

ArtsBuild Ontario Webinar Transcription:

Design for Public Spaces 101: Where do Creative Spaces Start?

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>> MODERATOR: Hi, there, again. If you're just joining us, we are experiencing a little bit of a technical delay. Our host did encounter a power outage just minutes prior to the webinar starting so they're just starting their computer back up and getting ready for the presentation. So we do appreciate your patience at this time and we'll be getting started quite shortly. Thank you.

>> THEA KURDI: Okay. It looks like I'm finally here. Can you hear me?

>> MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear you, Thea. And the presentation is all yours.

>> THEA KURDI: (Referencing Slide 1) Excellent. Thank you. Apologies to everyone. Two seconds before we got started my whole house went out, so I'm glad to be back here with you now.

Welcome, everyone, to the webinar, Designing for Public Spaces 101, Where Do Creative Spaces Start. This is the second webinar in the Arts Build Ontario Accessibility Series. My name is Thea Kurdi, I am the vice President of a company called DesignABLE Environments. We're accessibility specialists in built the environment. We're working with ArtsBuild Ontario as consultants on both this webinar series and the creation of a brand new toolkit to support accessibility in creative spaces.

Today, we're delighted to have as our feature presenter Jay Pitter, a designer, placemaker, and city builder and she's going to be presenting to us a little bit later.

(Referencing Slide 2) First, we have a view things to get out of the way for housekeeping. One, we wanted to let you know that you can hear us, but we can't hear you. Your microphones have been disabled for the webinar, but we hope you can hear us through your speakers and headphones.

You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icons that you can find at the top of the meeting window.

The second thing is we need -- we are offering closed captioning, which you may have noticed on the webinar already. The closed captioning will appear in the bottom left of the meeting room screen, and it's called the Caption Stream Pod where you as a participant, can change the font type, size, and color to suit your needs, so you can make those adjustments now if you need to.

Can our participants please confirm by typing in the Chat Box in the bottom right hand corner of the window that they can see the captioning happening in the meeting room now?

Perfect, I can see a couple people typing, yes, and confirming it. Thank you so much.

A record of this closed captioning will be sent to participants following the webinar, and made available on the ArtsBuild Ontario website.

So three last things before we get started. One, we will be recording this session and a link will be emailed to everyone following the webinar. Two, also very important, we will be emailing out a quick survey after the webinar, and we'll be asking you to complete that survey so that ArtsBuild Ontario can continue to improve their Learning Series for Creative Spaces, what did we do well, what could we improve for next time?

Three, lastly, we'll leave a few minutes at the end of the presentation and because we started a little late, maybe not quite as many as we would have hoped, but we want to answer your questions and be respectful that people probably need to do other things after 1:00, so please use the Chat Box on the bottom right to type in your questions and we'll get to as many as we can.

Please note that, unfortunately, the Chat Box function at the bottom right of your screen is not accessible using a screen reader, so for those of you who would like to contribute with questions, we definitely want to hear from you. Instead, you can please email those questions to our wonderful, Erin, and you can reach Erin at erin@artsbuildontario.ca. We'll be asking these questions along with everyone else during the question and answer period.

(Referencing Slide 3) Quickly then, our agenda today is to focus on what this learning series is about, recapping very quickly what we learned in the last seminar Let's Talk About Disability and Creative Spaces, and then we're going to have a fabulous presentation from Jay Pitter on the topic of the day, Designing for Public Spaces 101 Where do Creative Spaces Start?

And as mentioned we'll conclude with a question and answer period.

(Referencing Slide 4) We wanted to give a brief background on the Learning Series in case you haven't heard of ArtsBuild Ontario, we're a not for profit art service organization that provides programs and learning opportunities that help make Ontario's creative spaces more sustainable.

One of their programs is called the Learning Series, which is a series of webinars, workshops, and resources that support their core programs. This is the second of six webinars in the Learning Series that will focus on accessibility.

These particular webinars will focus on accessibility and creative spaces based on the Design of Public Spaces Standard, which is part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, also known as AODA legislation. Each of these webinars will explain how creative spaces need to meet accessible building standards and explore ways creative spaces can go beyond the standards taking into account both physical accessibility and experiential accessibility.

The webinars will be supported by a toolkit for creative spaces around the topics of accessibility which will be released in the Spring of 2019. ArtsBuild Ontario would like to thank its accessibility advisory committee for informing the webinar for the topics, speakers, and upcoming toolkit for creative spaces in Ontario, and I would like to thank ArtsBuild Ontario for inviting me to be the host for today's webinar.

