

▲Arts-Based Civic Dialogue

Arts-based civic dialogue is an emerging practice nationwide. Whereas **civic dialogue** engages participants in meaningful and enlightening conversations about issues of mutual concern in their communities, **arts-based civic dialogue** incorporates some form of art as a catalyst to explore such issues.

The role of art in civic engagement is as a spark for dialogue. Art can be the focal point to explore civic issues. It can bring forward the voices of those often silenced or left out of public discourse. Art can help people suspend judgment and hear each other in new ways. It can bring together people with divergent viewpoints who might not readily agree to talk or work together.

Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, is encouraging arts-based civic dialogue across the country. Their nationwide initiative encourages and enhances civic engagement and dialogue, based on the premise that democracy is animated when an informed public is engaged in the issues affecting people's daily lives.