1. Project Data
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Mesa Arts Center
Location: Mesa, Arizona

Owner: Mesa Arts Center, City of Mesa, AZ

Project Use(s): Cultural arts center offering comprehensive professional performing arts, visual arts, and arts education

Project Size: 242,755 feet of program space on 7 acres.

Total Development Cost: $97.9 million

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate)

Date Initiated: 1998

Percent Completed by December 1, 2006: 100%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate): Center opened in September 2005

Application submitted by:

Name: Martha Schwartz
Title: President
Organization: Martha Schwartz Partners
Address: 147 Sherman Street # 200
City/State/Zip: Cambridge, MA 02140
Telephone: (617) 661-8141
Fax: (617) 661-8707
E-mail: martha@marthaschwartz.com

Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 617-669-0111 (cell)

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization: Mesa Arts Center
Key Participant: Gerry Fathauer
Telephone/e-mail: 480-644-6501

Architect/Designer: Boora Architects, Inc.
Key Participant: Michael Tingley
Telephone/e-mail: 503-226-1575

Developer: City of Mesa
Key Participant: Shelly Allen
Telephone/e-mail: 480-644-2773

Professional Consultant: Martha Schwartz, Inc. (Landscape Architects) Martha Schwartz
Telephone/e-mail: 617-661-8141

Community Group: Architectural Selection and Design Committee
Key Participant: Joanie Flatt
Telephone/e-mail: 480-961-9159

Other

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudolph Bruder Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

Direct Mailing
Magazine Advertisement
Previous RBA entrant
Professional
Online Notice
Previous Selection Committee member
Organization
Bruder/Loeb Forum
Other (please specify)

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Signature: [Signature]

Please provide your full name and signature as it appears on the forms submitted.
2. Abstract
ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Mesa Arts Center

Address: One East Main Street
City/State/ZIP: Mesa, Arizona 85211

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The Mesa Arts Center for the Performing and Visual Arts creates a vibrant urban nucleus for the City of Mesa, Arizona. Located directly across from City Hall, at the corner of Center and Main, the open spaces of the Center provide lively civic space where there was none. The design team worked collaboratively from the outset to create a design that captures the essence of Arizona while revitalizing the image and activities of the city.

The central idea of the design took its inspiration from the extreme qualities of the desert landscape, the hot dry climate, the desire for shade, and the intense character of the sunlight. An ever-shifting, arcing promenade called the “Shadow Walk” is set between the theaters, art school, and gallery. Numerous overlapping spaces, all of differing character, provide opportunities for gathering, quiet relaxation, and enjoyment. Long curving lines of trees, each with their unique shadow patterns, shift back and forth as one proceeds along the Shadow Walk, creating a cadenced, yet dynamic, interplay of light and shadow. Woven stainless steel canopies and colored glass screens augment the experience by casting colored shadows on the ground.

Goals for the Mesa Arts Center were for the Center to be:

- Mesa’s new gathering place
- A downtown landmark and destination
- The heart and soul of the Mesa Town Center
- The anchor of the arts and cultural district
- An economic development engine

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

There is much talk in the urban planning community of the value of sustainability as we build and rebuild our cities. However, the tendency, at least in the United States, is to talk about sustainability solely as it relates to environmentalism. What these discussions overlook is the fact that sustainability is a four-pronged issue. When assessing the sustainability of a place, the most successful solutions are those that address its physical, environmental, economic, and social components. Only when we address all of these issues can we truly create a sense of place and pride in our urban spaces. That is how we build sustainable cities and societies.