(Referencing Slide 5) So a quick recap from our last webinar. I was presenting and giving people a brief overview of accessibility in the built environment, and to do that well we needed to talk first about what exactly we were thinking about when we talked about disability.

We reviewed that people with disabilities are really the minority of everyone, and that the human condition is a lifetime of changing needs and abilities because everyone either currently has a disability or has someone in their

life with a disability or may get a disability through illness, accident, or aging.

(Referencing Slide 6) We also did a quick review understanding the AODA law. The AODA stands for Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act but the goal of the law is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. It is based on equality, dignity, and respect, and there are five areas of requirements that have all been grouped together under something called the Integrated Accessibility Standard and the five include customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces.

(Referencing Slide 7) We also reviewed that customer service requires staff training, that the information and communication legislation talks about providing alternative formats upon request, including things like large print text and Braille. The employment standard is focusing on making hiring practices accessible.

(Referencing Slide 8) And then the large part of our presentation was focused on how the legislation relates to the design of public spaces. So in most spaces or buildings, we're focusing on the exterior path of travel for this legislation, any outdoor public eating areas and outdoor play spaces, which if they're going to be included, those require a public consultation which is not as hard as it sounds, and accessible parking, which includes two different types of van size called Type A and car size Type B and service counters, fix queuing guides and waiting areas that has a minimum 3% seating for people with mobility devices.

(Referencing Slide 9) We also did a quick review of the Ontario Building Code also referred to as the OBC, and this is a comprehensive document but has limited accessibility requirements in it. The question was, can we build a building that fully complies with the OBC but actually is not fully inclusive for the needs of people with disabilities?

Unfortunately, the legislation so far has really been focusing mostly on the needs of people using wheelchairs and IT doesn't solve for full range of disabilities that people have, hearing loss, vision loss, multiple chemical sensitivities, fatigue, or even arthritis.

(Referencing Slide 10) We also reviewed that even if you were compliant with the Ontario Building Code and with the AODA, there is a third law in Ontario called the Ontario Human Rights Code and this law is the higher law, it supersedes both the OBC and AODA, so it's possible to be compliant with the OBC and AODA and not have achieved the Human Rights Code so that's something to be thinking about and aware of as you're moving forward with your projects.

(Referencing Slide 11) So we wanted to make sure that if you didn't get a chance to watch the first one, we did have a second presenter. Their name was Sage Lovell and they discussed deaf culture and creative spaces. It's certainly worth watching the first seminar to see Sage and their amazing presentation. I think Erin at this point might be providing us a link in the Chat Box so you can find it easily after this presentation is over. [Link to first webinar](#).

But, we also wanted to make sure that should you want to reach out and learn more about the legislation or about what's happening in accessibility in Ontario, you can reach out to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility with the [contact information on your screen](#), including their website, telephone number, their social media connections, and their email address. If you need this in an alternative format, please let us know.

(Referencing Slide 12) Finally, we can get to our presenter. Our wonderful Jay Pitter, MES, author and placemaker whose practice mitigates growing divides in urban centers. She spearheads international city building projects, rooted in neighbourhood knowledge, focused on cultural heritage

interpretive planning, gender based mapping, inclusive public engagements, safe streets and healing fraught sites.

Creating more inclusive cities is not just a professional mission for Jay, it is personal. Her city building values are informed by the long term mentorship of her second grade Irish Canadian teacher who modeled the power of reaching across social divides when Jay was a child growing up in social housing.

As a result of these rich experiences and international portfolio, Jay shapes urgent city building conversations through media platforms such as the Agenda and Canadian Architects as a keynote speaker for organizations like UN Women and Massachusetts Institute of Technology or MIT. And lecturer and knowledge producer in urban planning facilities across North America.

Recently, Jay consulted on Edmonton's new heritage plan and hosted a luncheon for women city planners in Detroit, shared her placemaker principles with Memphis River Parks Partnership, initiated a safe and connected cities engagement following the mass shooting in Toronto and led a Confederate monument placemaking process in Lexington.

Currently she is working on her second book called "Where We Live" that will be published at Penguin Random House Canada. And now turning it over to Jay to get us started we'll try to wrap up maybe at 12:50 to make sure that we have a time for a few questions before we wrap up. On to you, Jay.

