

# PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name The Heidelberg Project Location 3680 Heidelberg Street

Owner The Heidelberg Project, a Mi non profit corporation

Project Use(s) An outdoor art environment and Landscape

Project Size Two blocks including vacant lots Total Development Cost Approx \$150,000

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) Approx \$550,000 including in-kind

Date Initiated 1986 Percent Completed by December 1, 2002 ongoing

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) N/A

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name Jenene Whitfield Title Executive Director

Organization The Heidelberg Project

Address PO Box 19377 Mailing City/State/Zip Detroit, MI 48219

Telephone ( 313 ) 537-8037 Fax ( ) Same 313-267-1622

E-mail Jwhitfield@heidelberg.org Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 313 510-3177

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies		
Architect/Designer	<u>Tyree Guyton, Artist</u>	<u>Tyree Guyton</u> <u>313 258-2449</u>
Developer		
Professional Consultant		
Community Group	<u>Franklin Wright Settlement</u>	<u>Monique Marks, Executive Director</u> <u>313 579-1000</u>
Other	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Terrence German</u> <u>313 268-1233</u>
	<u>Wayne State University</u>	<u>Mame Jackson, Prof of Art &amp; Art History</u> <u>313 259-9093</u>
	<u>Wheaton and Associates</u>	<u>Marilyn Wheaton</u> <u>313 5951290</u>

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing     Magazine Advertisement     Previous RBA entrant     Other (please specify)  
 Professional     Newsletter     Previous Selection Committee member  
 Organization     Magazine Calendar     Bruner/Loeb Forum

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# ABSTRACT

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Project Name The Heidelberg Project

Address 3680 Heidelberg PO Box 19377 (mailing)

City/State/ZIP

Detroit, MI 48219

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

In an area once known as "Black Bottom" or "Paradise Valley," Heidelberg Street was once part of a thriving community. This is a predominately African-American neighborhood in Detroit, where Black migrants from the South were required to live. It was once home to more than 300 African-American owned businesses. In the 1940's, this area was the cultural and economic heart of the Black community in Detroit. By 1970 the community would virtually be destroyed. This destruction was attributed mostly to the 1967 riots. Poverty, abandonment, drugs, crime, and despair characterized this once pulsating neighborhood. The damage is still visible in the vacant lots and abandoned homes and buildings that litter the community. Contained within two blocks of this historical area is the Heidelberg Project.

The Heidelberg Project is an open-air art installation located in an urban community on the east side of Detroit. It was created 18 years ago as an innovative response to the blight, decay, crime, drugs and hopelessness that currently plague the neighborhood. Founded by Tyree Guyton, the Heidelberg Project is organized as a non-profit art environment created to develop awareness for the arts in an underserved area. The mission of the Heidelberg Project is to inspire people to use artistic expression in novel ways to enrich and improve their lives, and beautify and preserve the community in which we live, work, and play.

Since 1986, Guyton has labored to reverse some of the devastation caused by the 1967 Riots. He began his work on Heidelberg Street where he was raised. Armed with a paintbrush, a broom, and neighborhood children, Guyton began cleaning up vacant lots on Heidelberg and Elba Streets on Detroit's east side. From the refuge he collected, he used his artistic talent to transform the street, the trees, the house and the sidewalks. Vacant lots literally became "lots of art" and abandoned houses became "gigantic art sculptures." The lesson that was taught us by Guyton is that much like our society discards "things," we often discard communities and ultimately people. Guyton's vision provided a flicker of hope and explored new possibilities.

In 1989, Guyton's work on Heidelberg Street was officially incorporated as the Heidelberg Project. According to John Beardsley, Sr. Professor of Art and Architecture at Harvard University and author of Gardens of Revelation, the Heidelberg Project is regarded as one of the most influential art environments in the world.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

Vision, Courage and Tenacity.