The Mesa Arts Center should be considered for the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence because it stands as a sparkling example of the power of collaboration between a community, a design team, and forward-thinking civic leaders. It shows that we can successfully reinvigorate our urban areas by using a holistic approach to development, giving value to the societal, environmental, physical, and economic components of a project. More specifically, the Mesa Arts Center is worthy of the award because of the following:

- Design/Environmental Inspiration — The architecture by BOORA Architects and landscape design by Martha Schwartz, Inc. drew inspiration from the Arizona landscape and climate, deriving colors from the desert, evoking interior and exterior forms from the surrounding geology, and responding to the intense desert sun.
- Economic Context — As the new Mesa Arts Center is located in the center of downtown Mesa, Arizona, it serves as an economic stimulus. The organization of the site places buildings and features that are active and animated during the weekday periods along the street edge where they can contribute to daily urban vitality. Theaters with peak hours of use on the weekends and evenings, are located in the middle of the block where the lobbies will provide an illuminated, nighttime beacon.
- Social Component — The Mesa Arts Center has touched hundreds of thousands of individuals by providing opportunities for people to participate in the arts through Performing Live performances, art exhibits, and Art Studios classes.
3.
Project Description
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

Underlying values of the Mesa Arts Center include the following:

- A unified arts environment forges dialogue between artists and audiences.
- The Mesa Arts Center establishes a distinct identity amidst the homogeneity of suburban Phoenix, Arizona, allows the city to compete strategically in attracting business activity to the downtown area and reasserts civic culture prominently in the face of a pronounced automobile and consumer culture.
- Environmental sensitivity and program/design quality are essential for creating a memorable civic space.
- Mesa Arts Center's key attributes are to be "relevant, inspiring, confident, and accessible. We strongly believe an arts center should be a place for all to enjoy and discover the similarities and differences of mankind."

With regard to trade-offs during the project, a professional project management company (Kitchell CM) was hired to guide budgetary issues and value engineering from the very inception of the design process. Their professional guidance kept budgetary issues at the forefront of the project throughout program design, site/building design, and construction. While choices had to be made concerning materials and program uses, the process was not waylaid by insurmountable differences or compromises.

2. How has the project impacted the local community? Please include relevant information on urban context.

- Mesa Arts Center was honored to host nearly 600 performances, with some of the world's greatest performing and visual artists appearing on our stages and in the galleries.
- Over 265,000 guests were welcomed to events in the Mesa Arts Center facilities, with nearly one quarter of our own performances "sold out" - a remarkable feat for a first year of operation.
- Mesa Contemporary Arts held celebrated exhibitions by world-renowned artists and was greeted with critical acclaim by local, regional and national press. The quality of the exhibitions and the beauty of this facility have created a unique new setting for viewing contemporary art in the Valley.
- The Mesa Arts Center has contributed to education through onsite art studio classes, through the Stageworks Performing Arts Program, and through a new partnership with Mesa Community College.
- The Center has provided a focus for Mesa's downtown area. Public civic spaces are accessible to the community at large. Festival events spill throughout the Mesa Arts Center site and provide activities and opportunities for interactions with artists and performers with the community.
- The Mesa Arts Center provides setting for performance events new to the area. Visitors come for events and help to spur the City's economy. The new center has created a signature space that contributes to the revitalization of the urban center.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

From the beginning of the design process, the Mesa Arts Center project was a series of continual collaborations between the client, the community, and the design team. The Mesa Arts Center provided impressive direction throughout the project. An oversight group called the Mesa Arts Center Architect Selection and Design Committee which included community representatives and stakeholders was formed. The Mesa Arts Center, with the Mesa Arts Center Architect Selection and Design Committee, did a national search for the appropriate design team. BOORA Architects, Inc. and DWL serving as the local, lead executive architect for the design team were hired.

