

The Social Network of Intersection for the Arts

Intersection for the Arts is a San Francisco arts organization with programming designed to provide space for diverse voices in the arts and the community. Founded in the 1960s as a merger of several faith-based programs using art to reach disenfranchised neighborhood youth, Intersection has evolved over the decades to respond to new social issues and challenges while remaining a community based arts organization.¹ In 2011 Intersection moved from its well-established location at 446 Valencia Street to 5th and Mission. This was an ‘invited’ move, as it were, part of a private/public development collaboration at the site of the San Francisco Chronicle called 5M (for 5th and Mission). The move involved a distance of less than two miles, yet raised some concerns locally that it would “change [Intersection’s] identity in unforeseeable ways.”² An article in Fast Company provided a tangible example of this possibility when it referred to Intersection simply as “a not-for-profit arts incubator.”³

We collected data and created a social network map of Intersection’s partners in its various initiatives. The goal was to examine the geographical distribution of Intersection’s network as input in addressing whether its programming partners were so focused on the Mission District that this would create an obstacle to continuity in Intersection’s new location. We felt the concern of this was a real one, given the community-based, problem-based nature of most of Intersection’s initiatives. What we found surprised us. Intersection has built a strong network of partners in both the arts community and the social change community throughout the greater San Francisco Bay area, including Oakland and Berkeley. While it will have to be sensitive to the changed demographics of its new setting in terms of attracting participants into the site, Intersection’s social network suggests that if it chooses to continue with its arts-based social change programming it has an organizational network to support it in its new location.

¹ <http://theintersection.org/about-intersection/vision-statement/history/>, last accessed 6/15/2012. A detailed history of Intersection for the Art was published by the San Francisco Chronicle. “Life Met Art Here: Part One”, Jesse Hamlin, June 13, 2005, available at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/06/13/DDGQ4D6RM51.DTL>. “Art in a Time for Peace: Part Two”, Heidi Benson, June 14, 2005, available at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/06/14/DDGQ4D70C81.DTL>. “The Art of Relocating: Part Three”, Steven Winn, June 15, 2005, available at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/06/15/DDG6CD7U7I1.DTL>. “Staying Alive: Part Four”, Jane Ganahl, June 16, 2005, available at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/06/16/DDGU8D8DOK1.DTL>. “Embraced by the Community: Part Five”, David Wiegand, June 17, 2005, available at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/06/17/DDGOND9ALM1.DTL>.

² “Intersection for the Arts Moves to New Crossroads”, Aimee Le Duc and Reyhan Harmanci, The Bay Citizen, February 15, 2011, available at <http://www.baycitizen.org/blogs/culturefeed/intersection-arts-moves-new-crossroads/>.

³ “Brave New Co-working World: The Rent-A-Desk Movement Matures,” Christina Chaey, Fast Company, May 1, 2011, available at <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/155/brave-new-co-working-world.html>.

Intersection's previous neighborhood – the Mission District – has been described as culturally eclectic; a “wonderful mishmash”⁴; and “one of The City’s most popular and fascinating places.”⁵ *Figure 1* is a photograph of Intersection’s previous building on Valencia Street.

Figure 1
Intersection for the Arts’ Previous Location



Intersection's new location is in the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood, close to downtown. In the 1940s and 1950s SoMa consisted primarily of warehouses, light industry, and San Francisco's transient population. The 1960s and 1970s saw a growth of the gay community in SoMa. Today the area also hosts the civic center, multiple museums including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the old San Francisco Mint, and software and technology companies. *Figure 2* is a photo of Intersection's new location at the San Francisco Chronicle site.

⁴ “36 Hours in San Francisco,” Chris Colin, *The New York Times*, September 11, 2008, available at <http://travel.nytimes.com/2008/09/14/travel/14hours.html?ref=travel>.

⁵ “Iconic Mission district transforming into a true melting pot.” Chris Roberts, *The San Francisco Examiner*, 12/18/2011, available at <http://www.sfexaminer.com/local/2011/12/changing-demographics-make-iconic-mission-melting-pot>.

Figure 2
Intersection for the Arts Current Location



Source: <http://stradasf.com/investments/5m-5th-and-mission.html>

Intersection's Social Network

A network consists of a set of nodes (dots) and links (lines) that connect those nodes. A wide variety of interactions can be visualized as networks.⁶ In this instance, we asked Intersection for the Arts to provide us with a list of initiatives in which it was involved, along with a list of partner organizations in each initiative. For each network, the organizations make up the dots and they are linked to one another by virtue of working on the same initiative.