>> JAY PITTER: (Referencing Slide 13) Good afternoon, everyone. I hope that folks are both well and warm today. So thanks for having me. It's a pleasure to be hosting this conversation. Alex is in the background driving, so when I say next, Alex, or next please, that's what's going on. Alex, could we ask you to please advance the slide?

(Referencing Slide 14) So I thought I'd begin by sharing my first experience with accessible arts spaces. Many years ago, before moving into a city building career, my practice and also my research within the context of city building is focused on both spatial design and social justice, but many years ago when I started off my career, I worked as an arts funder, and so I know a thing or two about artists and also where artists create and perform.

While I was in that particular role, I had clients way across the Province and I was also assigned the Diversity Portfolio, so I guess in the '90s, what diversity meant was looking at obviously different lived experiences, so a lot of my work was looking at better reaching artists who lived in Rural Ontario, in indigenous communities, in intercity communities like the one where I grew up, and at some point doing that work there was a conversation that was bubbling up, so I'm going to age myself. This was like early '90s, mid '90s, there was a conversation bubbling up, and that conversation was about accessibility within the arts.

And because I managed the Diversity portfolio and am overall a curious person, I really took on that conversation and organizing and convening which actually took place in the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. And so a number of artists with disabilities came out to talk about their experience on the periphery of the arts, meaning both arts networks and arts spaces, and we really just spent an afternoon listening and learning.

And based on what I listened to and what I learned, it became quite apparent to me that we generally speaking narrowly define accessibility. So when I was listening to Thea give a little rehash of the session from before and she spoke about how, you know, generally speaking accessibility has been defined as wheelchair access, which is of course critically important; however, that is a narrow definition and especially now today we know that

disabilities are visible and invisible and are encompassing a wide range of lived experiences in space.

And so fast forward after having that conversation many, many years ago, I became quite passionate about accessibility overall, and so again I mentioned that my practice really looks at both spatial design and also social justice because I strongly believe that design is supposed to actually enhance everyone's life and create more equity. It should be really a lever for change, and so this is the perspective that I'm bringing into this particular conversation.

Can we advance the slide, please.

(Referencing Slide 15) So tapping into the conversation using that more holistic lens, of again looking at design and its social consequences, I want to first unpack this idea for you. Design is not neutral. We often talk about design as being neutral, but it really isn't. The truth is to have well designed art spaces and well designed cities, we need a lot of people having access to those design conversations and also design processes and projects.

However, we don't have that happening. What we have and what we have historically had is a very small group of urban designers and also decision makers making a lot of executive decisions around who gets what kind of design, and so we have to recognize that design approaches come from a very specific cultural background. In North America and other places throughout the world, design is very much informed by a Eurocentric aesthetic and approach, and secondly it's important to understand that design is generally led and has historically been led by men, and men who, you know, do not have a physical disabilities, so there is a bias even in terms of the approach to how we design spaces. There are just certain people, many people who are not at the table, and there are many questions that are not being asked.

Please advance the slide.

(Referencing Slide 16) So, as a result of this narrow approach to design, persons with disabilities have actually been designed out of cities.

Please advance the slide.

(Referencing Slide 17) So, I wanted to provide a little bit more of a historical context of how persons with disabilities have been designed out of cities. So, initially, persons with disabilities were extraordinarily patronized, dehumanized, and sent to large, isolated complexes to live their lives. And so, you know, they felt trapped, they were treated like objects and given no control over their daily lives, and so when I say they've been designed out of city, I really mean that. Like designers created institutions that kept folks with disabilities really locked up. Women were sterilized, women living with disabilities were sterilized, and this was really supported by the eugenics movement and so persons with disabilities continue to be sterilized against their will or without consent or due process, particularly those persons who also have an intersection at experience of cognitive or developmental disabilities.

We know that schools were segregated so the classrooms and playgrounds were not designed to include children with disabilities. However, there was a deinstitutionalization movement which started several decades ago and this started in Canada. It was led by persons with disabilities who were forming collectives within institutions as well as their parents and other allies joined them to move toward creating greater access within the communities where they lived.

And everyday in Canada and internationally people with disabilities are exploited in all ways and yet persons with disabilities are less likely to be believed when they report such abuses, and so if we're going to have a

conversation about arts spaces and why they're not accessible, it's so important to understand the history behind the lack of accessibility.

Let's advance the slide, please.