Once the design process started, BOORA Architects, Inc. undertook programming and site massing studies. Input from Martha Schwartz, Inc. (landscape architect) was included in these early stages. Program and design issues were also taken to the appropriate user groups and stakeholders for their input. The design process included the City Planner and Engineer, professional consultants from the arts, educators, and Kitchell CM, a professional project management consultant. By including a professional management consultant from the beginning, budget issues were reviewed from the programming stage throughout the design process. Presentations were made to the City Council and stakeholder groups. The City Council reviewed the plans and voted to approve the program and design for the new center. The professional management of the process by the Mesa Arts Center serves as a model for other communities that would like to undertake such an important development.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The majority of the $94.5 million budget was provide by a voter approved Quality of Life sales tax. These funds were supplemented by $4.8 million from the mesa Arts Alliance, a private non-profit group to individuals, businesses and organizations. Prior to the Center’s opening, another non-profit private partner, the Mesa Arts Center Foundation, pledged to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in operating funds and to establish an endowment bolstering the Center’s future financial stability.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The project is unique because of the close collaboration between the community, the Mesa Arts Center, and the design team. The team began its collaboration from the very inception of the process. Whereas often the landscape is left as an afterthought in a site's development, Martha Schwartz, Inc., (landscape architecture) was involved from the beginning with Boora Architects' initial building diagrams and site massing in the design process. This collaboration is apparent in the strength of the interplay between the outdoor and indoor spaces and how they both provide space for the Art Center's program directives of performance, exhibition of visual arts, and education. The collaboration also addressed the urban design issues of how to regenerate an area and establish a sense of "place" as a destination for tourists and residents alike. Adjacencies were recognized, both as existing and where they were absent and needed to be created. An identity for the Center was drawn from the surrounding Arizona landscape. The development is true to its context. The dry climate instructs the issues of sustainability on the site and the cherished nature of water and shade which are both incorporated into the site design. This collaboration is truly adaptable to other urban settings as the methods of analysis and development of design alternatives are standard to the design industry, but they need to be applied with rigor and focus on the site's unique context and program in order to solve each site's unique issues of "sustainability."
4. Perspective Sheets
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name: Joanie L. Flatt
Title: Immediate Past President
Organization: Mesa Arts Alliance
Phone: (602) 339-7012
Address: 623 W. Southern, Suite 2
City/State/ZIP: Mesa, AZ 85210
Fax: (480) 836-9597
E-mail: flatt@azol.com

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Signature: 

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

The Mesa Arts Alliance was the non-profit organization that successfully got funding for the Mesa Arts Center on a citywide ballot and then campaigned successfully for the sales tax proposal that provided the funding for the construction and operations of the Center. The Alliance raised $5 million in donor contributions to make up the shortfall in the public funding necessary to complete the Center. We also had three of our Board members on the Architectural Selection and Design Committee. I was president of the Alliance when we conceived of the project and campaigned for the tax proposal. I was on the Architectural Selection and Design Committee. And I served as the inaugural president of the subsequent non-profit group - the Mesa Arts Center Foundation - that guided the opening of the Center and serves as its non-profit partner today. I was also instrumental in the capital campaign and was one of the major donors to the effort.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

I'm going to answer your questions from my perspective as chair of the non-profit support groups and a member of the Design Committee, issues? We had more dreams and aspirations than we had money. We had only one shot at making a community's dreams come true. We had an aging, tired, bored, dead downtown that we wanted to rejuvenate. We had a plethora of local arts groups - really good ones - that desperately needed a venue in which to thrive and grow. We determined to create a downtown urban space that would do something no one else had yet done - combine arts education, visual arts, performing arts and an urban park space in an environment so collaborative, so beautiful and so impressive that people visiting our Mesa Arts Center would look at it and say, "WOW! What city are we in? Surely, this couldn't be dull and boring Mesa, Arizona!"

And all of this had to be done by INVOLVING all the stakeholders. That meant we had to select an architectural design team that could fulfill our vision and still have the patience, and the talents, to involve hundreds of people in hundreds of hours of meetings. The Mesa Arts Center HAD to be a process, with gifted professionals who could listen and translate our community's dreams and aspirations into a wonderful center for our city - a home for our artists - a destination - without having the committee group-speak evolve into a hideous camel. We wanted a quality project but we also respected that multiple cultures and groups in our community had to have a say in how we were spending their money to fulfill their dreams.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

The real joy of working with our design team was that they shared our passion and our vision. They also shared our commitment to a participatory process. Trade-offs and compromises? Suffice it to say that if I never have to live through another painful value engineering meeting I will be forever blessed. Mesa is a city that was going to hold us to the budget that the sales tax election funding would provide for the project. It wasn't nearly enough to do all that we wanted, even when the Mesa Arts Alliance stepped up and raised nearly $5 million (an unprecedented amount, by the way, for our city - not even the United Way had ever raised that amount in private donations) to meet the funding shortfall.