In April of 2004, the Heidelberg Project became the recipient of the Environmental Design Research Association's (EDRA) Place Design Award and is currently featured in the Fall 2004 edition of *Places*, a Forum of Environmental Design. In this edition of *Places*, one juror comments, "you go to places and hear people complaining that their city isn't good, that if only they had the answer. 'Oh we've got to plan for this, but it's never happened.' And this is the most hopeless place there is, and this guy just did it himself." Still another juror says, "you could get an army of professional and a bucket-load of federal money and it wouldn't be nearly as good." Additionally, the Heidelberg Project was the only Design that was voted unanimously by the EDRA committee.

The area where the Heidelberg Project exists is satiated with drugs, crime, poverty and despair. It is a community that many would drive out of their way to avoid. Guyton's method of revitalizing the community using found and discarded materials and incorporating it into the infrastructure of the neighborhood was symbolic of how the community and its people had become discarded. This symbolism resounded piercingly as not only had the community been revitalized, so had the people. Guyton literally breathe life back into his community. The Heidelberg Project became a social commentary challenging perceptions of urban blight and raised awareness both from within and without the community. This new awareness has led to innovative programs and services for the community.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. How has the project impacted the local community?

The impact of the Heidelberg Project on the community can be measured in a number of ways. From a statistical point of view and according to records at the Detroit Police Department's seventh precinct, there have been no serious crimes reported on Heidelberg Street in its eighteen year existence, notwithstanding the fact that the community's African American male mortality rate is 50%.

From a social and economical stance, children and residents within the community have been exposed to over 90 cultures in community that is 99% African American (87% for the city of Detroit). The success of the Heidelberg Project to incorporate cultural diversity into the community is evidenced by the fact that its newest resident is a Caucasian artist who also contributes his talent to the neighborhood. The Heidelberg Project has also become a tourist destination thereby providing an economic benefit to the city of Detroit.

Perhaps the greatest testament to impact of our project on the community is the effect that it has on community children. Consider this story about a boy named Justin:

Justin comes from three generations of drug abusers and was just two years old when he was first introduced to the Heidelberg Project. Over the next nine years Justin would become a regular on Heidelberg Street, participating in various projects and programs. Teachers at his local elementary school were puzzled as to why young Justin was such a thriving child, so eager to learn, in spite of his deteriorating home life and exposure to drugs and violence. Justin would often share his experiences on Heidelberg Street with his classmates and teachers but it was not until the staff at his School saw two-year old Justin featured in a documentary about the Heidelberg Project that they begin to understand that Justin had been nurtured and mentored through the Heidelberg Project programs virtually his entire life. Justin knows that he has choices and believes in himself. Today he is an A and B student, loves classical music, participates in sports, is a champion chess player, and is still a regular participant in the Heidelberg Project's programs.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The Heidelberg Project enhances the quality of life in the neighborhood by introducing residents to the concept of Community Cultural Development. Community Cultural Development combines the elements of neighborhood development by using the culture of society within that community as the vehicle for change. The Heidelberg Project has provided a stage for the community as a means of expressing their culture and improving their lives. For 18 years, the Heidelberg Project has transformed this community at a grass roots level by engaging children in art programs, generating tourism and cultural awareness, and creating an art environment that challenges perceptions of urban blight.

The Heidelberg Project was a provocative and oftentimes controversial commentary on urban blight in the city of Detroit. This became the magnifying focal point for political leaders. Consequently, the Heidelberg Project was partially destroyed in 1991 and again in 1999. The partial demolitions put the Heidelberg Project at a grave disadvantage with plans for development. Over the years political leaders struggled to recognize and value the accomplishments of the Heidelberg Project. The most significant trade-off has been the ongoing effort of the Heidelberg Project to find a common denominator that political leaders could grasp and support. Still an arduous task, the Heidelberg Project finally struck a cord after tracking the number of visitors to the Heidelberg Project and a determination was made that with over 250,000 visitors annually, the Heidelberg Project had become the third most visited (cultural) tourist's destination within the city of Detroit (second to the Charles Wright Museum of African American History and third to the Detroit Institute of Arts). The economic benefits of the Heidelberg Project to the city of Detroit could no longer be underestimated.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

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3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The Heidelberg Project began in 1986 and can be best described as an evolutionary process rather than a development process. Tyree Guyton fed up with the negativity that had engulfed his community, says he looked at his neighborhood and saw the possibilities of what it could become. He did not propose or devise a blueprint for creating the Heidelberg Project, he simply relied on his artistic talent and vision to transform Heidelberg Street.

