, *Berkshire County Board of Realtors*  
Stuart Chase, *Berkshire Museum*  
Beryl Cohen, *The Mahaiwe*  
Ellen Cohen, *Cohen & White Realtors*  
Michael Conforti, *Clark Art Institute*  
Lisa Corrin, *Williams College Museum of Art*  
Diane Cowen, *Sheffield Pottery*  
David Crane, *Excelsior Printing*  
Tom Curley, *Berkshire Community College*  
Bill Darger, *Williamstown Theater Festival*  
Vivian Dorsel, *Writer*  
Gail Downey, *Painter*  
Don Dubendorf, *John Adams Innovation Institute*  
Peter Dudek, *Storefront Artists Project, artist*  
Emily Dawnis, *Papyri Books*  
Peter Fasano, *Designer*  
Phylene Farrell, *Berkshire Community College*  
Nancy Fitzpatrick, *Red Lion Inn*  
David Fleming, *Colonial Theater*  
Peter Garlington, *Interprint*  
Michelle Gillett, *Writer*  
Joe Goodwin, *Goodwin Studios*  
Mary Grant, *MCLA*  
Judi Gray, *Voice teacher at Berkshire Music School*  
Lisa Green, *Clark Art Institute*  
Elie Hammerling, *Pittsfield Cultural Development Board*  
Eric Hilton, *Developer*  
Lola Jaffe, *The Mahaiwe*  
Mark Jones, *Shakespeare & Company, Inc.*  
Meryl Joseph, *Artist, developer*  
Sam Kasten, *Sam Kasten Handweaver*  
Sara Katzoff, *Berkshire Fringe and Bazaar Productions*  
Kevin Kenefick, *Kevin Kenefick Photography*  
Jim Kolesar, *Williams College*  
Roy Krantz, *Developer*  
Peter Lafayette, *Berkshire Bank Foundation*  
Judith Lerner, *Beaux Arts, artist*  
Alan Lombardi, *New Marlborough Cultural Council*  
Evan Lurie, *Composer for children's TV show*  
Kate Maguire, *Berkshire Theater Festival*  
Maggie Mailer, *Storefront Artists Project*  
Eugene Mamut, *AniMagic*  
Kent Mikalsen, *Kent Mikalsen Studio*  
Jason Morin, *Media X Productions*  
Steve Murray, *Composer*  
Seth Nash, *Blue Q*  
Laurie Norton Moffatt, *Normal Rockwell Museum*  
Danny O, *c/o Broken Record Art Group*  
Barbara Koz Paley, *Arts Assets*  
Sharon Palma, *Southern Berkshire Chamber*  
John Parker, *Berkshire Botanical Gardens*  
Heather Phillips, *Contemporary Arts Center*  
Amy Renak, *Piano teacher at Berkshire Music School*  
Maia Robbins-Zust, *Berkshire Production Resources*  
Jodi Rothe, *Writer*  
Diane Rousseau, *Diane Rousseau Conservation*  
Deanna Ruffer, *Pittsfield Community Development*  
Olson Ryan Timothy, *Berkshire Fringe and Bazaar Productions*  
Greg Scheckler, *MCLA Fine and Performing Arts Department*  
Jonathan Secor, *MCLA*  
Gabrielle Senza, *Red Collaborative*  
Ellen Spear, *Hancock Shaker Village*  
Hope Sullivan, *IS 183*  
Paul Sundberg, *Trumpet teacher, Berkshire Music School*  
Allison Tracey, *Writer*  
Douglass Truth, *North Street Studio III*  
Larry Wallach, *Simon's Rock College*  
Megan Whilden, *Pittsfield Cultural Development Office*  
Linda Whitehead, *Writer*  
Irene Willis, *Writer*  
Bill Wilson, *Berkshire Visitors Bureau*  
Michael Wilson, *Berkshire Museum*  
Tracy Wilson, *Berkshire Music School*  
Lisa Yetz, *Berkshire Community College*  
Nick Zammuto, *The Books*  
Sandra Zink, *Interprint*  
Michael Zivyak, *Berkshire Living Magazine*

**sect9**

# Art Means Business in the Berkshires.

We would like to thank the creative assemblage of community leaders who came together to conduct this project. The work had its genesis in a creative sector presentation by Mt. Auburn Associates during the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts' Berkshire Compact for Higher Education project, a model of cross-industry county-wide planning.

The Berkshire County Legislative Delegation has long been ardent champions of the regions' cultural and education community. We thank Representatives Daniel Bosley and Smitty Pignatelli, Christopher Speranzo and Denis Guyer, and Senators Andrea Nuciforo and Benjamin Downing for their leadership support of this endeavor.

The project was made possible by the generous investment of the John Adams Innovation Institute of Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. We thank Donald Dubendorf, Patrick Larkin, Michael Ward and William Ennen for their support. The region's mayors are pioneers in recognizing the value of the creative cluster to economic development efforts. Mayor John Barrett III knows the power of the creative economy to turn a city around. An early and ardent champion of MASS MoCA, he has led and witnessed the rebirth of the City of North Adams through the development of its creative cluster enterprises. Mayor James Ruberto is leading a similar renaissance of the City of Pittsfield through investment in arts and creative industry.

This project would not have been possible without the inspiring leadership of Mount Auburn Associates, leaders in the field of economic development research and quantification of the

impact of the creative economy. It was a pleasure working with principals Beth Siegel and Michael Kane and their talented team. We thank them for their dedicated work and for defining the creative cluster in the Berkshires.

We salute and thank Tyler Fairbank, Beth Larrow and the leadership of the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation board who took the project under wing and integrated this important planning into the Berkshire Blueprint, a countywide economic development plan to guide the future of the Berkshires. We gratefully acknowledge Michael Conforti, Director/CEO of the Clark Art Institute, and BEDC board member, who provided valued strategic advice and coordination.

The Creative Economy Steering Committee members represent a cross-industry group of creative leaders who dedicated nine months to guide the work of the CE project. Manufacturing, publishing, printing, designers, architects, landscape designers, artists, cultural organizations, musicians, creative entrepreneurs, educators, philanthropists and many more fields were represented in this talents committee. These leaders were the creative linkage to those who contribute to the economic and cultural vibrancy of the region.

The project was initiated in the cultural long-range planning committee of the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, comprised of the CEO's of the region's vibrant cultural organizations. These leading not-for-profit organizations' investment and commitment to the Berkshire economy has long enriched the intellectual and aesthetic lives of Berkshire residents.



Laurie Norton Moffatt, co-chair  
Berkshire Creative Economy Project

Director/CEO, Norman Rockwell Museum



Ellen J. Spear, co-chair  
Berkshire Creative Economy Project

President/CEO, Hancock Shaker Village