We had to give up so many elements that we wanted to include. The store is smaller than optimum and we had to locate it in a less than perfect location. We kept our campus-wide water feature (the arroyo) but still lack the funding to create our signature water feature. That still breaks my heart. We wanted a restaurant and catering kitchen onsite but had to value engineer those out. Shade canopies that would have allowed us to utilize more public spaces had to be cut. We're still waiting to design and install an oasis in the largest of our four theaters. All painful decisions.

But we stuck to our vision. We kept those things that were most important to the overall success of the Center without sacrificing quality. As soon as we recognized there would be ongoing challenges and value engineering decisions to be made, the volunteer leadership of the Architectural and Design Committee went to our mayor, who had appointed us, and lobbied to have the committee stay together as the Design Committee to oversee the project through its conclusion. He concurred. Those of us on the committee as volunteers worked with the professionals and city employees on the committee for nearly 8 years. We were part of every decision - what to keep, what to cut, what chair to buy, what amenities we could include, what public art installations would be part of the project. It was exhausting but it was fulfilling. And the hallmark of the entire process was the total collaboration between the public and private sectors and the design professionals with whom we worked. We didn't get everything we wanted but we fulfilled our community's vision.
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE CONT'D

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

Yes and yes. Before the Mesa Arts Center was built, the only major "place" signature destination point of pride in Mesa was the Mormon Temple. For those of us who are not Mormon, which is the vast majority of the population, we had no place to take out-of-town friends and family and say, "Hey, is this just about the most beautiful, coolest, magnificent place you've ever seen?" Now we do.

At our first meeting of the committee, we told our design team that the Mesa Arts Center had to have a "WOW factor." We wanted people coming to the Center for the first time to stop, catch their breath, and say, "Oh, WOW." And to a person, they have. I still occasionally "hang out" at the Center before and after performances just to hear what visitors say. What I hear pays me back for every one of the thousands of hours I've worked on this project as a volunteer.

Better place to work? You betcha. Before the Mesa Arts Center was built, there was not a single oasis for downtown workers to go. As soon as the Arts Center was built, downtown workers started using our Shadow Walk, our gardens and our ameno as a place to walk, eat lunch, attend free lunchtime concerts and just renew their spirits. It's also a HUGE marketing tool for attracting companies with knowledge workers who require arts education classes for their children, performing arts opportunities and visual arts offerings. And we're finally beginning to see the economic rejuvenation of our downtown around the Center that we had hoped it would create.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

I would not change a single thing about the process. I think our city and the professionals we hired to design the project made a commitment to community involvement and stuck with it every step of the way. I think the process was exemplary, as evidenced by the fact that every one of us who volunteered for a few-month assignment stuck with the process for nearly eight years. Mesa's process is an example that other cities would do well to replicate.

Would I change anything about the project? Of course. I would have allocated several million more dollars to make it the crème de la crème that we all wanted. But you can't have everything, I guess. And there will be future opportunities to fund raise for those elements that were eliminated during that pesky value-engineering process.
PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gerry Fathauer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Mesa Arts Center, City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>P. O. Box 1460 (physical 1 East Main Street)</td>
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<tr>
<td>City/State/ZIP</td>
<td>Mesa, AZ 85211-1466 (physical 85201)</td>
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<td>Telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gerry.fathauer@mesaartscenter.com">gerry.fathauer@mesaartscenter.com</a></td>
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Signature

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefit, impact statements).