Armed with a paintbrush, a broom and neighborhood Children, Guyton began by cleaning up vacant lots. From the debris and other refuse, Guyton reconfigured the environment. Vacant lots literally became 'lots of art' and abandoned houses became giant art sculptures. By 1991, Guyton had transformed four abandoned structures from found and recycled materials. His work drew such attention until drug dealers and prostitutes had to find a new place to operate. Now residents who were previously afraid to come out of their homes began to engage in active dialog and get in involved. Guyton offered ground-breaking solutions to hard-hitting problems and a microscopic prospectus for urban renewal in his community.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The initial phase of the project (under Mayor Coleman Young), 1986-1991 did not call for a formal development plan, consequently financing was not a factor. Determination, courage and vision became the intangible qualities necessary to transform Heidelberg Street. Children, neighbors and supporters also played a key role by donating time, materials and paint. By 1989, supporters formed a non-profit and called Guyton's work on Heidelberg Street the Heidelberg Project. Unfortunately the city of Detroit destroyed 65% of the Heidelberg Project in 1991.

In 1993, (under Mayor Dennis Archer) Guyton began re-building the Heidelberg Project. This time newly cleared vacant lots created a canvas for additional art sculptures. The Project drew the attention of architects, urban planners and other artists from around the world which led to a more formalized development plan. The goal was to somehow appease politicians and expand services to the community. Small grants and private donations were secured and in 1997, the Heidelberg Project secured a grant from the city of Detroit in the amount of \$47,500 for a café and welcoming center. However two members of Detroit City Council did not agree with Guyton's concept of community revitalization and yet another political battle ensued. Once again, in 1999, certain aspects of the Heidelberg Project were destroyed and the majority of funding had to be returned.

Today, (under Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick) the Heidelberg Project continues to grow and is at its best. Although still not always understood or appreciated, The Heidelberg Project's success and longevity despite setbacks has gained respect and is recognized as one of the most influential art environments in the world. The Heidelberg is poised to take the next evolutionary step.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The uniqueness of the Heidelberg Project has been its greatest challenge and its sweetest victory. Not only does it address urban issues, it also has a proven track record of effectively addressing many of these issues by engaging the community. Even those whom society characterizes as renegades have experienced a transformation. Today many assist Guyton with the development and maintenance of the Project. There is also a profound respect for the Project by community residents as evidenced by the mere fact that it is allowed to exist unharmed while the remaining community continue to deteriorate. The Heidelberg Project challenged all notions traditionally attached to urban communities: The notion that a creative spirit could not exist in the ghetto. It challenged the notion that hope and life could not be found from within.

The Heidelberg Project has already become a model for other communities around the world.

# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

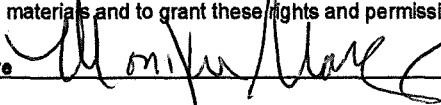
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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Monique Marks Title Executive Director  
Organization Franklin Wright Telephone ( 313 ) 3579-1000  
Address 3360 Charlevoix City/State/ZIP Detroit, MI 48207  
Fax ( ) 313-579-0001 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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1. How did you, or the organization you represent,

become involved in this project? What role did you play? Franklin Wright Settlements services the east Detroit community. The Heidelberg project originated only two blocks away. We recognized that both organizations shared similar ideas and goals as it relates to community revitalization and development and we share many of the same participants. Many of the children that are involved in our programs are also involved in some way with Heidelberg. Our role with the program has been as partner and supporter. We offer space in our facility for Heidelberg program and we have partnered with them to bring education and awareness programs to the youth in the community.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Franklin Wright Settlements' position has always been one of support for the project. We have tried to build a positive working relationship for the good of the community. We were able to see the strengths of the program and we share in its vision and mission for the City of Detroit. The project has historically been very controversial, however, we view the perspective of the community in which we serve to be more positive than negative. The only issue that we are aware of would be how the art itself is viewed, however, we have found that education fosters understanding of the message.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? Our agreement with the project leaders was that we would support one another. We agreed to work together and share resources in order to reach a larger number of youth. We have been very successful in the endeavor. We offer our space and in return we have gained a very fruitful partnership.

