

CHAPTER
10

CROWDSOURCING

**“I HAVE SIMPLY WISHED TO
ASSERT THE REASONED AND
INDEPENDENT FEELING OF
MY OWN INDIVIDUALITY
WITHIN A TOTAL KNOWLEDGE
OF TRADITION.”**

HENRI MATISSE

IN THIS CHAPTER

Before you even touch a paintbrush, when developing public works of art it's important for you to know what the surrounding community wants to see reflected in the work being created. Although it is difficult to please everyone, it is possible to incorporate many different voices by organizing and negotiating various viewpoints. In Chapter 3, we will discuss how to collaborate with everyone in the neighborhood on your public art project by using a method of community involvement called crowdsourcing...

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Chapter Three title page by: Pose 2

WHAT IS CROWDSOURCING?

Crowdsourcing is defined by Wikipedia as the “act of taking a task traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people or community in the form of an open call.” The sound bite definition is the application of ‘open source’ principles to fields outside of developing software. Examples of crowdsourcing include Wikipedia itself (the entries and its maintenance are crowdsourced); YouTube (the videos are crowdsourced); Amazon, iTunes and Yelp! (the product reviews are crowdsourced); and eBay (the entire marketplace is crowdsourced). All of these crowdsourced tasks are open for anyone to participate at any time.

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE CROWDSOURCING?



Multiple artists are collaborating on a mural in Philadelphia, PA during Concrete Alchemy Tour in 2008.
Photo by Ricardo Barros

There are two kinds of crowdsourcing, competitive and collaborative. Competitive crowdsourcing involves a contest with one or a few winners, like the Doritos Superbowl Ad contest with ads submitted by anyone on YouTube and voted on by the public. Competitive crowdsourcing typically solves well-defined problems that one person or a small team can handle, like a logo design contest where the winner takes all. Collaborative crowdsourcing involves a community of people working together to solve problems that are not well defined, like how to improve healthcare, make a neighborhood safer, or define the values for a public mural that reflects the neighborhood where it will be painted.



VYAL with VENG, POSE2 and CHOR BOOGIE worked as a team with other 11 artists to create an all-embracing mural. To see photos from the Concrete Alchemy Tour visit www.albuscav.us/concrete-alchemy. Photo by Ricardo Barros

HOW CAN CROWDSOURCING BE APPLIED TO PUBLIC ART?: VALUE STATEMENTS

A value statement summarizes the goal of the work of art, and can be created by multiple people, rather than the sponsor mandating something that will not express the ideas and wishes of the community itself. Value statements can be ideas such as ‘this mural needs to reflect the contemporary cultural renaissance of the town’ or ‘the emotion in this piece should be melancholy and self-reflective to communicate the gravity of what’s being represented’. It is this value statement that can be crowdsourced to the public.

“This wall conveys a vision and message of the hard work people have provided for positive change in the neighborhood, where the following images and ideas for the wall represent the diversity of values beneath the surface: music, bright colors, art, unity, people, children, family, love and community.”

HOW TO CROWDSOURCE A VALUE STATEMENT FACE-TO-FACE.

1. Prepare and inspire the participants, for at least an hour, to be motivated to express their opinions on paper. This needs to be done by someone who has a reputation for relating specifically to the emotions of the target audience. Identify two or three participants that can serve as role models for the rest.
2. Provide each participant with an index card and pen asking them to provide their values and what’s important to them, with the idea that the mural will become a powerful expression of this collective thought.
3. Have each participant read aloud what they wrote in front of the group. This is very similar to the vibe at poetry slams where presentation/expression is just as important as content.
4. Post the cards on the wall and provide each participant with five stickers to place on their favorite entries. They can use all five on one entry if they wish, but only one on their own.
5. Identify the most popular entries and break up into groups to allow group input to enhance those statements.
6. Discuss with the group how they can start to summarize these enhanced entries into a singular value statement for the artists to use as a guide.