(Referencing Slide 18) So, you know in my work, I'm always looking to move beyond access to meaningful inclusion and something that I call spatial entitlement. So a part of my spatial entitlement theory is that it is not enough to create just a bit of space so that people can show up. It is so important to create lots and lots of space so that people can really co-own their space and so that people feel a deep sense of entitlement to every single space they navigate.

Please advance the slide.

(Referencing Slide 19) So what does accessibility mean in the arts? Well, for someone who works using, again, a comprehensive lens which looks both at spatial design and social justice, here is my definition of what it means.

Firstly, we need to view persons with disabilities as capable and creative. We also need to create physical and conceptual space for artists with disabilities to shape their narratives and express themselves in performance spaces, including galleries, street, warehouses, parks, and laneways.

And so we also have to think about the ways in which the definition of performing spaces has expanded. We now know that we have path ups and multiple public spaces and informing a spaces for performance so we have to look at what accessibility means within the full range of arts and performance spaces.

We want to ensure that performance spaces are accessible to persons with disabilities. We want to develop policies and professional development processes that both enhance and continually assess levels of accessibility

within arts spaces, and we want to continually be assessing spaces because there are so many dimensions of accessibility.

We want to foster organizational cultures that create physical spaces that are accessible but also socially respectful, warm, and deeply inclusive.

And lastly, it is so important to consider the intersectional identities of persons with disabilities, and when I say intersectional identities, what I mean is that for individuals, we have many different aspects of our identities which shape the way that we navigate spaces, so persons with disabilities also have intersections in terms of gender, race class, and these also shape the levels of accessibility that we have in spaces and barriers both visible and invisible which shape the way that we experience each other and the spaces we occupy.

Please advance the slide.

(Referencing Slide 20) So I'd like us to take a moment, everyone, to think about these three questions, and so I'm going to ask you to actually start using the Comment Box before we go to the Q&A. I always prefer talking with people, and I know there are a lot of folks listening right now that have exceptional experiences and insights as well, so just a few questions.

So based on everything that I just said about what accessibility in the arts means, which of the definitions of accessibility in arts spaces most resonate with you?

And then the other question is, which definition in arts spaces is your organization currently addressing or doing really well? And is there an area for growth? So again I'm going to say it slowly so you can jot this down. As my definition, what really resonated with you? What is your organization working on? And where is there an opportunity for growth?

Now I'm going to ask Alex to go backwards with the slides so that you can see the definitions once again. So while you're thinking this through, let's start with what really resonated with you of this definition? What resonated? Let's use the Box and talk to each other.

Okay. I see that folks are typing, so we'll definitely let's give that a moment.

So what resonated with you?

Oh, so Michelle says this is the first time she's heard of the integration of spatial design and justice and patrons have a spatial entitlement.

Okay. Yes, they do they absolutely have a spatial entitlement.

And Junia talks about fostering an organizational culture so that resonated with you. Jenny says that organization of culture creates spaces that are accessible. Yes. Green square and blue square, okay, got it.

So green square is fostering organizational culture and blue square is performing spaces that are accessible or you might be talking about the blue or turquoise square that talks about continuing to assess accessibility.

These are amazing answers. I see Corey is on the way in, let's see – food for thought and also the concept of space and inclusion. And I see people are continuing to weigh in on the first part of this question. Thank you so much for conversing back and forth with me.

Let's go to the next question. So the next question is, let's go straight to, what was difficult about my definition? I'm going to go to, let's go back and leave it on the slide, so what does accessibility in the arts mean? So what did I say in my definition that was challenging for you? It's complex, so of everything that's in this definition, what would be the most challenging thing to embrace within the context of your work?

So folks are typing, so let's give a moment.

Okay. Looking to build new spaces and looking for creative accessible ideas. Okay. I heard intersectional identities, and I like that you included that. PWD are not homogenous, absolutely not, and I see multiple attendees are typing. Okay, love to see new funding to support these changes. Me too, Emily.

I see Jamie and Michelle are typing and I'm going to take those two last responses because we're a little short on time this afternoon so I'm going to have to move along. The economic challenges of making a stage and back stage accessible for performers with any disability or challenges. Thank you for sharing, Michelle. And Jenny is saying that creating physical and conceptual space as well as considering the intersectional identities.

Yes, when we get into intersectionality it becomes very exciting because that's when we can really get at accessibility and it's also complicated work, of course.