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The Heidelberg Project has created a safer environment in which to work, live and play. Because the Project is so unusual, people who would not regularly come to this area, now come by the hundreds. Many of the children in this community have never met people from Europe, Germany, Russia, China, Japan, etc., or even the neighboring suburbs. In a city that is horribly segregated, I think the Project has helped to eradicate fear about people who don't look like each other. Because of the Heidelberg Project's existence, our community is experiencing an infusion of diverse cultures and this is an invaluable educational experience for our children. Additionally, our staff at Franklin Wright Settlement is now experiencing diversity.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

I think all that the Community and the Heidelberg Project together have experienced (and continues to experience) is necessary for the growth and development of each. I would not change a thing.

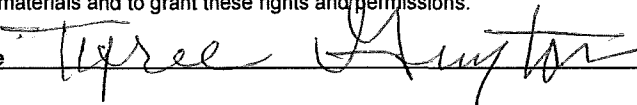
# ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name Tyree Guyton Title Artist/Founder of the Heidelberg Project  
Organization The Heidelberg Project Telephone ( 313) 258-2449  
Address PO Box 19377 City/State/ZIP Detroit, MI 48219  
Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Tguyton@heidelberg.org

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1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

The Heidelberg Project has been a type of artistic experiment since its inception in 1986. I believe that tradition and convention only speaks to a certain class and is failing urban society. I have incorporated all elements of the urban experience into my work including people.

My work is a science that deals with colors, shapes, objects that bring about a rare beauty to the mind and eyes of people—a type of esthete. My art is life, life that lives on with time because the entire creation is an art form. I see magic in what I do as an artist. This magic helps me to understand how to create compositions of unusual taste. It's a journey that keeps me searching to know more about life in general and my own life. The whole world is a stage and we, as humans, are playing our part—acting out our purpose.

My work has been controversial and provocative and as a result was partially destroyed by city government in 1991 and again in 1999. I did not set out to create controversy, however, in retrospect, the controversy served to raise awareness.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The most important social and programmatic function of the design is the entire composition as a whole. Houses with unusual colors schemes, trees fashioned with various materials, streets bursting with color, vacant lots containing elements that reflect an industrial society all create a type of harmony and rhythm that captures the imagination and makes you think! In an instance, folks forget their predicament/circumstances and maybe life can become new once again. In transforming the environment, I aim to transform the people. Only then can healing, health and hope begin.

## **ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE** (CONT'D)

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3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The major challenges of designing the Heidelberg Project are people in general but especially those in high ranking positions such as politicians and corporation. For me the compromise has been in finding a balance that will allow this work to flourish and at the same time find a common ground that satisfies the appetite for tradition and convention.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

The Heidelberg Project IS the urban experience. All of the work is a direct reflection of the community. Although it is abstract in nature, it provides a stage that fosters other creative means by which residents in the community can express themselves and contribute their experiences as well.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the project's design and architecture.

The weakness of the Heidelberg Project's design is in its ability to function in a tangible way. My vision started with an environmental (social change) design. The next phase of development calls for inside renovations to several of the structures that currently exist on Heidelberg Street. This will allow the project to expand and house artistic programs for children and adults.

The strength of the Heidelberg Project is its ability to attract people from all walks of life. From pimps to priests, prostitutes to school teachers, black to whites, rich to poor, children to adults, drug dealers to politicians. All come to the Heidelberg Project and share a common experience. Then something magical happens—a rich dialog about the need for change takes place. The conception of designing such a “place” of wonder and amazement in one of the cities most undesirable areas creates a level playing where all can come to the table and begin the process of positive and victorious change.