Artist GAIA contributing to this always-changing wall in Washington, DC. It is an example of an extensive collaboration of many artists contributing to one large dynamic mural.

HOW TO CROWDSOURCE A VALUE STATEMENT USING THE 'BUBBLY' WEB APP.

1. Post a summary of the program on the Bubbly site (www.bubblyapp.com). This explains how people will be using the site to transform their ideas into a real work of public art.
2. Post the guidelines of the program on the site. This includes the deadlines for submitting ideas and rating/commenting; rules of conduct (to prevent ballot stuffing, for example); media formats, etc.
3. Identify a dozen popular ideas and post them as the examples. You can also post examples from the face-to-face crowdsourcing of a value statement on the Bubbly site. This provides inspiration and guidance for people to submit their own value statements.
4. Broadcast an open call for people to submit their ideas. It is up to you to decide whether to allow people to submit and rate/comment at the same time, or in succession.
5. Note the winning ideas. It is up to you to decide whether or not to incentivize participants by rewarding the top rated/most popular submissions. These can be summarized into a singular value statement and transformed into a 'word cloud,' otherwise known as a 'wordle' (see the paragraph below). The entire site should remain public to allow people to continue to peruse and comment on individual entries.

HOW TO GENERATE A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE VALUE STATEMENT.

The artists are used to work visually. The value statements can be portrayed as a written sentence or alternatively as an image, a group of words that appear in participants' statements most often. A project coordinator will collect these statements and transform them into a 'word cloud' (www.wordle.net) that will become a visual guide for the artists when conceptualizing the

with. This helps the participants feel like they're being listened to and appreciated, and assists the artists in understanding what emotional chords are potentially present to be played with passion. Please see an example of a value statement.

Step Three

The artists return with an interpreted public art sketch that combines elements of their previous work and elements from the crowdsourced value statement. It is optional and a good practice to review this third stage of the vision development with the public that previously participated in the initial crowdsourcing process.



"Birds On A Wire." Mural on The Fringe Gallery painted during Albus Cavus summer program under guidance of Nicole Puzan and DECOY.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS FOR CROW SOURCING

The following are tools that may be included in crowdsourcing, but by themselves are not crowdsourcing:

Surveys - These do not establish a working community interaction.

Voting - This does not establish a working community interaction.

Focus groups - These do not establish a working community interaction. They are meant to get ideas from a group of people at one particular time, and that's it.

Charrettes - A charrette is a multi-day workshop to get everyone interested in working with 'experts' to produce a plan at the end of the meeting. They are meant to get people working together over a few days, but that's mainly it. They do not prioritize a working community interaction before and after the meeting.



Young people are watching an artist painting an interactive mural during Street Art Festival in New Brunswick, NJ. This festival was organized by NJ state Theater and Albus Cavus built a portable wall that attracted hundreds of contributing artists.

NOTES

USE THESE PAGES FOR RESEARCH/SKETCHING

QUESTIONS:

These questions will help to guide your own approach to knowledge collection. Choose some or all, then figure out an approach that works for you to answer these questions before creating your own public artwork(s).

1. What are examples of crowdsourcing? Can you name any that were not previously mentioned?
2. What do you think could be crowdsourced?
3. Why is crowdsourcing better than having only one person participate and make decisions?
4. Is collaborative crowdsourcing better than competitive crowdsourcing? If so, what makes it better?
5. How could crowdsourcing be used to build a better neighborhood where you live?

ACTIVITIES:

