

# Karen Hutzal Describes the Mak...ing of Art and Cultural Policy

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## SPEAKERS

Karen Hutzal, Eva Dale, David Staley, Janet Box-Steffensmeier

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**E** Eva Dale 00:00  
From the heart of the Ohio State University on the Oval, this is Voices of Excellence from the College of Arts and Sciences, with your host, David Staley. Voices focuses on the innovative work being done by faculty and staff in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University. From departments as wide ranging as art, astronomy, chemistry and biochemistry, physics, emergent materials, mathematics, and languages, among many others, the college always has something great happening. Join us to find out what's new now.

**D** David Staley 00:32  
Karen Hutzal is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Arts Administration, Education, and Policy, and Interim Chair of the Department of Arts at The Ohio State University College of the Arts and Sciences. Her research and teaching expertise include collaborative art making, asset-based community development, urban art education, and participatory action research. She has presented at numerous national and international conferences, and is published in a number of leading journals. She has co-edited the book, "Transforming City Schools Through Art: Approaches to Meaningful K-12 Learning" that we'll talk about at some point this morning, I think. Welcome to Voices. Dr. Hutzal.

**K** Karen Hutzal 01:14  
Thank you.

**D** David Staley 01:15  
First of all, I'm interested in the department for which you serve as chair, please tell us about the Department of Arts Administration, Education, and Policy. What does that encompass aside

from what I've just listed here?

K

Karen Hutzel 01:26

Yeah, that's a mouthful. So when I started here at Ohio State in 2005, it was the Department of Art Education.

D

David Staley 01:33

Oh, okay.

K

Karen Hutzel 01:34

And it contained a large art education program, and arts policy and administration was a subsidiary or a small aspect of the program. And with time, that aspect of our department grew so much that we started questioning the name of the department. And so, we came up with this very large department name to recognize all aspects, but I like to tell people that really the focus of the department is on considering the role of arts in society, and that involves, through education in schools, communities, museums, it involves arts management and arts entrepreneurship. And it involves cultural policy, which is a concept that's really hard, I think, for a lot of people to wrap their heads around, including myself.

D

David Staley 02:18

Swell, but I'm going to put you on the spot, then, what's cultural policy? What does that mean?

K

Karen Hutzel 02:21

I know, it's good question. I've been spending the last 15 years learning about it, which is really wonderful to expand my own area of expertise in art education to include management administration policy. So, in cultural policy and arts policy, which are sort of interchangeably used as terminologies, it's really about how policies affect and impact the way arts and culture are practiced in our society. In the U.S., for instance, as a country, our government does not have a written policy on the arts, whereas most countries do. And so without a policy, it's kind of interesting the way programs like the NEA, the National Endowment for the Arts, play out funding and not funding and what types of programs they enact. But, it all starts with policy, and so that, if you look at the other aspects of our department, it trickles down, it affects education. In most states in the U.S., art education is a requirement in the schools, we have art teachers in K-12 schools; not all countries have that, not all states, frankly, have that same policy. In the state of Ohio, there's a requirement that students receive a credit in art to graduate. Again, that's not a given, and so we look at the variety of ways that the arts are impacted by policy, and the way that it affects programming as well.

D

David Staley 03:34

David Staley 03:15

Arts entrepreneurship, that's an interesting combination of words. What does that entail?

Karen Hutzel 03:38

Yeah, so this is the growing area of our department and in the field of the arts, where we are recognizing how the arts are an economic force as well, and how do individuals who become artists or are working in some creative industry, how do they create opportunities for themselves to make a living? And so, that's really where the arts entrepreneurship aspect comes from. We have a large donor to our department, the Barnett family, who have supported for many years before arts entrepreneurship was really a terminology or a field of study, were interested in artists, students graduating and being able to create careers for themselves. And so, we've really gone in a direction that approaches arts entrepreneurship from all angles as well. So, art educators in the schools thinking of themselves as entrepreneurs, but also artists who are graduating with a degree in art, a degree in dance, a degree in theater, they're entrepreneurs; they have to go out and figure out how to manage their own careers, how to negotiate, how to figure out what needs to go into contract to protect themselves, how to create jobs for themselves oftentimes. We often are making our own positions within institutions and organizations as well. It's sort of bridging creativity and entrepreneurship or business mindedness.