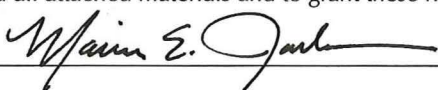
## OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Name	Marion E. Jackson	Title	Professor, Art History
Organization	Wayne State University	Telephone	(313 ) 577-1801
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Fax	(313 ) 577-3491	E-mail	mjackson@wayne.edu

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

My involvement with the Heidelberg Project has been driven by my interests both as an art historian and as a citizen, inspired by the demonstrated success of this Project in transforming a blighted urban neighborhood and inspiring dialogue among diverse people. Since I first saw the Heidelberg Project and met Tyree Guyton in 1988, I have followed the evolution of the Project with great interest. As an art historian, I have written articles about the Heidelberg Project and have lectured on the Project at several academic institutions, including the University of Michigan and Wayne State University and at annual meetings of the College Art Association in New York and in San Antonio. I have also included the work of Tyree Guyton in exhibitions organized at Wayne State University and Siena Heights University and consider the Project important to present to university students and emerging artists in my classes. My involvement with the Heidelberg Project goes beyond this academic interest, however. I was a founding member of the Board of Directors for the Heidelberg Project when the Project was established as a non-profit organization in 1989, and served for a number of years as the Chairperson of this Board. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Project testified on behalf of the Project as an expert witness when the Heidelberg Project was under duress from the City of Detroit.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

With his Heidelberg Project, Tyree Guyton has transformed a blighted urban neighborhood of crack houses and abandoned properties to an environment of color, shape, and fantasy. Using his paint brush – along with car hoods, broken toys, hubcaps, discarded clothing, dysfunctional television sets, and the endless detritus of the inner city – Guyton has created sculptures in abandoned lots and has festooned the sides of houses with a cacophony of color. The physical environment that Guyton has created along Heidelberg Street has become a “safe zone” within what was previously a decaying and dangerous inner-city neighborhood. People of all ages, ethnicities, and social strata are drawn to this exuberant art environment and, once there, are amazed and begin to talk with one another. The Heidelberg Project is one of the most-visited destinations in metropolitan Detroit and enjoys an international reputation; visitors from all over the world have signed its visitors’ book and the Heidelberg Project has been the subject of many articles in the U.S. and international press. For inner-city youngsters growing up in the area of the Heidelberg Project, it offers a beacon of hope – a concrete demonstration that the world *can* be transformed through the vision and dedication of a person who cares. Outreach projects with children are an important part of the mission of the Heidelberg Project.

## OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

### 3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

As a member of the Heidelberg Project Board of Directors for 14 years from 1989 to 2003, I have been very aware of the chronic financial problems faced by the Project and by the political machinations of the City of Detroit that, on two occasions, resulted in the demolition of portions of the Heidelberg Project. I have been greatly impressed that -- throughout the Project's 18 year history and in spite of these difficulties -- Tyree Guyton and Project Executive Director, Jenenne Whitfield, have maintained a sustained vision for the Heidelberg Project as a catalyst for positive social change through art. This vision has *never been compromised* and remains integral to the project today.

However, it is appropriate to acknowledge that more energy than any of us could have anticipated has been expended through the years on fund-raising events, public relations, and legal defense. On reflection, I wonder if these supplemental efforts are themselves an important part of the evolution of the Project, strengthening the resolve and refining the vision of the artist and engaging the involvement and varied talents of a diverse circle of supporters.

### 4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

I view the *most successful aspect* of the Heidelberg Project as the positive changes effected in the lives people whom the Project has inspired and brought together with a new sense of community and empowerment. Providing a common (and safe) ground for people to meet and an environment that stimulates wonder, the Heidelberg Project breaks down barriers that usually separate people. Everyone is welcome at the Heidelberg Project, and even the most skeptical are generally drawn in by its exuberant color and energy. The Project provides both a physical environment and a metaphor for transforming the world -- and opens a dialogue among diverse people whose lives become richer through the shared experience of art and, not so incidentally, of one another.