Mesa Arts Center is a department of the City of Mesa, and was the owner/client for the project. We oversaw the program review, architect selection, design and approval processes as well as function and design-related construction decisions. Requirements for the project originated with a 1997 feasibility study: four theaters, including a 100-seat black box, 250-seat playhouse theater, 550-seat repertory theater and 1600-seat lyric theater; galleries totaling 5500 sq. ft., feature hall and exhibit preparation spaces; 14 visual and performing arts classrooms; a community meeting room and public plaza. The performing and visual arts programming was to consist of public and private uses, housing the Mesa Arts Center's 700-class community arts education program, Stagedworks youth theatre productions, and Mesa Contemporary Arts gallery exhibits; and theaters for Mesa's non-profit performing arts groups. A City Council-appointed oversight committee, the Mesa Arts Center Architect Selection and Design Committee, held 40 public meetings during the planning and design processes, inviting over 25 stakeholder organizations for input. Mesa City Council, in public meetings, held seven distinct votes between 1999 and 2002, the year ground was broken, to approve the budget, design and construction of the Center. Zoning for the seven-acre site in the heart of Mesa's downtown was in place; however, many land parcels had to be purchased. Design goals for the project included: "The Center should be an inviting oasis during the day and a transparent and inviting beacon at night. The design should heighten the anticipation and excitement for performing and visual arts audiences and stimulate the creativity of arts students. The image of the Center should be classic, elegant, and forward-thinking without feeling elitist. The design should draw upon Mesa's multi-cultural past as well as the unique requirements of desert architecture. The design should include a collaborative process between architects and artists to ensure effective integration of public art."

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

Mesa Arts Center has been intended to provide year-round programming in the visual and performing arts to provide quality of life amenities, to stimulate economic development, and to create in Mesa as a downtown destination. The four theaters hosted, in fact, over 600 performances the first season with patrons from every State in the Union. National publicity about Mesa Arts Center has boosted Mesa's image and renown. As the Executive Director of Mesa Arts Center, I participated in all decisions impacting the design and building of the Center, including value engineering decisions, both prior to bid and following the bid process. I also had a vote on the "Design Committee" which considered many of the value engineering options and voted on final priorities. Among the trade-offs: dropping variable acoustics in the 550-seat repertory theater, revising tech requirements in the lyric theater to preclude Broadway shows (we are able to do them none-the-less); using alternative finish materials in interior non-public spaces; building art classrooms with industrial-look finishes, such as omitting ceiling tiles, yet not impacting the function of those spaces. Mesa Arts Center partnered with a 501(c)(3) organization, Mesa Arts and Entertainment Alliance, to raise $2.7M in capital dollars to supplement the $50.8M in public commitment. That private goal was increased to $3.7M to retain some potential victims of value engineering and our partnership ultimately raised $4.9M, a record for our arts community. An example of a decision our agency made in concert with the "Design Committee" and City departments was to retain retail buildings on the northeast Main Street edge of our property for future complementary retail development and/or potential future relocation of the box office and Mesa Arts Center Store to accommodate future expansion. That decision saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. Currently the City leases portions of those buildings to complementary non-profit art organizations Segura Art and Southwest Shakespeare Company.
PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

Mesa Arts Center is the largest single visual and performing arts center in the state of Arizona, and as such we are attracting new donations of private money from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Mesa has become a destination for peers who want to tour the Center and patrons who want to have a variety of entertainment choices on any given weekend. We have become a source of pride for a community previously seen as a "staid" bedroom community of 450,000. The Center has put Mesa on the international map with Urban Land Institute's 2006 "Award of Excellence: The America's," and our Center on the cover of the August issue of Urban Land Institute Magazine with the heading "Sharing Space - In Pursuit of Great Places." The City's Investment in Mesa Arts Center has spurred interest in the downtown area: two new restaurants, renovation of One MacDonald Center and the Barge Building, and interest in three downtown sites: 1st Avenue & MacDonald, Main & Hibbert, and Site 17, for mixed use development. Eighteen of 51 downtown properties within two blocks sold during the three-year construction period compared to fewer than 18 in the previous 18 years. Mesa Arts Center has presented artists never before seen or heard in Mesa, i.e., Michael Crawford, Olivia Newton John, Liza Minnelli, and Buddy Guy. National artists have exhibited work at Mesa Contemporary Arts, i.e., Deborah Butterfield, Luis Jimenez, and Michael Eastman. Mesa Arts Center is at the center of new partnerships with Mesa Community College, for the delivery of for-credit arts classes in downtown Mesa; and is working on future collaborations with the rapidly-growing Arizona State University Polytechnic campus in southeast Mesa, attracting more creative-class workers and companies to Mesa, Arizona.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