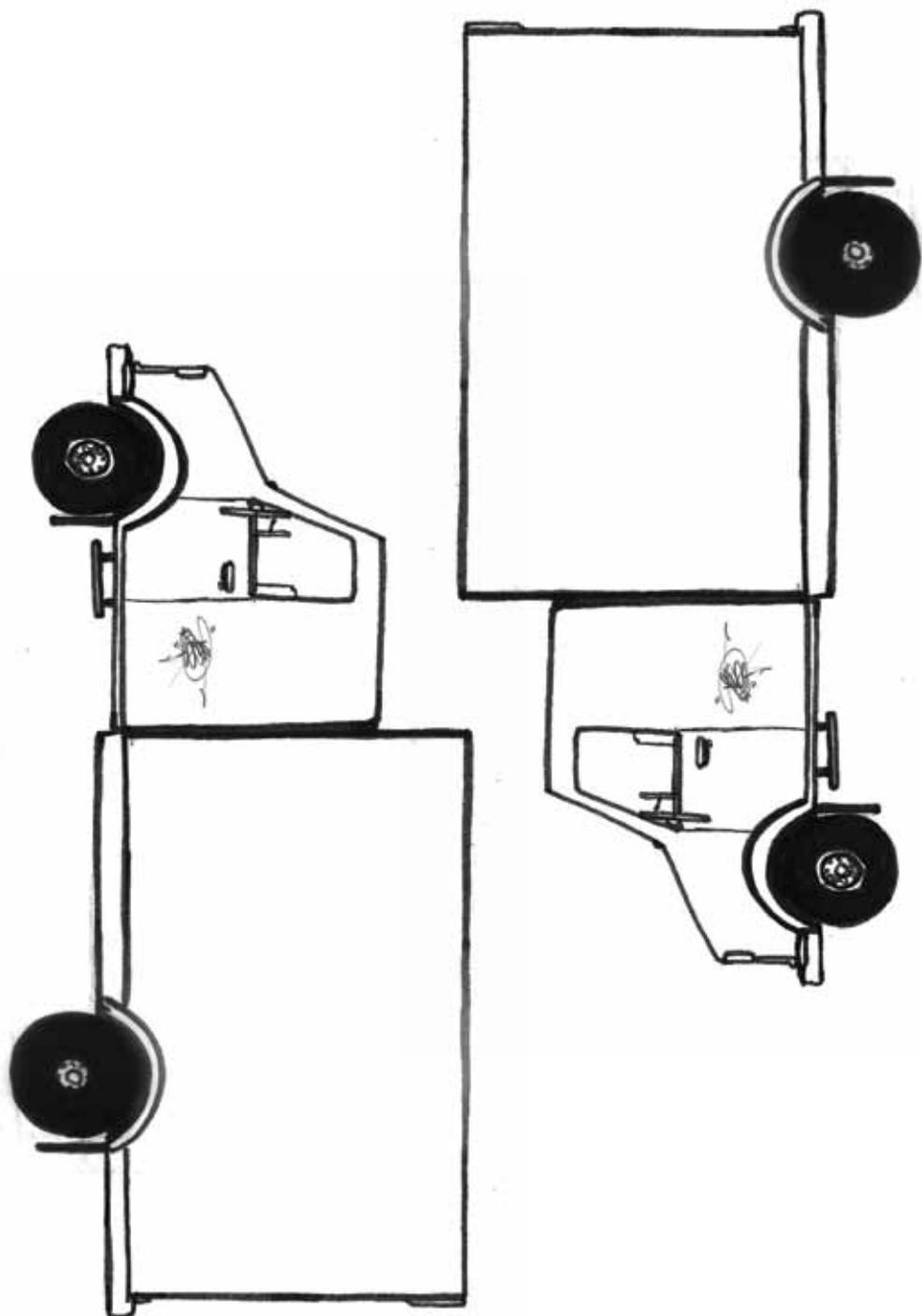
1. Collage of images from historical research: Everyone brings in a photo or image of what they think represents the history of the neighborhood. These can be posted on the wall and voted on, then arranged in a collage with the most popular images in order from top left. A photo is taken of the collage and used as a visual guide for the artists to create a collective public work of art (this can be small or large in scale).
2. Historical research scavenger hunt: The historical research image collage can be applied to objects in general. In addition, the most popular objects can be used for a scavenger hunt. Identify interesting sites or objects in the neighborhood, such as original lamp poles and benches, houses where important historical figures were born, streets paved with original cobble stones and create a game for the participants to go out and find all these interesting places and objects.
3. Color theory exercise: Everyone brings in a sample of a color(s) that appeals to their mood or personality, either an image or object. Take a photo of the collage and collection of colors and use it as a visual guide for the artists to create a collective public work of art.
4. Culture/nature/people/community values exercise: Repeat activity #3 but instead of the colors, ask the participants to present their favorite objects in the neighborhood's natural world or the most appealing values that the community shares. Any of the activities and processes previously mentioned can be used to better understand people's values through various themes that are relevant to the messages behind the public art.