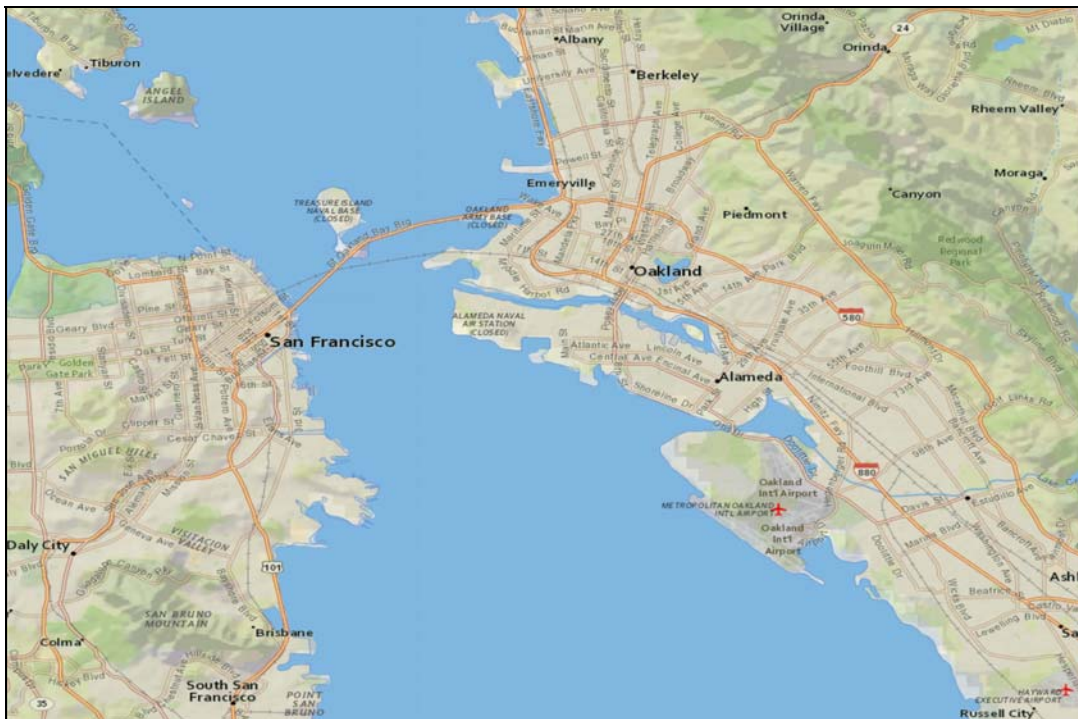
Intersection for the Arts provided us with partner information on eight initiatives in which it is involved and which it views as central to its work. These initiatives include:

- Theatre
- Leadership Development
- Visual Arts
- Education
- Youth
- Literary
- Open Process
- Community Engagement.

⁶ For an in depth discussion of social networks and how they can be used to increase our understanding of cultural organizations, see the following papers, posted on our web site at www.c-3-d.org. "The potential of social network analysis for research on the cultural sector", 2010, Kay Oehler and Stephen C. Sheppard. "Network analysis and the social impact of cultural arts organizations." 2007. Kay Oehler et al.

