



Museums are spaces of freedom for both artist and audience.  
- Yasmil Raymond, Dia Art Foundation



Museums are safe havens that don't change while the city rushes on.  
- Museum Teen Summit

# MUSEUMOPOLIS

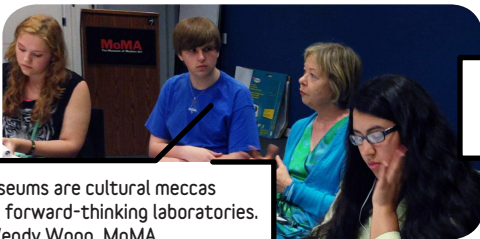
## WHAT'S THE ROLE OF A MUSEUM IN A CITY?



The role of a museum in a city is economic development.  
- Clara Lou Gould, Former Mayor, Beacon



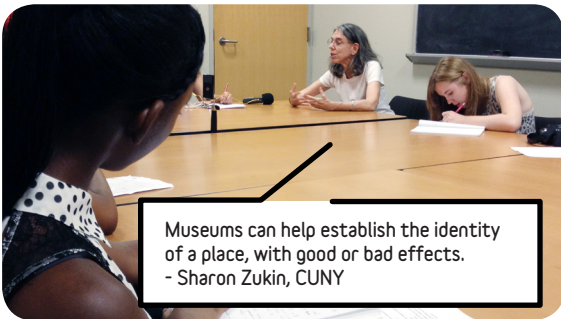
Museums bring people together to learn and think.  
- Annie Pollard, Tenement Museum



Museums are cultural meccas and forward-thinking laboratories.  
- Wendy Woon, MoMA



Museums can create economic vitality in the region.  
- Susan Batton, Dia Art Foundation



Museums can help establish the identity of a place, with good or bad effects.  
- Sharon Zukin, CUNY



Museums are both community living rooms and cathedrals for the city.  
- Libby Ellis, AEA Consulting

This project is a collaboration of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), Dia Art Foundation, CUP teaching artist Katarzyna Balug, and students from Dutchess County. It is supported in part by the Dyson Foundation; the Union Square Awards, a project of the Tides Center; the Lily Auchincloss Foundation; and the Scherman Foundation.

**About CUP**

**The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)** is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of art and design to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

CUP's Urban Investigations are project-based afterschool programs in which public high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and teaching artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the fields of arts and social justice.

To learn more about CUP, visit [welcometoCUP.org](http://welcometoCUP.org)

**About Dia**

A nonprofit institution founded in 1974, **Dia Art Foundation** is renowned for initiating, supporting, presenting, and preserving art projects.

In keeping with the innovative and unconventional nature of the collection, Dia's education philosophy grows out of a belief that experience-based exposure to contemporary art can enrich and inspire visitors, while offering new approaches to a range of disciplines from the sciences to the humanities. Emerging from the Greek prefix for "through," Dia's pedagogical approach is founded on the idea of art as an active, self-determined experience.

To learn more about Dia, visit [diaart.org](http://diaart.org)



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**INTRODUCTION TO MUSEUMOPOLIS**



Once upon a hot summertime, 15 public high school students from the Hudson Valley embarked on an adventure. The quest of their *Museumopolis Mission* was to determine the role of a museum in a city. How can a museum impact a city? Who is a museum for?

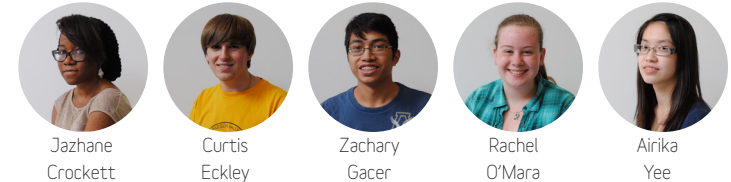
Searching for clues, they interviewed curators, artists, community members, and politicians. Armed with their research, they time-traveled to fantastical worlds where they explored how a museum and its host city can influence each other in multiple ways. Upon their return, they invented, built, and wrote original stories about three museums— *The Now*, *GISH*, and *The Garden Walls Project*—in three cities—Central Point, Genesis, and Maple City—to share their ideas about what they learned.