I'm going to advance the slides, please. Can I advance one, and advance two. Thank you.

(Referencing Slide 21) And so I want to make sure that we get or have time to go through some of these examples, and as you can see, I used the definition that I came up with as a lens to assess these organizations that I'm providing as case studies.

One of the things that I want to say is that this is not comprehensive. This is a few organizations who are doing a great job. I know that there are many more organizations across the Province doing a wonderful job, and also this is not a ratings system so if some organizations get all of the colors, which I think Buddies in Bad Times Theatre actually does, and some

only get a few, and that might be just based on what people posted on their website, but it's not a competition. It's a process.

And so Buddies in Bad Times Theatre actually hits all of the categories though, so let me just take time to go through why. The entire facility is physically accessible to audience members and the stage is also accessible to performers. Washroom facilities are not designated by gender and all patrons are free to use the washroom of their choosing. Personal assistants and support persons accompanying a person with diversabilities will be admitted at no cost, so now we're getting into class and economic accessibility. Many of the shows in the main stage, season, and festivals offer ASL interpretation on select dates. Many of the shows in the mainstage season and festivals offer Relaxed Performance options designed to welcome audience members who could benefit just from a more relaxed environment.

And Buddies is committed to providing access to programming for all people who want it regardless of their financial means, so they're pretty thorough. Good job Buddies.

Let's go to the next slide. I'm not going to have time to read out every single case study, but can we advance, please.

(Referencing Slide 22) Okay, so we have disability art and culture project and this is coming out of Portland, and you know you can see some of the aspects of accessibility here. They use the performing arts as a method of examining disability in relation to society, they have all kinds of accommodations listed, ASL interpretation, audio description, realtime captioning, and also alternate formats. They support established artists as well as the community at large, and they ask participants, including artists, to commit to creating an anti oppressive environment.

Let's move on, please. Next slide.

(Referencing Slide 23) Dundas museum and archive, there is accessible elevator, parking, and wheelchair accessibility in the atrium, so they're really looking at physical infrastructure, predominantly for I would say wheelchairs and assistive devices.

Let's move to the next example, please. (Referencing Slide 24) Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery, making improvements to the lobby, achieving legal accessibility standards, they have gender neutral washrooms, interactive educational hub with integrated technology, and they have a new entrance with improved visibility.

Let's advance to the next example, please.

(Referencing Slide 25) Ottawa Art Gallery, admission is free, all are welcome, entrance to galleries and venues are physically accessible. They have free childcare services as well and gender neutral washrooms.

Let's advance, please. (Referencing Slide 26) And finally, we have the Stratford Festival, wheelchair accessibility, special access seating, select performances with live audio description which is great, select performances with ASL interpretation, Braille house programs may be borrowed, policy to encourage patrons to refrain from wearing heavily scented products and relaxed performances as well.

So as you can see, let's advance, please.

(Referencing Slide 27) Tangled Art + Disability, they're doing also really great work and really addressing accessibility from a very comprehensive manner, showcasing and promoting artists with disabilities, visual, performing, media art and film and integrated art forms and encouraging and fostering partnerships and collaborations and providing accessible professional development and networking opportunities, and they are

building an inclusive arts and culture sector so that everyone can appreciate the abundance of arts that our society has to offer.

Let's advance, please.

(Referencing Slide 28) So you know what I would say is that although there hasn't, in my view, been enough movement on this issue, I'm hearing conversations that I heard at the very beginning of my career and I'm hearing gaps in funding and resources that I heard at the very beginning of my career, but I must say that it is also true that I am seeing this sector take leaps and bounds without all of the required resources, so I think you should all be super proud of yourselves. I think there is a lot more work to do, but it's so clear to me that people are thinking from an inclusive and intersectional perspective, even if that language isn't being used, I'm seeing that organizations are being either very intentional in using a holistic sort of justice based approach or organizations intuitively get it and are doing a great job.

So why do we need more of these kinds of accessible art spaces right now? There are a million great reasons, I'm sure, but what I will just say very quickly is that arts spaces create a really important platform for sharing diverse perspectives and counter narratives and aspirational narratives, and I think that in this moment where political and sort of cultural discourse is so polarized, it is more important than ever to create space for everyone to participate in the conversation.

Also, as a placemaker, one of the things that, you know, I have to note as well is that city building is experiencing so much change and transformation right now that this is a really prime moment to leverage urban growth to create greater community benefits and accessibility.