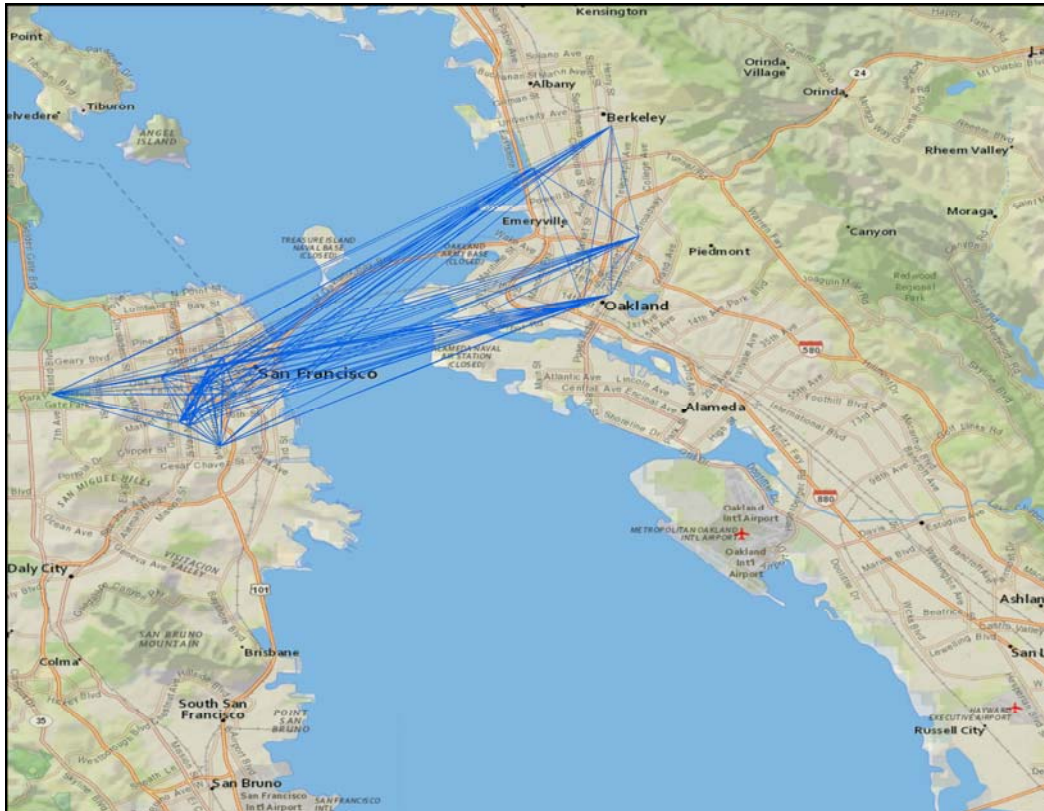
There are ninety-five organizations that partner with Intersection in their eight initiatives. They are a wide variety of organizations including arts, activist, youth, and education organizations. We will discuss each initiative in turn and provide geographic maps of the networks. The social networks for Intersection are dense enough that they cover the maps on which they are placed. Let us start with a simple map of the San Francisco Bay area. *Figure 3* presents such a map. We see the city of San Francisco to the west, and Berkeley and Oakland across the Bay to the east.

Figure 3
The San Francisco Bay Area



Theatre Network. Intersection’s theatre initiative supports innovative performances dealing with timely issues. The theatre initiative supports new forms of theatre, re-envisioning of existing works, and the development of new voices for theatre. There are 19 partners in this initiative with Intersection. *Figure 4* presents the network map for the theatre initiative (in blue).