A *less successful aspect* of the Project is its historic position of marginality in the political structure of the City of Detroit. While the Heidelberg Project and its creator, Tyree Guyton, have received intermittent acclaim in Detroit, including the Spirit of Detroit Award, the Project has not yet received the consistent level of official acceptance in its hometown that it has achieved elsewhere. Guyton has been invited to other U.S. cities as well as to major cities in Europe and Australia to create projects inspired by the Heidelberg Project, but the Project's official acceptance by government leaders in Detroit has been uneven -- perhaps echoing the notion of the prophet unappreciated in his own land. While this is not an aspect of success that can be directly or totally remedied by Guyton or others involved in the project, recognition from a respected organization such as the Rudy Bruner Foundation would afford a level of recognition that may well help to ameliorate concerns of local officials regarding the validity of this extraordinary and highly creative urban Project.



## OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Name Marilyn L. Wheaton Title Owner

Organization Wheaton & Associates Telephone (313) 595-1290

Address 8120 E. Jefferson Ave., Suite 6M City Detroit/State MI/ZIP 48214

Fax (313)822-5958 E-mail wheatonml@comcast.net

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project? As a City of Detroit resident for 27 years.

I have supported the work of the Heidelberg Project since its inception. As the director of the Michigan's statewide arts advocacy organization for 11 years, I saw Tyree Guyton, Heidelberg artist, receive the Governor's Michigan Artist Award in 1989, an honor bestowed by a statewide jury. As Director of the City of Detroit's Cultural Affairs Dept. from 1996-2003, I worked with the Heidelberg artist, staff and volunteers on several community projects.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The Heidelberg Project has for two decades been a beacon of light on Detroit's eastside. I have visited the site regularly (10 - 20 times annually) and during every visit I observe visitors walking around the project, quietly and curiously observing and consuming all that is there to experience. I have seen busloads of people--tourists, students, art lovers---arrive at the project and disembark from buses in awe and sometimes disbelief at the sheer magnitude and density of the art work. The Heidelberg Project has become a Detroit symbol of hope and inspiration. It attracts visitors from around the world, making it one of Detroit's best known tourist destinations.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

Trade-offs and compromises have been made over the years with the City of Detroit and some of the nearby neighbors. While I was the director of the City's Cultural Affairs Department Mayor Dennis Archer asked me to be the liaison between the City and the Project while a vocal minority pushed to have the Project dismantled. Tyree Guyton and Jenenne Whitfield, executive director, compromised with the City to cease expansion of the project. It is now eight years later and the vocal minority has vanished, and some of those same people are now supporting the Project. The reason for this change of heart, in my opinion, has to do with the Project artist and staff being eager and willing to meet all parties half way. Tyree Guyton and Jenenne Whitfield are seen as team players in the community and are sought after as speakers about the Project.

4. What do you consider to be the most and the least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of the Heidelberg Project is that it exist, for the people of Detroit and the world.

The least successful aspect of the Project is that it has not yet garnered the full embrace of Detroit's political leaders.

## OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Name Terrence H. German Title Board Member, Founders Junior Council

Organization Detroit Institute of Art Telephone (313 ) 567 1594

Address 1300 East Lafayette 409 City/State/ZIP Detroit, MI 48207

Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail terrencegerman@yahoo.com

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I did not have a role in the development of the Heidelberg Project. As a patron and supporter of the arts in metropolitan Detroit, I am a proud advocate of this project and its accomplishments over the past eighteen years.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The impact of the Heidelberg Project in its near two-decade existence has been direct and enormous. First and foremost, children in the neighborhood have a "place" to create and play. This "place" is a destination of solace, as well as fun, in a area where by and large existing playgrounds are abandoned. Also, the deliberate use of outdoor art installations has introduced artistic expressions to Tyree Guyton's neighborhood. Individuals have seen value of art and its impact on culture, politics, etc, in a way that many would not bother to experience in, say, a museum. Further, the attention generated by the Heidelberg Project regarding abandoned, derelict structures is most pronounced. The city of Detroit demolition of condemned buildings around the project site and throughout the city (50,000 abandoned buildings, reportedly in Detroit, as of 2002) remains slow, but spurred in part by the advocacy of the Heidelberg Project

