



A FELLOWSHIP TO CATALYZE CULTURE

The breadth and depth of Rhode Island’s creative landscape is considered one of the state’s greatest assets and one of the most vibrant in the United States. In 2019 - 2020, the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities hosted the inaugural RI Arts & Culture Research Fellow, Janaya Kizzie, as she uncovered the remarkable landscape of the state’s arts and culture network, enhancing Rhode Island’s reputation as a creative destination, connecting our arts and cultural communities, and catalyzing education.

Kizzie, an archivist, librarian, writer, and researcher, created and connected over 200 articles on Wikipedia and added Rhode Island connections to existing articles. This brochure highlights some of these connections. By sharing her discoveries through this freely-available and edited online encyclopedia, Kizzie opened the door to more a diverse and complete representation of Rhode Island’s creative community.

Explore the RI Arts & Culture Archive at: riartsandculture.omeka.net



When I began the project, the arts and culture of present-day Rhode Island was very underrepresented on Wikipedia. During my research, I found Rhode Islanders whose work has had a major impact not only on our state and the world, but also how that work is connected to others. Here are some of the unexpected connections I found while exploring the rich story of our state.

–Janaya Kizzie,
RI Arts & Culture Research Fellow

The 2019 - 2020 RI Arts & Culture Research Fellowship was administered by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities with generous support from Yarrow Thorne.

Explore the hundreds of connections between Rhode Island’s cultural sector by visiting: riartsandculture.omeka.net

Cover image:
RI Arts & Culture Research Fellowship Connections map.

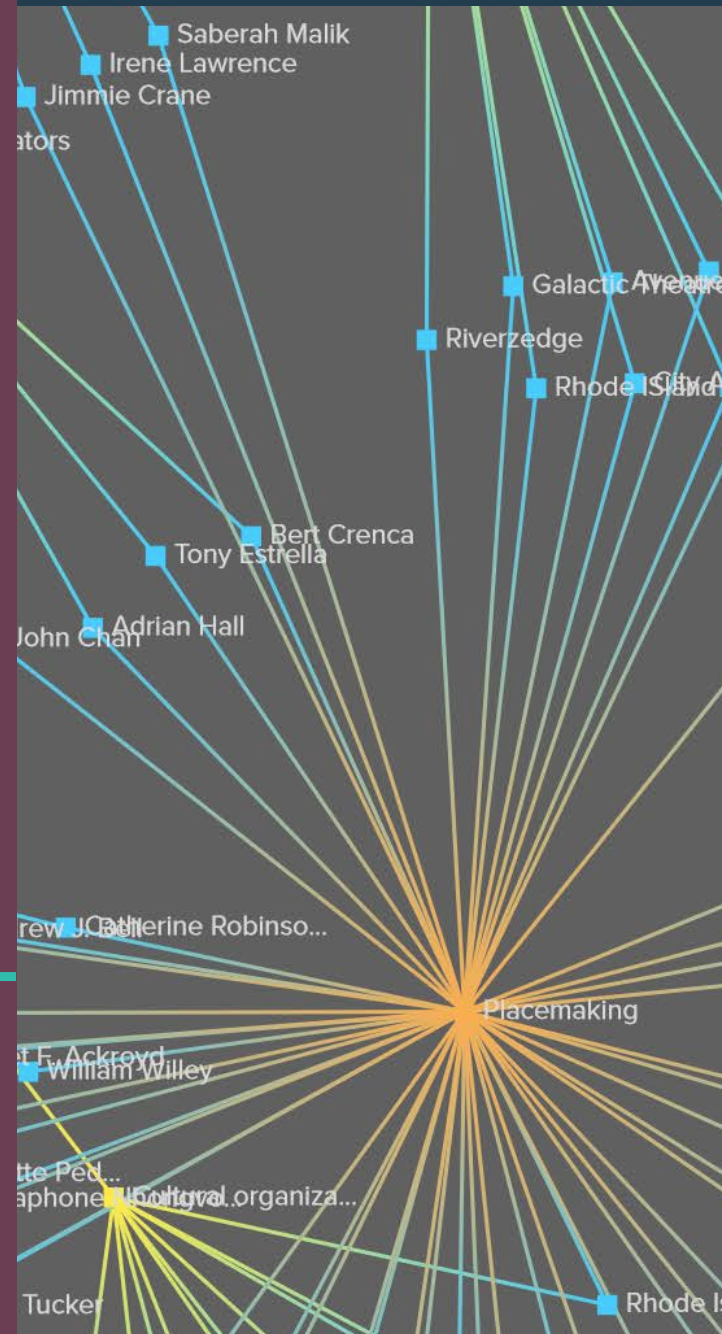
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MAKING CONNECTIONS

RI ARTS & CULTURE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP



Here are some examples of connections – more can be found in the archive:

FESTIVAL CONNECTIONS

WaterFire

Started by Barnaby Evans in 1994, WaterFire was a one-night installation for First Night Providence, a New Year's eve celebration. Years later, WaterFire continues as a regular event in downtown Providence, and has become a defining feature of the artistic renewal of the city.

Convergence International Art Festival

Convergence International Art Festival was the brain-child of Bob Rizzo, an artist and then-employee of the Providence Parks Department. Founded in 1988 and hosted in Roger Williams Memorial Park, the festival featured experimental performance and sculpture. Convergence was the first place WaterFire was reprised in 1996, and part of the reason it became a regular event.

Pawtucket Arts Festival

After attending Convergence International Art Festival, Kristine Kilmartin and her husband former Attorney General Peter Kilmartin brought the idea of an annual arts festival in Pawtucket to then-Pawtucket mayor James Doyle. The Pawtucket Arts Festival continues to this day, with artist exhibitions, dragon boat races and musical performances.



CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Southside Cultural Center of RI

Located in a historic building with a long history as a community gathering space in the southside neighborhood of Providence, the SCCRI formed in 2009 to provide a home for cultural organizations. The center has forged deep intercultural creative partnerships with many of their tenant organizations.

Rhode Island Black Storytellers (RIBS)

RIBS has over 20 years of dedicated experience promoting the awareness, appreciation, and application of Black Storytelling in RI through performance, educational, and cultural experiences. They are partner tenants at SCCRI dedicated to outreach and collaboration.

Laotian Community Center of Rhode Island

A neighbor of RIBS in the Southside Cultural Center, the Laotian Community Center of Rhode Island believes firmly in a cross-cultural understanding of the arts. Working with RIBS, they created a program where girls with Black and Asian heritages learned about traditional dance and storytelling and performed together at Providence's annual arts and cultural festival, PVDFest.

MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

Chan's Eggs Rolls & Jazz

Established in Woonsocket in 1905, Chan's didn't become a musical venue until John Chan, part of the third generation of his family to own the restaurant, started a regular jazz series in 1977. Over time, the venue grew into an essential home for jazz and blues in New England, and is now known colloquially as Chan's Egg Rolls and Jazz.

Duke Robillard

Well-known blues guitarist Duke Robillard grew up in Woonsocket. While he has since become world famous for his virtuosity, he comes home often, playing at Rhode Island venues like Chan's Egg Rolls and Jazz and the Rhythm and Roots Festival.

Stepping Stone Ranch

A prime music venue in the 1970s, Stepping Stone Ranch is a western-town-style ranch established by Rhode Island-native Henry V. Davis in West Greenwich. Davis brought acts from Aerosmith to B.B. King to Rhode Island and hosted festivals like the Cajun & Bluegrass Festival, which in turn spawned the popular Rhythm and Roots Festival. Stepping Stone now functions as a horse ranch and hosts the annual Cowboy Rendezvous Festival.