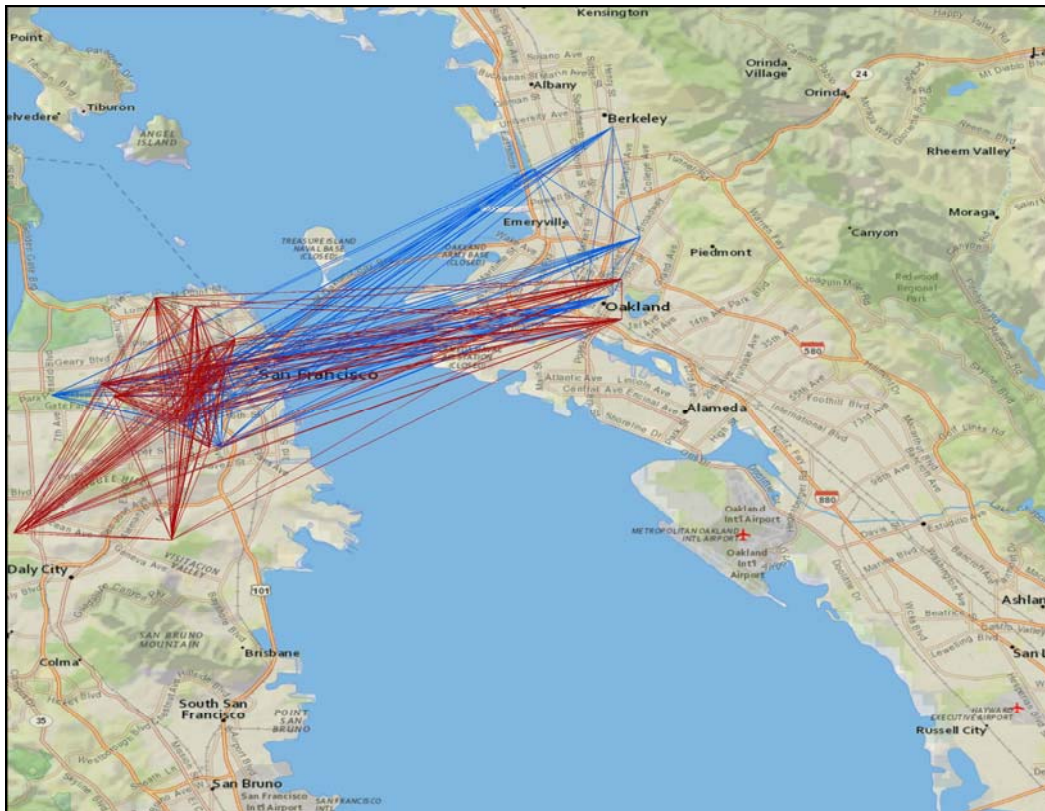
Figure 4
Theatre Network



One striking aspect of Intersection’s theatre network, as shown in *Figure 4*, is that it has a much larger geographical reach than we expected. In addition to the 14 partner organizations in San Francisco, there are 2 partners across the San Francisco Bay in Berkeley and 3 in Oakland. The other notable thing about Intersection’s theatre network is the range of organization types. At least four of the partners are theater organizations; at least five partners focus on social issues such as human rights, the prison population, services for women, and social justice. Intersection’s theatre initiative is a performance-based theater program. It is also part of Intersection’s larger mission of arts-based community change and activism.

Leadership Development Network. Intersection’s leadership development initiative involves a four-month internship in all aspects of producing and administering activities across artistic boundaries. There are 21 partner organizations in the leadership development network with Intersection. *Figure 5* maps the leadership development network (in red) and presents it along with the theatre network (in blue).

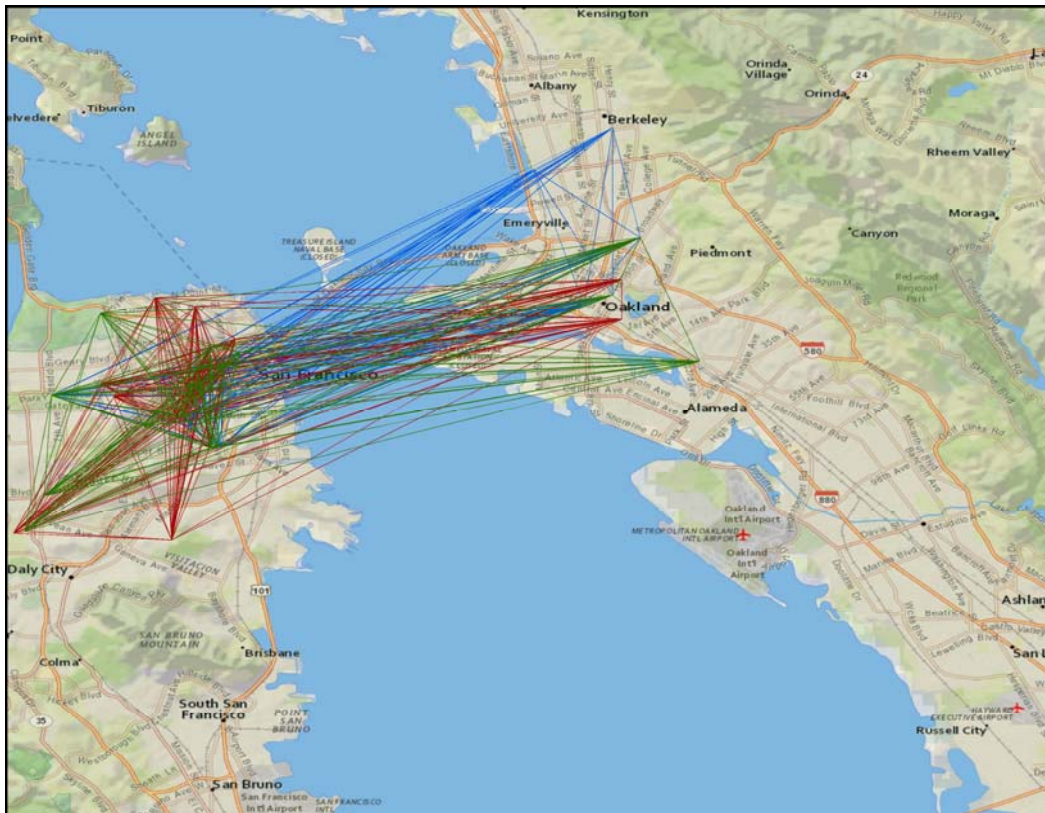
Figure 5
Leadership Development Network



We see in *Figure 5* that the leadership development network has a wide geographic spread in San Francisco and also reaches across the Bay to organizations in Oakland. Of the 22 partner organizations, 20 are located in San Francisco and 2 are located in Oakland. Partners include other arts organizations (such as the Oakland Museum of California, the San Francisco Art Institute, and San Francisco State University Art Gallery) that would benefit from experienced arts administrators as well as youth oriented organizations such as Larking Street Youth Services, Boys and Girls Club, and Oasis for Girls.