Mesa Arts Center partners with two 501(c)(3) organizations to raise money on behalf of the arts. Mesa Arts and Entertainment Alliance raised close to $5M in a joint capital campaign, enabling us to complete all four theaters, finish the architectural sails, purchase two grand pianos and five uprights, build kilns for the ceramics studio, and fully equip a state-of-the-art glass studio. Mesa Arts Center Foundation partners with Mesa Arts Center to raise $5M annually in operating support for youth community arts programming and contemporary art exhibits. This summer, we negotiated a partnership with Mesa Community College whereby adult visual and performing arts students may receive college credit for classes at the Center, offered in fall, spring and summer. The College also receives some free and reduced-rental of the theaters for the performing ensembles and faculty.

The means in which the City of Mesa "bundled" various amenities on a "Quality of Life" half-cent sales tax voter initiative in 1998 to pay for the building and operations of Mesa Arts Center has been of interest to many who have toured and called about our project. That bundling included parks, libraries, transportation, police and fire, as well as arts and culture projects. Mesa Arts Center was the single largest capital project built with the tax proceeds. The Mesa Arts Center Foundation (then called Friends of Mesa Arts Center) played a significant role in the success of that election, helping to run a grassroots bi-lingual campaign in support of a performing/visual arts center.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects have been the response to the beautiful design of Mesa Arts Center, what some have characterized as a "city in itself" and the community's appreciation of our programming. People visiting the project for the first time are easy to spot, as they stand in the Shadow Walk and do a slow "360" to take in all the surprise architectural and design elements. Visitors travel from around the state and beyond to tour the Center, attend a show or see the art galleries. Area schools are benefiting from school-day matinees of Shakespeare and traditional children's plays. Youth learn the art of technical theater, dance and improv, with many going on to pursue degrees in these fields. A new, late-night event series at Mesa Contemporary is introducing people ages 18 - 35 to contemporary art in a "cool urban setting. Local Mesa arts groups have professional theaters in which to produce plays, The Nutcracker and concerts. And the image of Mesa has changed substantially from one of a bland downtown to the lush, urban, forward-looking setting that is Mesa Arts Center.

The unsuccessful aspects have been cuts in the City's General Fund that resulted in no community aid grants for local Mesa arts groups utilizing the theaters. The cuts also impacted Mesa Arts Center's youth and arts education programming, and would have decimated those programs were it not for the partnerships with Mesa Arts Center Foundation and Mesa Community College. They enabled those portions of Mesa Arts Center programming not only to remain intact, but to enjoy a broader base of community support through private donations.
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Evelyn Bergaila  Title: Director
Organization Martha Schwartz, Inc. (landscape architecture)  Telephone (617) 661-8141
Address: 147 Sherman Street #200  City/State/ZIP: Cambridge, MA 02140
Fax (617) 661-8707  E-mail: ev@marthaschwartz.com

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Signature

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

A few years ago, our firm, Martha Schwartz, Inc., welcomed the challenge of designing the landscape for the Mesa Arts Center in Mesa, Arizona. Mesa, for all intents and purposes is a "proto" Phoenix with rapidly developing "sprawl" without a center or identity. This is a scene we encounter all too often in the United States. Mesa had previously lived without a central core. There was no destination place for residents and visitors. The city leaders fortunately realized that, in order to retain a population and attract future inhabitants, Mesa had to reinvent and brand itself through substantial urban regeneration. The design team of Martha Schwartz, Inc. and BOORA Architects, Inc. of Portland, Oregon worked together in a close collaborative process to design a visually and socially appealing city center. The site was to contain three performing arts theaters of varying sizes, a community art gallery, and a school.

