



GCDN
Global Cultural
Districts Network
An Initiative of AEA Consulting



Connecting Cultural and Civic Leaders

At its heart is the relationship between culture and community.

Cover image: Jardins Gamelin et 1.26, Ulysse Lemerise, OSA.
Courtesy of Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles
Image opposite: Story of the Forest.
Courtesy of the National Heritage Board

Our story

The Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN) brings together leaders from around the world in the fields of culture and urban development and provides a unique forum to foster new ideas and collaborations.

Cities are changing at a formidable pace. Arts and culture have repeatedly demonstrated their strategic value in defining urban character and identity; improving livability; attracting investment, knowledge workers and tourists; and building community. Distinctive urban areas that combine a rich cultural life with compelling public spaces and architecture – cultural districts – have been integral to this success.



Billions of dollars are being committed to cultural infrastructure globally – but this investment is difficult to get right. Success requires much more than physical infrastructure. The conditions in which culture and creativity thrive need to be nurtured, especially as the economic, social and political circumstances that gave birth to them change.

Initiated in 2013 by AEA Consulting, the Global Cultural Districts Network is a forum for stakeholders in cultural districts, quarters or clusters. Members identify common agendas, develop partnerships, and share research and knowledge with their peers in culture, government, industry, and academia.

The work of GCDN informs better practice and policy for cultural districts and contributes to more liveable cities of the future.

Image: Jordan Battiste.
Courtesy of Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Areas of focus include:

Governance and operating models

Tourism strategies

Metrics of success

Economic and social impact

Climate change

Content partnerships

Branding and identity

Education and community engagement

Animation of public spaces

Role of anchor institutions

Financial and environmental sustainability

Investment strategies



Current members

Our membership is made up of those responsible for planning, operating and animating many of the leading cultural districts around the world. The districts are a powerful mix of size, governance, scale and function.

Our Members

Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism – *Abu Dhabi, UAE*
Adelaide Festival Centre – *Adelaide, Australia*
Alserkal Avenue – *Dubai, UAE*
Arizona Arts, University of Arizona – *Tucson, USA*
Auckland Live – *Auckland, New Zealand*
Better Bankside – *London, UK*
Brooklyn Cultural District – *New York, USA*
Canberra Theatre Centre – *Canberra, Australia*
City of Providence – *Rhode Island, USA*
Creative Estuary – *Essex/Kent, UK*
Culture Mile – *London, UK*
Dallas Arts District – *Dallas, USA*
East Bank at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – *London, UK*
Exhibition Road Cultural Group – *London, UK*

Goldsmiths, University of London – *London, UK*
Grand Center Arts District – *St. Louis, USA*
Harbourfront Centre – *Toronto, Canada*
Harbour Trust – *Sydney, Australia*
HOTA, Home of the Arts – *Gold Coast, Australia*
International Festival of Arts & Ideas – *New Haven, USA*
Kingston Art District – *Kingston, Jamaica*
LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura – *Lugano, Switzerland*
Melbourne Arts Precinct – *Melbourne, Australia*
MiSK City – *Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*
MuseumsQuartier Wien – *Vienna, Austria*
National Museum of Singapore – *Singapore*
Navy Pier, Inc. – *Chicago, USA*
New World Symphony – *Miami Beach, FL, USA*
New Jersey Performing Arts Center – *Newark, NJ, USA*
Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage – *Lausanne, Switzerland*
Onassis Foundation – *Athens & New York, Greece/USA*
Parnell Square Cultural Quarter – *Dublin, Ireland*
Perth Theatre Trust – *Perth, Australia*
Pittsburgh Cultural Trust – *Pittsburgh, USA*
Quartier de la Création – *Nantes, France*
Quartier des Spectacles – *Montreal, Canada*
RAB /BKO – *Brussels, Belgium*
Sharjah Museums Authority – *Sharjah, UAE*
Southbank Centre – *London, UK*
The Kuwait National Cultural District – *Kuwait City, Kuwait*
The Lowry/Salford Quays/ACE – *Manchester, UK*
The Masswascut Collaborative – *Providence, USA*
The Music Center – *Los Angeles, USA*
Times Square Alliance – *New York, USA*
West Kowloon Cultural District – *Hong Kong, China*

Our Affiliate Members

BuroHappold Engineering – *Bath, UK*
Cistri – *Singapore and Hong Kong & Urbis – Australia*
DesignSingapore Council – *Singapore*
Grimshaw – *New York, USA*
Jason Bruges Studio – *London, UK*
wHY – *Los Angeles & New York, USA*
Wordsearch – *Singapore*

Image: PVD Fest 001, N. Millard/GoProvidence.com.
Courtesy of ACT Providence

Convening Singapore August 2019

Co-hosted by the National Museum of Singapore



Our network is growing



Images:

Canada: Prismatica Place des festivals, Cindy Boyce.
Courtesy of Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles

USA: Summer Block Party.
Courtesy of Dallas Arts District

UK: Tunnel Visions Array 3, Julian Sutcliffe.
Courtesy of Culture Mile

Dubai: Alserkal Avenue 5.
Courtesy of Alserkal Avenue

Australia: HOTA Q1.
Courtesy of HOTA, Home of the Arts

Singapore : Acquatic Dream.
Courtesy of the National Heritage Board

15 countries, 50 members



Image: Heidi Zeiger.
Courtesy of Navy Pier Inc.