Through a magical looking glass, we can see two futures for each museum: a utopia and a dystopia. The investigators found that how the future turns out is influenced by the decision-makers, the community, the politics, the money, and the creative intentions behind a museum. So what makes a museum successful? How can a museum avoid the devastation that ravages these dystopian universes?

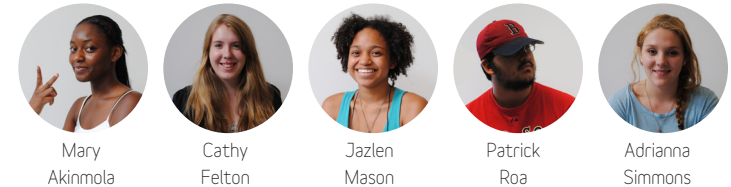
Travel with us to see the students' creations. In the pages that follow, you'll read how each museum came to be and see both of its potential outcomes: utopian in pink, dystopian in blue.

First, meet the team behind this tale of three cities:

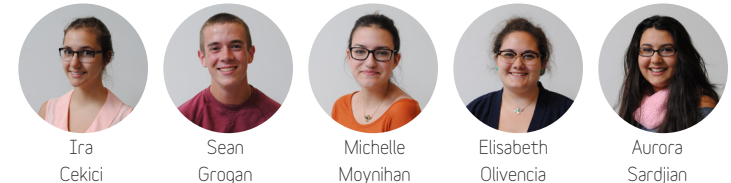
*The Now*



*GISH*



*Garden Walls Project*





# 01

## THE NOW IN CENTRAL POINT

The city of Central Point was not a destination. Each issue of the local paper, *Central Point News*, was filled with stories of economic downturn and the city's lack of an identity. Businesses were closing down, people were struggling, and urban decay was visible on every street. Central Point High students had a hard time making sense of the information in their history textbooks, as their own city lacked a rich history or even a famous building.

Then in 2008, Bill Jobs, a billionaire-philanthropist, decided to construct a museum to realize his dream of building a prosperous community. Supporters said that the museum would bring culture, better education, and business. Critics said that the museum would force low-

income residents to move out because of increased rents.

For Jobs, the museum would be a symbol of the 21st century, signifying innovation and community. It would be named *The Now*. Jobs hired a curator, who traveled the world to find artworks that portrayed modern issues and cultures. Artworks included paintings of dynamic cities, photographs of pollution, and interactive sculptures about the impact of computers. The architect Chris Cross created an innovative topsy-turvy building fueled by the new era of design.

When final plans for the museum were released, even the most critical critics praised them. *The Now* leaders hoped that the local community would become heavily involved with the museum. They planned a gallery where residents could submit photos, paintings, stories, videos, and mementos for display. Residents voted on which works to exhibit in the museum. Students could visit the museum and attend its art programs for free. To make decisions for *The Now*, residents would elect representatives to help the museum director choose exhibits, create education programs, and interact with local businesses.



What will happen to *The Now*?



Two years after the museum opened in 2010, the city transformed into a thriving tourist destination with a booming economy. Funny Food, a humble pizzeria in 2001, grew to be a five-story, five-star restaurant. The coffee shop next to the museum made millions of dollars in profit and opened stores across the United States. Hotels welcomed guests from around the world. Demand for apartments rose along with rents. Wisely, businesses increased their workers' incomes to keep local Central Pointers in town so they could help tourists and enjoy benefits from the changes.