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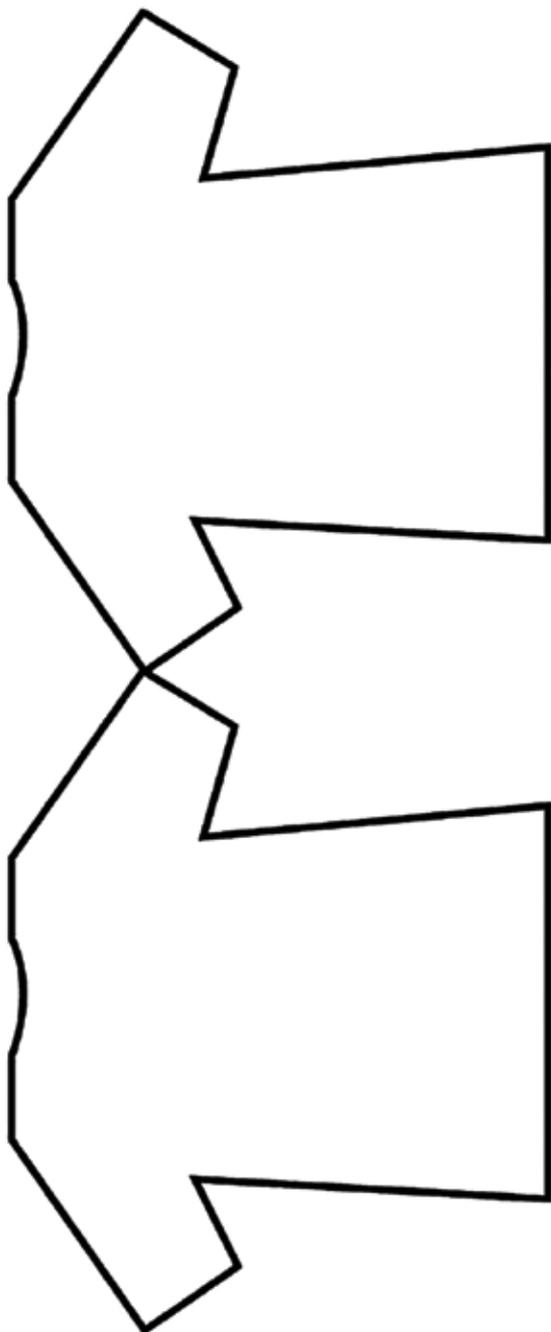
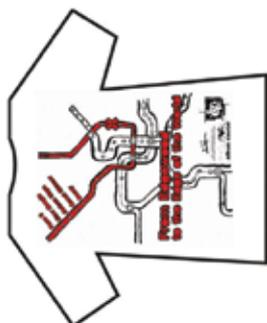
SKETCH FOR FUN

USE THESE PAGES FOR RESEARCH/SKETCHING



DESIGN YOUR OWN SHIRT

USE THESE PAGES FOR RESEARCH/SKETCHING



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SUMMARY:

Although the term ‘crowdsourcing’ was coined as recently as June 2006 by Jeff Howe in a Wired magazine article, “The Rise of Crowdsourcing,” the idea of people getting together to make decisions is as old as civilization itself. However, crowdsourcing can be applied to making art in public spaces through the creation of value statements and by building consensus and enthusiasm for projects that will find a home in the neighborhoods of crowdsourcing participants. This technique allows for the project sponsor/client, artist(s) and community members to reach a consensus about what type of art projects should be created, and it also breathes new energy into the process of developing public works of art