How GCDN works

Members collaborate via a programme of events, research and peer exchange:

Annual convenings

This invitation-only event for members and selected guests includes leaders from culture and the creative industries, technology, politics, transport, sustainability, and economics. Hosted on a rotating basis by member organisations, this high-level three-day gathering allows leaders to share the latest ideas and solutions in successful cultural districts through panel discussions, intimate networking events and cultural excursions. Convenings have been held in Barcelona, Brooklyn, London, Montreal, Dallas, Dubai and Singapore. The next annual convening will be held in Lugano, Switzerland, *(dates tbc)*.

Regional events

Members also meet at a series of regional convenings scheduled alongside workshops and conferences throughout the year. These events recently took place in Providence, Auckland, London, and Bahrain.

GCDN membership includes invitation and registration fees for two representatives to the annual convening and one representative to the regional convening and other meetings.

Research insights

GCDN commissions original research from independent experts on topics of interest to its members. Recent reports have focused on governance, branding, security and impact. Members also receive early access to research by AEA Consulting including the *Cultural Infrastructure Index*, an annual review of investment in capital projects in the global cultural sector.

Newsletters and social media

Membership includes subscription to our bi-weekly digest of articles and research relating to cultural districts, placemaking, public art, and more. This newsletter also features news and exclusive interviews about GCDN members. Members can also access and share relevant daily findings through our active Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

Members-only virtual fora and webinars

GCDN fosters conversation and exchange through webinars, roundtables and a virtual forum where members can candidly share information, opportunities and challenges.

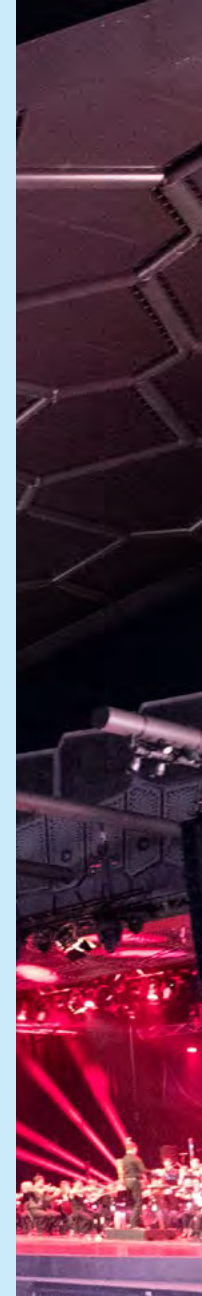
Partnership development and collaboration

GCDN offers regular opportunities to establish partnerships among members for content, programming, skills training and professional exchange. Recent collaborations include the touring of *Impulse*, illuminated musical seesaws, among several members and *Spectrum*, a joint undertaking to produce a new interactive digital artwork.

Strategic partners

GCDN partners with a number of complementary organisations to access intelligence, opportunities and profile through relevant networks. These include the International Downtown Association, the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres and Pritzker Forum on Global Cities.

Image: Concert for the Planet.
Courtesy of HOTA, Home of the Arts



What our members say:

“

GCDN helps me to think thoroughly about both the lessons and mistakes from private, public and NGO efforts to nurture culture and the arts. It does so by giving me an opportunity to talk to smart people who care about culture struggling with the same issues.”



Tim Tompkins, Former
President, Times
Square Alliance

“

In a world where international dialogue is mostly built around power and politics GCDN is a refreshing oasis of thinking and of doing things together for each other.”



Donald Hyslop, Chair of Better
Bankside and Director of
Regeneration & Community
Partnerships, Tate Galleries



“

Through the Global Cultural Districts Network, I have had the opportunity to meet with and to be inspired by many like-minded and passionate international counterparts, as well as to participate in a dynamic exchange of ideas and best practices, while establishing long-term working relationships across the world.”



Angelita Teo, Director,
Olympic Foundation for
Culture and Heritage

“Platforms such as GCDN form a common ground for the most prominent artistic communities and arts institutions to collectively innovate and address challenges in light of future sustainability... Our membership with GCDN has provided the opportunity for synergetic peer learning, which goes beyond the annual convening, and allows for collaborative dialogue throughout the year.”



Vilma Jurkute,
Director, Alserkal

“Our membership in the GCDN supports our mission... by providing access to valuable resources, research and case studies that will inform our planning and improve our execution. Networking in an international association also provides the opportunity to share the message with the world and ensure that our cultural district is on the map, attracting visitors and valuable investment.”



Andrea Dempster Chung,
Co-Founder and Executive Director,
Kingston Creative

“The GCDN is a very useful network that helps us stay connected with members from all over the world that have realities and challenges similar to ours. It is a most pertinent platform for information exchange and advice that allows us to learn from others. It has also proven to be a valuable network for artistic exchanges.”



Pierre Fortin, Former Executive
Director, Quartier des
Spectacles Partnership

Image: Luminotherapie Impulsion 2, Ulysse Lemerise, OSA.
Courtesy of Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles



Get in touch.

For more information on becoming a member please contact Greg Scarpella, Deputy Director, at gscarpella@gcdn.net or info@gcdn.net

Find out more at gcdn.net and follow [@GCDNet](https://twitter.com/GCDNet) on Twitter

We look forward to hearing from you.



Gregorio Lucena Scarpella,
Director, Operations



Su Fern Hoe



Adrian Ellis,
Executive Chair