Partnering with local schools, *The Now* improved education drastically. Students who graduated from Central Point High regularly became Nobel Prize winners, famous artists, accomplished authors, benevolent humanitarians, and generous philanthropists. All of *The Now's* exhibits were about the present, so students learned from the successes and failures of contemporary issues to build a better future. They passionately learned the stories behind each exhibit, learned to make art, and applied what they learned in their homework. Students were so driven to learn that a library was built next to the school.

Most importantly, *The Now* created a sense of community. Students, workers, and business owners all benefited from the museum.

## UTOPIA

### WHAT WORKS AT THE NOW?

1. Residents are part of decision-making
2. More tourism means more local business
3. Admission is affordable
4. The building is a landmark
5. Central Point has more money to beautify the city



After Bill Jobs's tragic death, his daughter Apple Jobs inherited *The Now*. She convinced city leaders to maximize profits from the museum and to take advantage of the high demand to live in Central Point. Rents skyrocketed, becoming unaffordable to many residents and forcing them out. Dinner at Funny Foods now cost \$700, hotels cost \$1000 per night, and coffee was \$30 a cup. Apple raised the admission price from \$5 to \$100, turning *The Now* into a club for the rich. She cut education programs and fired many employees.

Within a few months, the new residents moved on to fads elsewhere. Central Point High returned to its original state: a dump. Businesses closed since no one bought their outrageously overpriced goods. Unemployment exploded. Through a series of bad decisions, *The Now* and Central Point lost millions. Unlike *The Now's* original employees, the new staff were not local and knew little about the city. The last straw came when museum security failed to stop a thief because they did not know the number for the local police. Apple built a huge barbed wire fence to prevent future robberies, but she knew the city was on the verge of collapse. Soon after, she closed *The Now* and opened a landfill in its place.

Within six months of taking control, Apple made a wasteland of the city and the museum. The only profitable business now was U-Haul.

## DYSTOPIA

### WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE NOW?

1. Admission is too high for most residents
2. The barbed wire fence is not inviting
3. Rising rents and costs make life a struggle
4. Businesses don't address residents' needs, so they fail





# 02

## GENESIS INTERACTIVE SCIENCE HISTORY MUSEUM IN GENESIS

In the year 3047, mankind had given up hope for Earth to ever be salvageable again. The planet had been wrecked by both natural disasters and war. To most, it was a distant, melancholic memory; those who remained lived in squalor. Callie Cumberpatch, who inherited her billions, grew up on Gallihedron 45 hearing the great histories of her ancestors' planet. Upon finishing her degree in Earth Studies, she embarked upon a scientific expedition to Earth. Her team traveled across the dying rock, coming across many poor, starving natives who were unable to leave. As she marvelled at yet another grim reminder of the great Brazilian Burning that destroyed the lavish Amazon Rainforest a century ago, one of her crew snapped: "If this horrible planet is so

perfect to you, why don't you just live here?!" As he stormed off towards his escape pod, Callie considered his angry suggestion and decided to build a beautiful city right there. She scoured the villages, and came across many who joined her quest. They called their city Genesis.

To share her love of science, Callie founded a science museum that was thrilling, experimental, and accessible to the public. The school, cafés, and shops advertised the Genesis Interactive Science History (*GISH*) Museum, which had a huge budget to create revolutionary public demonstrations and teen programs. Inside, jaws dropped at the working proton disruptor and the old "cell phones" of 2000. *GISH* made being a scientist seem... cool. And, it was less boring than school.

So it was in a teen program that 15-year-old Karmin leaned back in his chair one day and thought out loud, "You know what would be cool? Living in a diamond." Everyone laughed, but when Callie heard the idea, she thought that a diamond building block might solve many problems in the city. The scientists at the museum's extensive lab soon found that with enough pressure, the coal left after the Brazilian Burning could become diamond. *GISH* teamed up with an engineering company, who created a carbon compressor to speed up the process by 1 billion percent and developed a laser to cut them into building blocks.