And then also, you know, conceptualizations of arts spaces are really expanding, so again we're not just talking about formal performance spaces.

We're talking about public space and pop up spaces, and so it would be really great to articulate what accessibility means in this moment as performance spaces are really diversifying and the definition of those is really rapidly changing as well.

Please advance the slides.

(Referencing Slide 29) Okay. So last slide, recommendations for creating more accessible art spaces. Take a comprehensive approach recognizing both design and social aspects of design and spaces, so again we want to look at space and we want to look at the social dimensions. So space and social together recognize multiple forms of apparent and non-apparent disabilities. We want to consider intersectionality and diversity within populations of persons with disabilities, especially those identities which may contribute to additional barriers, and so I spoke to that before, you know, persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group and there is so much strength and resilience and diversity within these communities and we want to recognize all of that as well.

We want to meaningfully engage artists and audiences with disabilities in the design and audit of arts spaces. We want to develop informative and experiential staff professional development sessions led by persons with disabilities. We want to develop an accessible communications plan. We also want to situate your accessible space strategy within a larger organizational growth and inclusion plan, and what I mean by this is this. Accessibility is not like this nice thing to do, nor should it be this thing that you do that is like in the margins or off in the corner somewhere. Every organization that wants to be excellent, that wants to grow in a good way, should have this strategy central in their strategic plan and not off to the side.

Again, we want to also, you know, I have something that I tell all of my clients who I work with, and also I say this at the beginning of all of my talks. I tell people that often I'm hired to make people feel uncomfortable. The kinds of projects that I work on, the kinds of issues that I talk about, if we start talking about attitudes that keep people away from thriving and being prosperous in cities and in public spaces, and if we start talking about power and balances that exist in all public spaces, including art spaces, if we start talking about the ways that we shy away from conversations around race or class or LGBT plus identity, people are going to get uncomfortable but that is totally okay. Embrace discomfort and ongoing learning. It is the only way to have truly accessible arts spaces and it is the only way to actually have cities that work for, that serve, and that inspire absolutely everyone, and that should be our shared, collective goal.

Thank you so much for your time this afternoon. I see that we have about 12 minutes for questions, and I'm totally happy to take them.

>> THEA KURDI: Wow, thanks Jay.

>> JAY PITTER: (Referencing Slide 30) Thank you for having a conversation with me, you can follow me on Twitter. Well, I'm on Twitter, and so, yes, if you want to continue talking or sharing ideas with me, please feel free to follow me there.

>> THEA KURDI: (Referencing Slide 31) That was a terrific presentation. I'm sure I speak for everyone, Jay, that that was very inspirational and it hit all the bells whistles of what we're talking about in the architecture field of what I'm doing in my work and I'm sure it echos with what people are hearing in their fields as well.

We have fortunately some time for questions for participants thanks to Jay's wonderful presentation and timing, so if you have any questions, please go

ahead and type them into the Chat Box, or as mentioned earlier, you can email them instead to erin@artsbuildontario.ca.

So we can see some people typing here. Let's give everyone just a minute.

So Jay, maybe while we wait for some questions to come through, where is it that you are based out of?

>> JAY PITTER: So I live in Toronto and I'm generally in other cities, but I also work here as well. I have a base, my home base is Toronto and my office is any city anywhere, pretty much.

>> THEA KURDI: That sounds like an amazing career. Okay. So it looks like we have a couple of questions here. One is from Emily. Is there a tool you would recommend to evaluate my current space and then make recommendations for changes?

>> JAY PITTER: Interesting. So there isn't a tool that I would currently recommend. I'm actually working on a paper that helps to sort of like breakdown and also articulate indicators spaces that are both spatially accessible and also socially accessible, but historically this conversation hasn't happened together so design doesn't tend to be very interdisciplinary, so we often, when we're talking about accessibility, often times designers are talking about the built environment.

And then when we're talking about sort of justice and that kind of accessibility, there is like a different conversation that's happening. And so really my research and practice brings those two things together, and but this is not something that's common. These tend to be different and siloed in different conversations and different fields, but as a first step though, I think what I would recommend for your organization is to come together and maybe first brainstorm so something that I do with my clients quite a bit, is after explaining the social and the spatial dimensions of design, I then with

my clients will have a chart, and I get them to think about their own space and, and what they do in the chart is they list the spatial components of their environment that is accessible, like that makes their environment accessible or inclusive, and then they list the social aspects that make their environment accessible and inclusive, and then they also do the same for barriers, and it's a good way to start the conversation and begin to just start to map and articulate what social means in your space and what kinds of spatial aspects your looking at in your space and checking off what you're doing really well and then creating a learning agenda and a to do list based on the aspects that you're not currently addressing.