David Staley 04:56

Before we sat down for this interview, you said that your department has become a research subject for you, which I thought was really interesting. What does that mean, a research subject?

Karen Hutzel 05:06

That just came out of my mouth today, and as I sat with it for a while, I realized that it really has, as I've been the chair for just three years, but I was born and raised in this department as a new Assistant Professor. And then, folks all retired and left me in charge, and with that, I feel like I understand the department in many ways, but to articulate what it is we do, and to explain it to others is, it's complicated, and it's challenging to do. So with that, I feel like I have worked really hard to understand the breadth of what we do on a practical level, but also sort of the theoretical and conceptual components as well. There are no other departments like ours in the country.

David Staley 05:44

That was my next question.

Karen Hutzel 05:45

So there's similar, arts administration you can find in a lot of different places, you can find in business schools and music schools. we happen to be coupled with art education. originally.

And then, cultural policy and arts policy you can find in policy programs, again, in business schools. But, to have those three points of the triangle within one department is very unique and unusual. And then with arts entrepreneurship as a component of it, it really connects those three areas, I think, in a way that's unique as well. And I think it's put us on the cutting edge of something that's happening in our society around the arts and around the value of arts economically, and that's not to discount the social either, but the economic component seems to be of real interest in higher ed as well, any more. So, I think we're just sort of well positioned with what's happening in our society without letting go of our department's interest in social justice or social issues, either, but trying to really connect those areas in important ways.

D

David Staley 06:45

When you say you practice collaborative art making, what does that mean?

K

Karen Hutzel 06:50

Yes. So, I don't think of myself as an artist.

D

David Staley 06:52

Oh, okay.

K

Karen Hutzel 06:53

That's not a definition. So, while I say I do collaborative artmaking, I think of myself as a facilitator, I think because I come out of education I'm an educator first, and with that, as a facilitator of groups of people to create something that didn't exist before we came together. I also see it as my research. But in terms of the sort of collaborative artmaking, what I often find myself interested in is how culturally disparate groups of people, children, adults, can come together and create a visual product that somehow represents what they've learned with each other and about one another. And that leads to sort of this cultural understanding that happens, in the meantime. I go into these types of projects without an end result in mind necessarily; I might have some constraints because, for instance, I only have so much funds for paint, or I'm only, you know, have a limitation in terms of location. But frankly, the groups themselves come up with the ideas and the concepts that we're going to create a piece of art around, and it might result in a mural, it might result in canvas pieces, it might result in a sculpture, permanent or temporary, but the real essence is in that process of learning with each other.

D

David Staley 08:05

In another context, we might refer to that as an impresario. Do you think of yourself as an impresario?

K

Karen Hutzel 08:19

So, it's related to the collaborative art making. Well, the framework for it comes out of community development theories, Kretzmann and McKnight sort of coined the term asset-based community development. When we think about community development, it's often about solving problems in neighborhoods and communities, and how do you go and fix issues like poverty or fix issues like drugs. And Kretzmann and McKnight's turned that around and said, what if we start with what's really good in these communities that we tend to talk about very negatively, and start with those things? So, the assets might include humans, so people, it might include buildings or services or resources or environmental. And, if you start with sort of this mapping of the assets that already exist, and you build on those things, those issues that we tend to start with, tend to get addressed in that process, without disparaging a group of people by outside folks, like community developers coming in and assuming that they can fix other people's problems. I've never thought of that before, but I will now. What does asset-based community development entail?

D

David Staley 09:19

Give us an example of your work here, either when collaborative art making or asset-based community development?