In addition, space here does not a lot for the vast national and international attention produced that impacts the immediate community, and Detroit at large. As an architect, I have personally spoken to visitors who visit the lower east side of Detroit where the Heidelberg Project resides for study and inspiration. And advertising executive turned developer from San Francisco, California has visited to converse on the challenges and successes of this project. As a volunteer giving tours in the past of the project site, I have spoken to government officials from The Netherlands about Tyree Guyton and government dynamics in promoting art and redevelopment. More importantly, the residents of the area and the children, notably, get to be exposed to people of different countries and cultures on a regular basis. These types of experiences are customary over the years on Heidelberg Street.

## OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

### 3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The rise of the Heidelberg Project certainly has not come about without compromises and trade-offs. I personally call it "delicate diplomacy". I was not a participant in emergent Heidelberg Project compromises. Still the unprecedented existence of the Heidelberg Project can be viewed in many ways.

Since 1986, the Heidelberg Project has lived through three Detroit city administrations as well as three Michigan governorships. Educating and re-educating government officials on why and how this art expression is a positive for the community proceeds as 'conversations in compromise'. Positive press for Michigan is a fair product, in the trade-off for 'misunderstanding' in the use of found objects as art. Thus, getting the 'quiet approval' by the city of Detroit to create a ten-foot high sculpture ("Doors of Opportunity" piece, for example) on a vacant city-owned lot of 25 years is a clear compromise by Tyree Guyton, the Heidelberg Project and city government. Likewise, educating long-time residents by Tyree Guyton during and after creating huge works of art of unsightly structures on Heidelberg Street is neighborly diplomacy. This diplomacy has resulted in a deep respect and affirmation by neighbors who understand the good work that is accomplished. Having to literally show that such work will not pose a danger to one's person allowed this artist to produce without constant retribution. In addition, talks with some neighborhood organizations were tepid, at best, in Tyree Guyton and the Heidelberg Project's efforts to reach out (for support). Now, in the case of the McDougall-Hunt Community Organization for example, a group that was vehemently opposed to the Project's 'found objects' has found strength in a willingness to dialogue with the artist and the Heidelberg Project in creating opportunities for children in the area.

### 4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project?

In terms of the least successful aspects of the project, two areas immediately come to mind. First, recognition on a city-wide basis continues to be slow. This aspect allows for some residents, for example, to believe that the Heidelberg Project no longer exists. This, particularly after the 1999 demolition of some art works by the city of Detroit. Second, certain funding opportunities are missed by the Heidelberg Project, due to inconsistent support by the city officials. Imagine if the Detroit officials embraced this one-of-a-kind entity and promoted it at the level it deserves! The strength of the Heidelberg Project could be that much greater.

Despite the before-mentioned aspects, the successful aspects of the Heidelberg Project remains voluminous. The international acclaim I've witnessed would make any individual or organization proud. This fact cannot be understated. Whether it be lecturing to elementary school children or donning the robe as 'ambassador of the arts' to Bolivia, Tyree Guyton and the Heidelberg Project endures as a beacon of progress. Another successful aspect of the Heidelberg Project is the generation of children's programs. This unintentional product, in my view is a true success whether they exist on Heidelberg Street or in collaboration with established organizations. Also, I continue to be intrigued by the academic study on the Heidelberg Project on the secondary, collegiate, and post-collegiate level. The uniqueness of the Heidelberg Project, from its humble roots to its current state, is certainly an impressive and engaging topic for anyone to indulge. In addition, the Heidelberg Project is growing as a 'blueprint' or 'tool' for development and redevelopment in communities, large and small. I say with humility that I am proud that an entity such as the Heidelberg Project exist in my city, and reverberates the power of art all over the globe.