Visual Arts Network. Intersection’s visual arts network centers on the Gallery at Intersection. The Gallery presents new exhibits of artists who interpret and transform society through their art. There are 17 partners in Intersection’s visual arts initiative. *Figure 6* adds the visual arts network (in green) to the map of Intersection’s networks.

Figure 6
Visual Arts Network

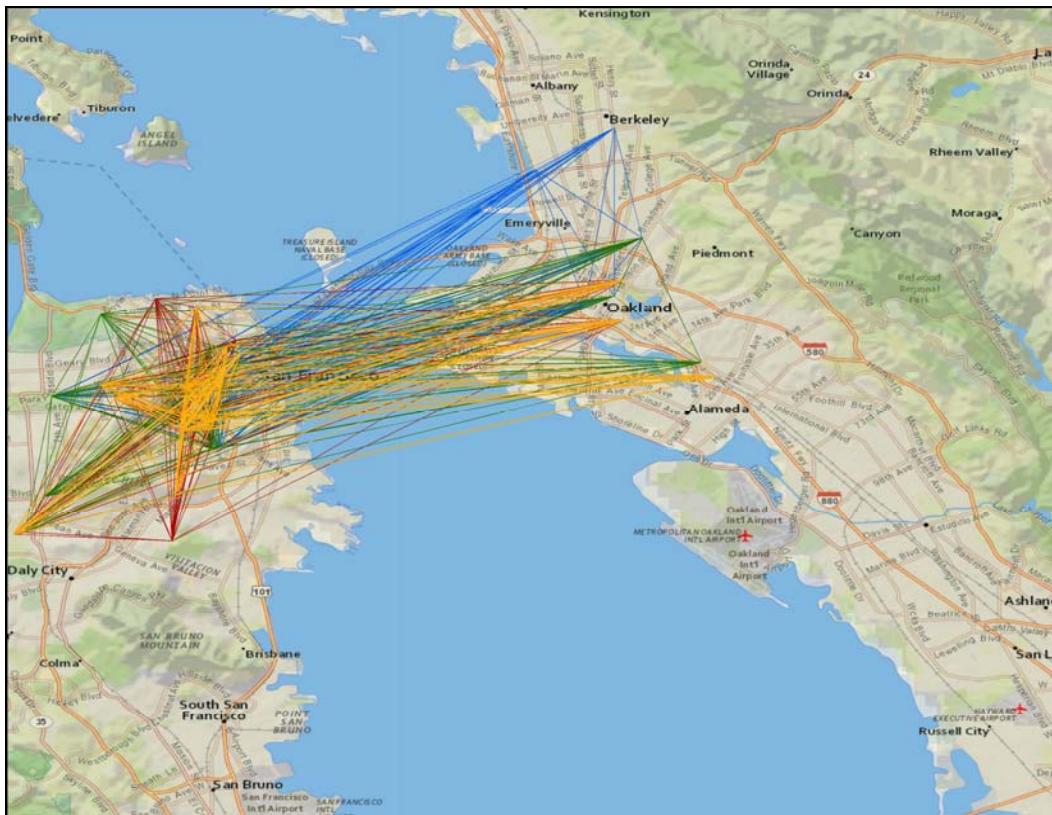


We see in *Figure 6* that Intersection’s visual arts network crosses the Bay to Oakland, as did the other networks discussed. Of the 17 partner organizations, 3 are located in Oakland, and the remainder in San Francisco. The list of partner organizations includes arts organizations such as East Side Arts Alliance and San Francisco Art and Film, as well as social change organizations including legal services, youth services, and human rights.

Education Network. Intersection’s education initiative highlights the process of creating new art. It is multidimensional in that it includes workshops, artist talks, and tours. It is multidisciplinary in that it engages a range of arts programming. It is activist because it seeks to cultivate an artistic environment that generates “more inclusive world views, and broader aesthetic, social, political, and cultural perspectives.”⁷

Intersection’s education network has 26 partners. Three partners are located in Oakland and the remainder in San Francisco. Partners include arts organizations (such as the San Francisco Art Institute and the Oakland Museum of California), educational institutions (such as the University of San Francisco and the Urban School of San Francisco), and social activist organizations (such as the collectively owned Modern Times Bookstore and the Freedom Archives). *Figure 7* displays Intersection’s education network (in orange).