K

Karen Hutzel 09:25

Yes. Recently, a few years ago, I worked with the Somali Women & Children's Alliance here in Columbus, and Dr. Vesta Daniel and I taught a summer course, and it was founded on asset based community development. The community itself was not a neighborhood in this case, it was a cultural community, the Somali community that we know is quite large here in Columbus. What I was finding as I was working with the Somali Women and Children's Alliance is that Somali children and adults were facing a lot of violence trying to get accepted into this community. And when I thought about this program, the International Kids' Guernica Peace Mural Project - that's a mouthful - I thought about -

D

David Staley 10:07

Guernica, like Picasso's famous paintings?

K

Karen Hutzel 10:09

So, this is an international program where groups of children create murals on canvas around the world to address issues of peace and war. And when I thought about it locally in Columbus, I thought, well, we're not in an act of war, one would think we don't need to attend to issues of peace, but when we think about some of our neighbors, in particular, new Somali neighbors experiencing violence on a regular basis, I thought that that project might be a good way to bring together a group of children who were in a summer program with The Somali Women &

Children's Alliance, with a group of college students here at OSU, and what happens when we bring those two groups of people together to create a mural on canvas that addresses issues of peace. And so the end result was the size of the original Guernica, I believe is...

**D** David Staley 10:56  
Large.

**K** Karen Hutzel 10:56  
Twenty something by thirteen something, I'm missing the, the figures now. But it's that size, and it can get shipped around internationally now to portray what Columbus Ohio wanted to address in terms of their own issues around peace.

**D** David Staley 11:09  
So where is the mural now?

**K** Karen Hutzel 11:11  
That's a good question.

**D** David Staley 11:11  
Oh, okay. It is not here in Columbus, now.

**K** Karen Hutzel 11:13  
It's not... well, I believe it is.

**D** David Staley 11:15  
Oh, okay.

**K** Karen Hutzel 11:15  
I released my own right to it, so to speak, because that's often the case, I don't own it, and I left it with the Somali Women and Children's Alliance. They hung it in... they were located in the Global Mall on Morse Road, which is a community center space for businesses and local needs for Somali residents, and it was hanging in the window for about two years, which faced Morse

road. It had a lot of presence for a while, and when the Somali Women & Children's Alliance moved out of that building, I lost track of the mural. So, I'm assuming that it's still either in that building or in the hands of that organization.

**D** David Staley 11:48

So, in this case, in working with the Somali community, when we say assets, what do we mean in this context? I think of assets as sort of an economic term, but it doesn't sound like that's what you're talking about here.

**K** Karen Hutzel 11:57

Yeah, I do think it's an application of an economics term to a social situation. So in this case, the assets are the human beings. So, we start with children who have ideas and children who have had experiences, and we have students from OSU who are artists, so their assets are their art making and their ability to create, and you bring those things together. And then the cultural representation of the Somali children is another asset, so we see that as a positive thing. So, how do you take those things and mix them up to create a positive outcome? And then in the end, it ends up addressing an issue of cultural groups not understanding one another. And so there is a positive outcome that addresses a problem, but it starts with the things that are good about what's already there.

**D** David Staley 12:38

What is participatory action research? Is this an example?

**K** Karen Hutzel 12:42

Yes, so these are all frameworks that we use in academia to frame the things that we do in practice, and it does challenge me to think about the ways I engage in my work, whether it's teaching, or in community spaces, or art making, it challenges by applying these frameworks.

**D** David Staley 12:57

Well, define them for us, what action research is or participatory action research?

**K** Karen Hutzel 13:01

So, action research or participatory action research is a type of research methodology that engages human beings in addressing their own issues and problems at a local level. And so, it really challenges what the purpose of research is in general, so it challenges the definition of research, and that's often where I start, asking people how they define research. And research is essentially the development of new knowledge, the sharing and dissemination of new knowledge. The way that we practice it in higher education tends to be often disconnected or in

a way that doesn't allow regular folks to engage with it, and PAR challenges that and says, we can actually solve world problems, large problems, at a local level, by having researchers engage with communities of people, whether the community is a neighborhood or a larger, we can talk about a full state, a full country, etc. So, it's a way of engaging people in becoming researchers themselves. Again, the term facilitator is important here, so the actual academic researcher acts as a facilitator of a process that brings people together to define what issue they want to address.