So I would say that that is a great first step.

>> THEA KURDI: That is a great first step. There is also some, if you are interested in the built environment piece of it, we did discuss that and provide resources in the first seminar, so if you're looking backwards, at least for building audits, if you're looking to do building audits, there might be some help for you in that episode.

But I love what you're saying, Jay, about it's so much more than the built environment and there is even intersectionality in thinking about policies between social justice and the atmosphere that you create in environments and policies and the welcoming feeling is holistic.

We have another question here about, Michelle mentioned she's very moved by the idea of social justice as being a respondent in the physical space. Can you speak to how you made this connection and best practices for organizations looking to do the same?

So I think you talked a little about that in how you made your chart, but maybe how did you make this connection yourself?

>> JAY PITTER: You know, I would say a few things very quickly. I made the connection very early, as mentioned as was mentioned earlier, I grew up in an inter city community and within that particular community, it emerged when I was 8 years old, and no I'm sorry, 12 years old and a friend's older sister was murdered as a result, and so several years later after doing research in spatial design and social justice, I went back to that community to audit the space, and I was actually able to identify precise design interventions and approaches that actually facilitated that kind of activity within the neighborhood, so I was able to actually map things like how awnings and sunken doorways actually create a shield for criminal activity, how placing parks behind very tall and wide buildings makes children vulnerable, and how having basketball courts beneath street level actually again creates avail around recreational activities of some of the most vulnerable folks, and so I was able to make the connection in large part through my personal experience growing up in a poorly designed social housing community, but also because I live and work across so many kinds of environments, I've seen it repeat in my work.

And the other way I made the connection as well is that whenever I would have convenings and talk about design or social issues, like design is often an invisible for us but it's a force that would come up a lot in my conversations with people, so even when I worked at the Ontario Arts Council, like the idea of the role that infrastructure or even having a building, capital infrastructure plays such a huge role in the ability for artists to earn an income, for the ability for artists to have a network and have support and to experience like professional development, and so I've really learned it a lot through my work and then I went back to grad school and did a very specialized study in both space and justice together.

>> THEA KURDI: Well, I think I speak for everybody to say I can't wait to read your books now. I wasn't aware of them before, I'm certainly going to read your first book and very much am looking forward to the second book.

(Referencing Slide 32) Unfortunately, that's all the time we have for questions now, and so we just wanted to finish up by reminding people this amazing Accessibility Webinar Series that is continuing. The third in the series is the Design for Public Spaces Advanced How Can We Create Spaces That Go Beyond the Standard. That will be happening on Tuesday March, 12 and the presenters are Lorene Casiez from Human Space and Quadrangle and we'll also have Dave Hollands from the ROM speaking.

Next is Best Practices for Architects and Designers and Creative Spaces on Accessibility happening Tuesday March 26 with Amy Potier and Corey Timpson.

The Fifth Seminar is Safety, Fire Codes and Accessibility for Creative Spaces happening on Tuesday, April 23 happening with Martin Day and Marne.

(Referencing Slide 33) The last but not least is invisible Disabilities and Creative Spaces happening Tuesday May 14, with Alex Blumer and Andrew Gurza. Register for any of the upcoming webinars or all of them on the learning series page on the ArtsBuild Ontario website.

(Referencing Slide 34) We, of course, could not have gotten this done without the help from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, including Kim Fullerton, Luke Anderson, Yvonne Felix, Amy Ross- oops sorry, switched slides, Terry Barna, Shirley Madill, Andrew Gurza, Sean Lee, Christine Karcza, Kevin Puddister, Aislinn Thomas, and Jessica Vellenga. Amazing people working very hard.

(Referencing Slide 35) So in closing, just a reminder that we will be emailing you a recording of today's webinar and also please complete the survey we're sending you. Tell us what we did well and what we could improve for next time.

A special thank you to Jay for your amazing presentation and all of the great ideas you brought to us today. Be sure to check out the rest of the upcoming Learning Series webinars on the website at artsbuildontario.ca and thank you for attending and have a wonderful day. Stay warm, people.

(session completed at 11:58 a.m. CST)