Figure 7
Education Network

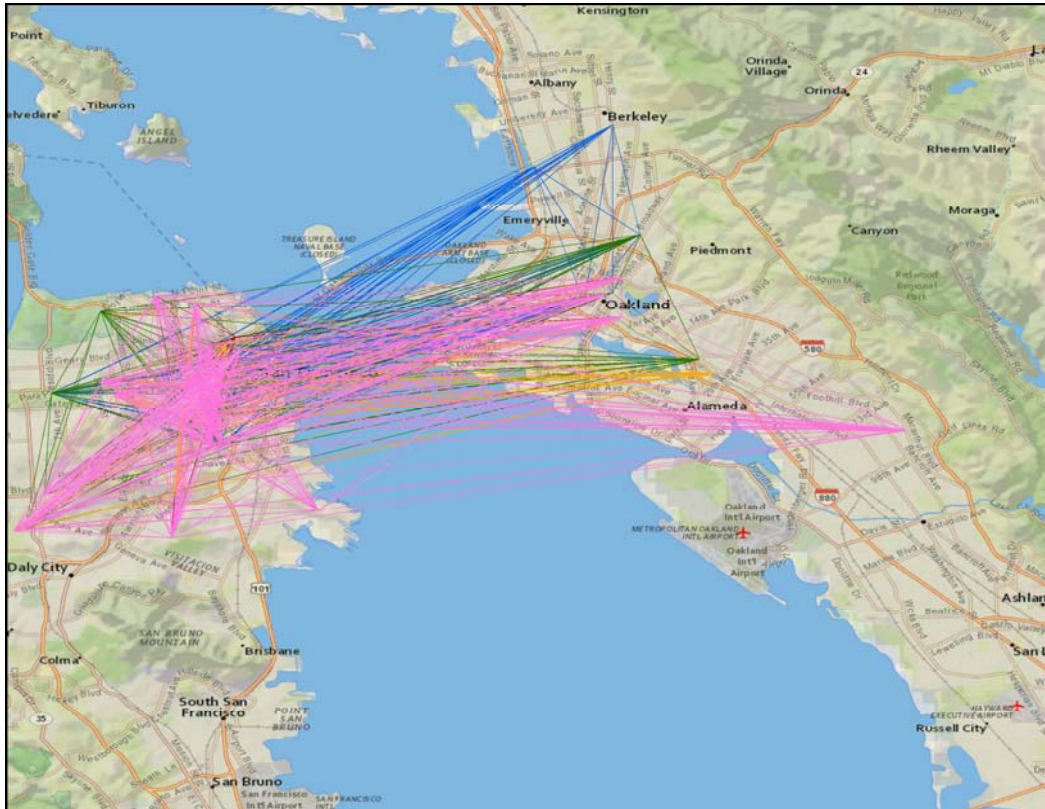


Intersection’s education network includes three partners in Oakland, including an arts organization (Oakland Museum of California), an activist organization (Mujeres Unidas y Activas), and an activist arts organization (Youth Movement Records). The remaining partners are in San Francisco.

⁷ <http://theintersection.org/programs/community-engagement/>, accessed 6/15/2012.

Youth Network. Central to Intersection’s approach to its mission of positive social change through active exposure to art is to involve youth in its programming efforts. Intersection’s youth program is designed to ensure the involvement of youth in all of its other initiatives. There are 35 partners in Intersection’s youth network. Thirty-one partners are located in San Francisco and 4 are in Oakland. *Figure 8* presents Intersection’s youth network (in pink).