**D** David Staley 14:07

And that's different from the way that we tend to think of the role of the researcher?

**K** Karen Hutzel 14:11

Yep.

**D** David Staley 14:12

In what ways?

**K** Karen Hutzel 14:13

I think often the role of the researcher is seen as something that's disconnected from...

**D** David Staley 14:17

Objective?

**K** Karen Hutzel 14:18

The realities, exactly. So if we start with the difference between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, or imperial ways of knowing, start with questioning, how do we know things that we know? It does, it challenges what we in higher ed, consider to be objective knowledge. Qualitative researchers have been doing that for years, it comes out of feminist theory, it comes out of queer theory, it comes out of issues in civil rights and... and so, if we as researchers can challenge our own place and our own limited knowledge to recognize that we bring our own perspectives - and often that's a perspective of privilege based on our education, based on our race, gender, whatever it might be - and we expand that to include folks who we may often underwrite or not include in the process and think that we can go and again and solve their problems, it really tries to empower folks, that you can actually solve these problems for yourselves. And again, that connects with the asset-based community development, it connects with collaborative art making, it's really about sort of the empowerment of folks who are often seen as oppressed or as overlooked.



**J** Janet Box-Steffensmeier 15:24

I'm Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Interim Executive Dean and Vice Provost for the Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences. Did you know that 23 of our programs are nationally ranked as top 25 programs, with more than ten of them in the top ten? That's why we say the College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual and academic core of the Ohio State University. Learn more about the college at [artsandsciences.osu.edu](http://artsandsciences.osu.edu).

**D** David Staley 15:51

Tell me more about the book that you co-edited, "Transforming City Schools through Art: Approaches to Meaningful K-12 Learning".

**K** Karen Hutzel 15:58

Yeah, so that's really applying all of these practices I've been talking about, and most specifically, asset-based community development, and applying it to a school based situation. You know, we read about often the problems we see in schooling and education in our society, and urban schools, especially, are struggling to meet the demands and needs that children in our cities are facing. So, we approached this book through the asset-based process, and it's really toward teachers.

**D** David Staley 16:24

The book is?

**K** Karen Hutzel 16:25

The book is really for teachers or teacher trainers. So, as students are becoming teachers or for teachers in, who are already in schools. How do we get them to think differently about the children that they're teaching on a daily basis, in the communities that they work in? We often find, in urban schools, that teachers are driving in from the suburbs to teach, you often have an economic difference, a racial difference; and, inevitably, as you're in these environments, you can start to stereotype the children in the communities you're working with, you can see their own communities as, you label them as dangerous. And if you have that mindset, it really affects the way you engage with the children you're teaching. And so we really try to challenge teachers to question their own limitations and understanding what the neighborhoods and communities that these children live in are, and what they can be. And, again, starting with the children as assets, looking at their neighborhoods, and their communities as assets, that their families and their neighbors are as well, as opposed to focusing on the fact that we know there's crime in this community, or we know that drugs get sold in this community, to start with those really good things that are happening. And one of the things I found as I was doing my dissertation study in a neighborhood in Cincinnati, is that there was a strong sense of community that I had never experienced in my suburban upbringing, a real commitment to one

another that I think is a really incredible thing that we find in urban communities, that there's a real commitment to the greater good; and if we can really tap into that as opposed to seeing it as a problem, I think we would better serve kids in our schools.

**D** David Staley 17:59

I note that you are a Fulbright Scholar in Jamaica with the Edna Manley College of Visual Performing Arts, and you've subsequently developed the study abroad program to Kingston. So, first of all, I'm interested in your Fulbright experience in Jamaica.