As Genesis filled with diamond homes, the value of a diamond went down on Earth. On other planets, it was still hot on the market. Seeing the double-diamond museum towers and a city made of such a valuable substance was amazing, and Genesis became an intergalactic tourist spot. Karmin now worried that the attention from other worlds was causing an influx of people moving in. He predicted that rising rents would drive out the people who currently lived in the diamonds. What if the locals could no longer afford Genesis?



What will become of *GISH*?





Diamond museum towers



## UTOPIA

### HOW DOES GISH SHAPE GENESIS CULTURE AND ECONOMY?

1. Partners with various local groups to invest locally, help businesses and attract visitors
2. Stages free public demonstrations for the community
3. Funds locally relevant research like diamond building materials

Once again, the museum crew listened to the boy, and organized a council made of residents to preserve affordability in the city. This addition to the city's government would keep the rents of the diamond city down at a price affordable to all.

The council first suggested that instead of demolishing all the old buildings to make more small diamond houses, the city should invest in upgrading the older, regular apartment buildings. Callie took the advice to heart and used a cheaper, glass-like alternative that was almost as aesthetically attractive as the gems.

With the new and old buildings, the city continued to prosper for everyone. Callie's dream of putting Earth back on the map of the universe was finally achieved. People from all over the cosmos came to see the diamond city of Genesis, and the museum helped to form a new creative culture of science. As the city grew, its other attractions increased, and Callie, her museum, and teens like Karmin continued to embrace and work with the newcomers.



Down with diamonds!



## DYSTOPIA

### HOW CAN IT GO WRONG?

1. Too much input in non-museum developments like real estate
2. Its popularity drives up prices, displacing residents from the diamond homes to live in shacks behind a wall
3. Residents resent the museum instead of enjoying it

Callie tried to listen to Karmin but her team did not take him seriously. They overtook her, took charge of the city, and demolished all the older buildings. Just as Karmin predicted, the city grew overcrowded with new residents. As Genesis struggled to keep up with demand by adding more diamond homes, it became suffocating with its dense clusters of identical buildings. Because the original design of *GISH* had been so popular, the new leaders simply mass-produced every new house to look like the museum. The rents for the diamond homes rose exponentially. Almost everyone but the rich aliens were forced out of their homes. Like Karmin and his family, many were now starving in the slums surrounding the city.

The teen cursed himself for ever deciding to share his ideas. The city was no longer the lovely diamond paradise that it had been. It was overcrowded and cold. Those who lived in the slums tried to get the town leaders to listen to the many problems that had arisen, but no one listened anymore. The newcomers cared only about how the city looked, and about showing off their wealth in the glitziest fashion imaginable. Once they decided that the slums around the city looked much too ugly, they built a tall wall to block them from view. Those outside the city all eventually died of either starvation or disease. Earth had fallen to human greed once again.





# 03

## GARDEN WALLS PROJECT ON BACON STREET IN MAPLE CITY ACROSS FROM PANCAKE PARK

Wallace Waffle was an intelligent man with many great ideas. Wallace lived in a bad part of town, which had seen economic downturn within its unfriendly walls. He had noticed a lot of graffiti outside and on the apartment building he owned and this struck a chord with him. He thought about it long and hard and after a few months of planning, he started a creative project. He called it *The Garden Walls Project*. Wallace's project would help others recognize graffiti as an art, even though many thought of it as destruction of public property.

*The Garden Walls Project* would plant flowers over the graffiti to correspond with the artwork underneath. This way, the artists could be appreciated by everyone for their talent.



What's next for Garden Walls?



Wallace first met with all of the residents and graffiti artists and got their approval. Then, he called his friend Sammy Sausage at the florist down the street to be the curator. Unlike a traditional curator, Sammy's job would be to tend to the flowers and answer questions about the project. Wallace would be the director, and would choose the graffiti and communicate with the artists. With generous donations of flowers and financial support from the community and the mayor, the vision came to life. Graffiti artists and building residents collaboratively designed and assembled a flowering masterpiece over the graffiti. Together they created a building-tall design that showcased their talents as both artists and florists.