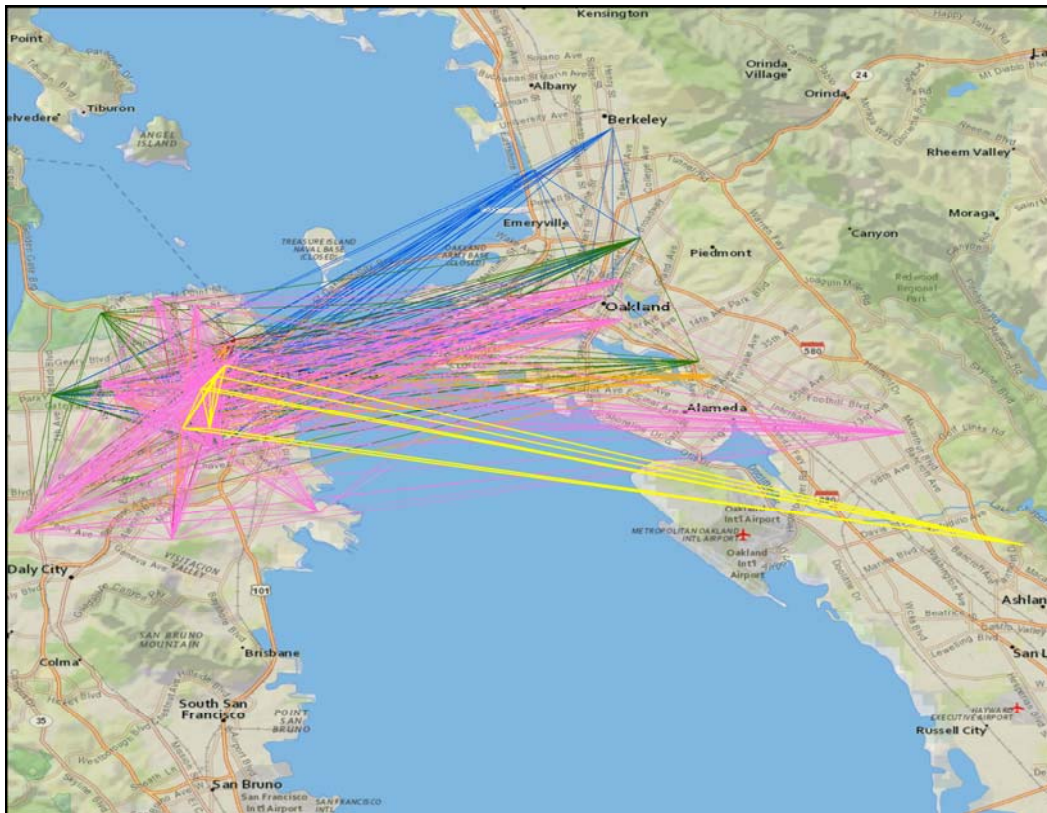
Figure 8
Youth Network



The Youth Network consists predominantly of organizations that give voice to young people in the San Francisco Bay area (Youth Outlook, Youth Radio, Youth Speaks, and Youth Uprising, as examples), provide services to at-risk or underserved youth (Boys and Girls Club, Girls 2000, and Larking Street Youth Services, for instance), or are organizations with access to many young people (Mission High School, San Francisco Art Institute, and the University of San Francisco).

Literary Network. Intersection’s literary series is the “oldest independent reading series in California.”⁸ Its goal is to sustain the tradition of live literary experiences and expand the boundaries of literature. Intersection’s literary network includes 7 partners, 1 in San Leandro and 6 in San Francisco. The literary network is displayed in *Figure 9* (in yellow).