**K** Karen Hutzel 18:13

Yeah so, this partnership started before I was at OSU and I really benefited from the beginning of a relationship. The Fulbright was an extension of that, we started with a MOU, the department did, with the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts, to serve art teachers in Jamaica through our online program, our online master's degree program. And with that, our goal was that we would become somewhat irrelevant to the college at some point in Jamaica, that we as Ohio State, we're here to uplift, and to help them generate their own courses and their own programs, but that we weren't going to necessarily continue to offer this degree program. And so, at one point, I realized that we were not getting to that point of letting it go ourselves, as Ohio State, and I worked with the arts college and developed a proposal to become a Fulbright, to go and spend time with their faculty on campus training and preparing them to turn their courses into online courses, and to start to generate their own program. And so, I spent my time there not doing research for my own means, but doing research through collaborating with the faculty to figure out what they can do to really start to build their own master's degree program to serve the needs of arts teachers.

**D** David Staley 19:29

Sounds like you were being an impresario again.

**K** Karen Hutzel 19:31

Exactly.

**D** David Staley 19:33

And from this has developed a study abroad course?

**K** Karen Hutzel 19:36

Yep. So, the latest piece of our, of this partnership is the development of a study abroad. What we were realizing is we were ultimately teaching students in Jamaica, art teachers and others in Jamaica, but there was a lot for our students to learn about Jamaica and through Jamaica as

well. And so, we developed a study abroad to take students to Kingston, to the Edna Manley College, to learn about the way that arts and arts education plays a significant role in the development of Jamaica as a post-colonial country. We've taken two groups of students at this point, and the students come back having had pretty life changing experiences. The first thing we do is address their tourist lens that they look at Jamaica through, so, you know, they often, and I do too, get asked the same questions about going to the beach, or about going to smoke pot, or about...

D

David Staley 19:38

Listening to reggae.

K

Karen Hutzel 19:44

Listening to reggae, and we do listen to reggae, we do go to the beach once, but we don't smoke. And I think what they find when they get there is that all of those things that we as Americans stereotype Jamaica about are actually not what's most important to that country or culture, and that Kingston, as a city, serves as a really necessary and important place for us to discover that. It's an arts-based city, it's been defined by UNESCO as a creative city and the role of the arts in generating an identity for the country, after colonial - they're only 56 years out of colonial rule, and so, that's not a very long time when you think about what that country might have looked like when it was under British rule. The educational systems are still being developed, and what we're finding is that their development of identity is happening through the arts. And we know of that through reggae, we think about Bob Marley's "Redemption Song", and we know that social reconstruction is prevalent in their music, but it's also prevalent in their visual art and in their dance. And it's not an add-on the way it is, perhaps in the U.S., I think we see social issues addressed in the arts here in the U.S. as a side category, but in Jamaica, it's inherent to what they do.

D

David Staley 21:40

So when you describe Kingston as an arts-based city, what does that mean in practice?

K

Karen Hutzel 21:45

It means that there are contemporary artists and musicians and performers who are coming out of that city who maybe are not yet well known, but are... they're known locally, and they're developing work that's challenging issues of mental slavery that you still see in the work that's produced - you know, again, we heard Bob Marley sing about it many years ago, and it's still something that they're addressing; the psychological trauma of colonialism, how do you move past that? You see it in the arts. The Edna Manley College of the Visual Performing Arts is in Kingston, it's the capital of Jamaica. It's, so-called "concrete Jamaica", it's not where the beaches are, it's not where the tourists go, it's the business capital. It's the capital of the country, and it really challenges our perceptions of what Jamaica looks like. And so, you see the arts all over, you see it, you hear it, they have festivals, it's inherent to the culture. And it's not for the tourists, it's for themselves.

D

David Staley 22:38

So, you mentioned that you're an art educator, at least that's the standpoint you come from. I'm interested in the journey to becoming Professor and Chair of Arts Administration Education Policy, how did you end up where you are today?

K

Karen Hutzel 22:49

I don't know.

D

David Staley 22:51

Was art something that...did you practice art as a kid, were you an art major in college?