The community was enchanted with the outcome. As it was updated monthly with new flowers, tourists began to discover this gem and some relocated to Bacon Street. Along with new residents came new businesses, which thrived in the now-healthy local economy. Wallace kept the rents stable for the people already living there, so that they could stay for a long time. Artists who visited found inspiration in the work. Art workshops were set up and individuals who initially participated to pass the time often discovered a new interest. The collaborative project brought art to an audience far from a typical museum, and helped them see in a new way.

At the beginning of Wallace Waffle's efforts, his work was completed efficiently and was well-received by the community. However, he wasn't familiar with any florists and soon found that the florist he had hired, Joe Jelly, was inexperienced in taking care of flowers that lived on walls. He didn't water the flowers frequently enough, which made them grow destructively long roots. In a matter of weeks, the ever-growing roots began to weather away the brick walls. On top of safety issues, Wallace Waffle hadn't talked to the graffiti artists about modifying their work. Angry and distrustful of the project, the artists soon joined other residents in protesting the deterioration of their apartment buildings.

*Garden Walls* also impacted the neighborhood by attracting many tourists. However, since it was in public space, no measures could be taken to control the amount of visitors and visiting hours. Beyond the now-wilting walls, there were no other attractions or stores, so tourists ended up hanging out on the streets. The neighborhood became extremely noisy. The residents felt suffocated by the crowds hanging around their homes, and the tourists' curiosity felt like a violation of privacy. Wallace Waffle had meant well, but bad planning made him the destroyer of a Maple City neighborhood.

## UTOPIA



### WHY MIGHT A MUSEUM ENGAGE A COMMUNITY BEYOND ITS WALLS?

1. To inspire curiosity about art and the community in residents and visitors
2. To offer an unusual learning opportunity
3. To question what art is, how it's made, and who it's for



## DYSTOPIA



Crumbling walls make for angry neighbors

### HOW CAN A COMMUNITY-BASED MUSEUM PROJECT GO WRONG?

1. Residents/artists don't get a say in decision-making
2. Project becomes too popular, disrupting locals' lives
3. Project isn't well thought out, so it negatively impacts the physical or social context







## THIS WAS A COLLABORATION OF DIA AND CUP

Through these tales of time travel, we hoped to illustrate the vast ways in which a museum can affect a city. Many of us initially thought that museums mainly serve to attract tourists. From our interviews, articles, and site visits, we learned that while museums can increase tourism, they also play other roles in the city.

Through museums like the *Guggenheim* in Bilbao, Spain, we saw that the construction of a museum can cause a gigantic blast of popularity and cultural development. Sometimes, though, that can also lead to over-development and rising prices for residents. We invented *The Now* to explore these possibilities.

In a place like the *Museum of Modern Art* in New York City, we saw that a large budget allows a museum to experiment with exhibition, research, and education programs. Our fictional *GISH* museum is a model for a museum as a place of education, to which students return over and over to learn. Museums in big cities can contribute to an ecosystem of economic and cultural prosperity, but they must also consider the negative consequences of becoming too big. The *GISH* shows these possibilities as well.

Through “open-air” museum collaborations, such as artist Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Gramsci Monument* at the Forest Houses in the Bronx, in collaboration with Dia Art Foundation, we saw how a museum can bring an exciting art project to a community and involve residents in co-creating it. Outdoor collaborative art projects can present unexpected learning opportunities for both nearby residents and the artist. However, a project like this can have negative outcomes if residents aren’t truly engaged or if the artist isn’t responsive to the neighborhood. Our *Garden Walls Project* demonstrates these options.

Museums play many roles in a city. They can influence the architecture, the economy, and most importantly, the people in a positive or negative way. While there’s no one formula for success, it’s important to consider how decisions about museums will impact the cities and communities of which they’re a part.

