



## OVERVIEW

Many artists today are deeply committed to making work that addresses pressing social issues and changes the way we perceive the world. While some artists use traditional forms of visual, literary, or performing arts to make work that comments on, responds to, or advocates for the need for change, others are exploring new forms of “social practice” that engages communities in an interactive exchange. In the latter category, an artwork might take the form of a store, a garden, a meal, a website, a street performance, a story exchange, or an urban planning project. Socially engaged art can ignite outrage and demands for change, and/or provide a platform for reflection, collaboration, and building community. It can focus on the residents of a single city block, or reach out to a global audience.

## THE CHALLENGE

The challenge for this category is to develop an innovative art projects that meaningfully engage with issues of advocacy, justice, and community-building. The projects may use any art form – visual/conceptual art, photography, new media, video, dance, theater/performance art, music, creative writing, or other forms. Art must be central to the project, and the proposal must reflect an informed understanding of the particular art form(s) being used, as well as of the communities being served.

Examples of proposals that would fit into this category include (but are not limited to):

- Development of an after school expressive arts program that aims to provide a safe space and creative outlet to elementary school students who live in under-resourced communities.
- Production of a documentary that raises awareness about public health consequences, detrimental social impact, and cost of imprisonment.
- Development of a community garden that seeks to build community relationships in diverse neighborhoods.

# BIG IDEAS ART & SOCIAL CHANGE

## FITE FILM: FROM INCARCERATION TO EDUCATION

*1st Place Winner, Art & Social Change (2016)*

The FITE documentary film combats recidivism in the prison system by motivating currently incarcerated individuals to seek higher education and mentorship opportunities. To accomplish this goal, the film features the success stories of relatable, formerly incarcerated students at UC Berkeley. Screening the documentary in prisons and jails around the U.S. will allow currently incarcerated individuals to become motivated, and learn that it's a realistic and desirable goal to attain higher education - both while incarcerated and after incarceration. In addition, the creation of a structured resource connection, organized by region, will supply viewers of the film with phone numbers and contact information of trusted, already established organizations that mentor incarcerated individuals on their journey to seeking higher education.

<http://www.fitefilm.com>

## RESPONSIVE CITY LIGHTS

*1st Place Winner, Creative Expression for Social Justice (2015)*

Responsive City Lights uses interactive light installations to enhance the perception of streets as engaging public spaces. The project implements Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles by increasing foot traffic and pedestrian interaction, bringing the "internet of things" into urban spaces to help fulfill a vital social need. The interactivity of the lights creates activity support for legitimate uses for previously unclaimed sections of the street, of curious pedestrians interacting with the lights. Through installations that engage residents and pedestrians, and provide a source of expressive and meaningful diversity in an otherwise uniform environment, the project ultimately seeks to provide a rich, additional tool to communities in order to enliven and enrich their streets and pathways as public spaces.

**Status:** The team piloted their prototype in San Leandro and will introduce their next iteration in Richmond this summer.

<http://bigideas.berkeley.edu/winners/responsive-city-lights-urban-streets-as-public-spaces-uc-berkeley/>

## AFROART EAST AFRICA

*3rd Place Winner, Creative Expression for Social Justice (2015)*

The urban arts centers of Nairobi, Kigali, Dar-es-Salaam, and Kampala are hubs for thousands of young and established visual artists, many of whom work in collectives or group studio spaces. The work coming out of East Africa is radiant and intelligent — it reveals slices of contemporary life from incisive, humorous and optimistic perspectives. It also varies widely in form; from painting, sculpture, and assemblage, to installation, photography, and digital media. The AfroArt team produces an artistic video series documenting the rich art culture of East Africa to promote artists' works on the AfroArt website, which will be made into a feature-length documentary presented in the United States, film festivals and other relevant venues.

**Status:** The AfroArt team is in East Africa collecting artist stories and preparing to produce their video series. Early clips can be found on their website.

<http://www.afroart.us/>



Photo credit: Dan Honda