K

Karen Hutzel 22:56

Yeah, so I started college in engineering - Mechanical engineering, my father a pipe fitter. So I'm a first generation, come from a working class family, my father was a pipe fitter, my mother was a secretary. And there was college education in my family, but my father recognized I was really good at math, and so I should go into engineering as opposed to going into architecture, which I wanted to do. At seventeen, eighteen, I followed my father's recommendation and went into mechanical engineering. And like many undergraduates, my sophomore year, I changed my major to... I discovered this thing called graphic design, I'd never heard of it, but I had been doing it for many years in my high school newspaper. So, I got a BFA in Graphic Design and that was the turning point for me. And then went on and discovered through... I actually joined AmeriCorps as a young person, and I spent a year in the Florida Keys working as an AmeriCorps volunteer with a Marine Studies teacher, and we were creating artificial reef habitats as a service learning project out of a high school. So I got introduced to the idea of education through service learning, I was never sort of a typical or traditional educator. And through that, I went on to get my masters and my PhD in Art Education, but I was always interested in this notion of community engagement and service learning as a form of education.

D

David Staley 22:58

No kidding. Well, I'm interested in the classes that you teach, but in particular, I know that your department has an online program, and I'm interested to know, what's it like teaching online versus teaching face to face? Is it basically the same or do you see really important differences between the two approaches?

K

Karen Hutzel 24:30

Yeah, so obviously, there are a lot of differences. If you think about my interest in engagement and community engagement, it would sound like online wasn't the place where that would happen, that they're two distinct things. And I try to, I really approach my online teaching and

courses as a form of community engagement, and I think that actually helps me teach online better and more efficiently, as well, is by building a community online. So, how do we build a community of folks? And often they're from all over or, you know, our online program is a master's degree, it's mostly full-time art teachers who are taking our courses. So you have art teachers from all over the country, and we still have some out of Jamaica and some, sometimes, who are teaching in American schools and other countries. So you have this sort of separate group of people, which I love bringing together people who, again, think they have little in common, and building that community online in order to enhance the teaching that happens. And the teaching happens and the learning happens in a very different way. I don't record lectures and I don't have in person time online, it's on their own time. So, it's a lot of discussion through writing and a lot of reading and processing. But, there's also an application. So all of their assignments, or all the courses I teach, there's some type of application that they then reflect on in the online environment and share with one another. But almost everything that I do in my class is open for everyone to see and read of each other so that there is a real sense of, we're all learning together and expanding together.

**D** David Staley 26:00  
Teaching as collaborative artmaking.


**K** Karen Hutzel 26:03  
Exactly.

**D** David Staley 26:04  
Tell me what's next for your research.

**K** Karen Hutzel 26:06  
So, I'm currently working on a book project with a colleague in Jamaica, and it's on Jamaican art education in general, but specifically around this notion of mental liberation and identity development and how that is occurring in the process of art education that's happening at the Manley College, as well as in the K-12 schools. So we're highlighting several art educators - arts educators, arts with an "s", outside of just the visual art as well - we're highlighting and telling the stories of those folks and what they're doing in their classrooms, and how that's contributing to this development of an identity, a Jamaican identity that enhances their mental liberation and really moves them forward in their goals beyond, sort of, the colonial rule.

**D** David Staley 26:48  
Define for us mental liberation.


**K** Karen Hutzel 26:51

 Karen Hutzal 26:51

I think the way Jamaicans define that is overcoming the notion of, or the sense of this mental slavery. While they're not enslaved physically, the history of enslavement carries on in our DNA in many ways. So I think when we hear about the mental liberation through the work of Bob Marley, or in, we see it in the work of the students at the Edna Manley College, they're really trying to address the notion that we're still trapped by our own confining thoughts and practices, and we need to push beyond those boundaries.

 David Staley 27:27

Karen Hutzal. Thank you.

 Karen Hutzal 27:29

Thanks.

 Eva Dale 27:30

Voices from the Arts and Sciences is produced and recorded at The Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences Technology Services Studio. Sound engineering by Paul Kotheimer, produced by Doug Dangler. I'm Eva Dale.