Figure 9
Literary Network

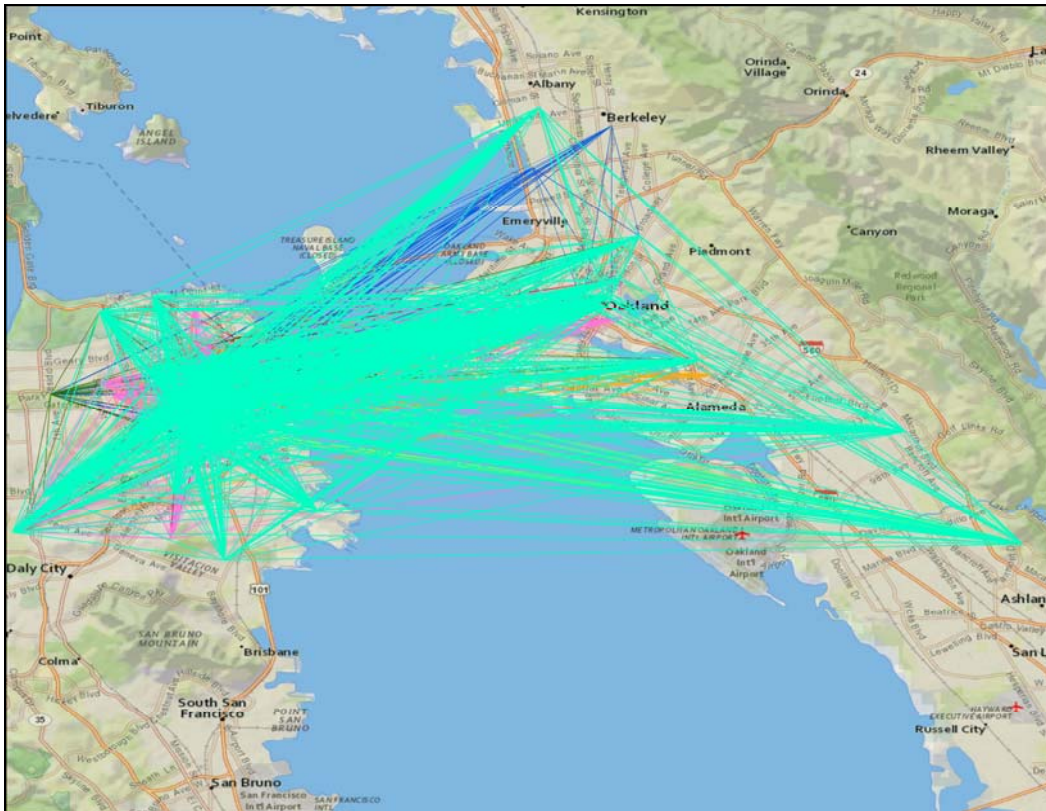


Intersection’s literary network is the smallest one in terms of partners. There are only 7 partners, 5 of which have a literary orientation: 826 Valencia, a writing center for students and their teachers; the Alameda County Library Write to Read program; McSweeney’s bookstore; Streetside Stories, which focuses on literacy through storytelling; and Youth Outlook, a literary journal reporting on current issues and events through the voices of young people. More general partners include the Kearny Street Workshop, an Asian American multidisciplinary arts organization; and West Bay, offering services to San Francisco’s Filipino community.

⁸ <http://theintersection.org/programs/literary-series/>

Open Process Network. Intersection’s open process series is designed to bring the stories and experiences of people in the community into the play writing process, encouraging new perspectives, while simultaneously sharing new work and the creative process with the community. The open process network has 61 partner organizations, 10 of which are in Oakland, 1 is in Berkeley, 1 is in San Leandro, and the remainder in San Francisco. Intersection’s open process network is provided in *Figure 10*.

Figure 10
Open Process Network



The Open Process network is one of Intersection’s two densest networks because it is so closely tied to its core mission of bringing artists and community together to envision a better society (and better art). As a result, this network includes a wide range of partner organizations. It includes organizations that focus on the needs of African immigrants; the homeless or marginally housed; at-risk young people; prisoners; and battered women. There also organizations like Freedom Archives that documents and preserves the history of social justice movements since the 1960s. There are also arts organizations and educational institutions. The breadth of partners allows for many different mixes of voices and perspectives as Intersection plans arts programming.

We have shown the geographic network maps of the eight initiatives identified by Intersection. *Table 1* brings together an overview of the numbers of organizations involved in each network, the distribution of organizations among San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley, and the range of organization types included in the network. To examine Intersection’s networks more closely, and to see the names of each organization included in each network, visit our two interactive network maps at <http://web.williams.edu/Economics/ArtsEcon/Intersection.html>.⁹

Table 1
Distribution of Partners in Intersection’s Eight Networks

Network	Partners	SF	Oakland	Berkeley	San Leandro	Arts	Activist	Youth	Edu- cation
Theatre	19	14	3	2	0	x	x	x	
Leadership Development	22	20	2	0	0	x	x	x	x
Visual Arts	17	14	3	0	0	x	x	x	x
Education	26	23	3	0	0	x	x	x	x
Youth	35	31	4	0	0	x	x	x	x
Literary	7	6	0	0	1	x		x	x
Open Process	61	49	10	1	1	x	x	x	x
Community Engagement	65	53	9	2	1	x	x	x	x
Total Net	95	79	12	3	1	x	x	x	x

Conclusion

We began this paper with the question of whether Intersection for the Arts’ recent move from the Mission District to the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood involved a large enough cultural and demographic change to engender concern that Intersection would need to rebuild its programming and would struggle to maintain the identity it has spent five decades developing. When we began, we assumed that Intersection’s social network would be very local, and would have been built to meet the needs of a very local community. What we found from an examination of Intersection’s network of partners is that this is not the case.

We were surprised to see that each of Intersection’s eight networks included partners across the San Francisco Bay in Berkeley, Oakland, or San Leandro. Between San Francisco and these three cities there exists both a geographical barrier (the Bay) and differences in governmental jurisdictions (counties). It requires openness and conscious decision-making for an organization in a large urban area such as San Francisco to cross these ‘natural’ barriers in its network building.

⁹ The online map tool is limited to displaying a maximum of four networks. Intersection’s network is displayed in two interactive maps.

Intersection has developed a variety of initiatives focusing on different art forms and strengthening different aspects of its core mission. Each initiative seems designed to meet the core goal of bringing artists and community together in ways that challenge and stretch both, allowing the artist to be citizen and the citizen to be artist. In doing so, art and civil society each benefit and can envision alternative models. Each of 8 initiatives we examined includes a variety of arts, activist, youth, and education organizations as partners. Only the theatre initiative does not include a formal educational partner, and only the literary initiative does not include an explicitly activist partner. All of the results from an examination of Intersection's partnership network suggest that Intersection has built a broad, resilient network based on its core mission that is well suited for continuing its mission in its new location.