What we jointly developed, after exploring at least a dozen different schemes, was a "geode" for the city, a central framework with a defined, solid exterior containing a magical gem as its inner space. This structure would provide a street wall for a city that had a lack of density and was in need of spatial definition. What resulted was a block of development that created a street wall along both Main and Center Streets thereby establishing urban density. This block was then "carved" to create an elaborated passageway and civic space that function as a street and entry spaces for the three theaters.

The Mesa Arts Center is literally at the central axis of the city. It is at the crux of Mesa's two main roads, Main and Center Streets. The block functions as a meeting point for all four corners of the city. We were presented with an incredibly large main block, measuring 600 feet x 600 feet with tremendously wide streets (100' wide enabling a cart driven by a team of oxen to make a U-turn). Through our designs, we sought to create a lively, highly imageable destination center while linking the previously disconnected city regions.

Our design for the Mesa Arts Center includes a "Shadow Walk" which is a grand promenade that runs through the building complex in a bold, arcing gesture. The bright sun of the southwest is the element of design. The concept was to display plantings in a way that would best dramatize their shadow patterns, a fundamental element of design. The concept was to display plantings in a way that would best dramatize their shadow patterns and also create spaces that would be comfortable for people. The planting, like performers on the stages of the Center, actively participate in the drama of the space.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

Our "Shadow Walk" provides opportunities for both large and small group gatherings, performances, art exhibits, smaller "parklets" for quiet relaxation, and water features for enjoyment. A rich interplay of overlapping shadows, trees, and architectural canopies creates a cool and inviting environment.

Paralleling the Shadow Walk is the "Arroyo," a water feature whose narative is appropriate to the southwest: a boulder-filled ditch, made of slabs of cut stone and lava rock, runs along the western side of the Shadow Walk for its entire length. At the head of the "Arroyo" was planned a stainless cloud that "rains" into a basin. When the basin fills, the water is released creating a strong pulse that rushes through the riverbed from north to south, recalling the flash floods characteristic of the region. After the flood, the water empties, and the cycle eventually begins again.

Another motif running through the Shadow Walk is that of the banquet table, an element that appears several times throughout the plaza. The Banquet tables are long, stainless steel tables with a running water slot in them, much like the water table in Villa Lante in Italy. They are meant to be gathered around and leaned upon, and create more formal social situations closer the theaters.

The formal elements of the plaza create a poetic statement about the environment and the people coming together in celebration in a family-oriented, active space for Mesa. The Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center creates a new image and functions as the new heart of the community. The Center has been open to the public since September 2005 and has already begun to instill a sense of pride in the people of Mesa and generate tourism and revenue for the city.

Mesa now stands as an example of the positive economic environmental, physical, and social benefits that come as a result of a holistic approach to sustainability in our cities. This is an approach we have begun to see in new projects throughout Europe. The United States, due to our seemingly endless tracks of land, the lack of investment in our cities, and the lack of legislative protection of our open spaces, is somewhat behind the times in this respect. However, Mesa stands as a leader in what we hope to be the beginning of a new wave of smart urban development in the United States.
3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

- The project can be instructive to others in the design profession because of its extensive exploration of alternative design possibilities in order to arrive at physical and programmatic solutions.

- It can also be instructive as to the enormous potential and usefulness of the design professions when collaboration is fully embraced instead of competing with one another for budget and space.

- The holistic approach used for this site in terms of sustainability is also a model that is appropriate for other sites where urban density and identity are lacking.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

Perhaps from our point-of-view as the landscape architects on the project, the lack of funds to create the rain cloud water feature from which the arroyo was to appear was perhaps the most limiting aspect of the project. As with any project, the realities of the budget can override collaborative efforts and design process. It is not that omitting the fountain was "per se" an unsuccessful part, but rather indicate the realities of the public funding process. Otherwise the project has been built as a signature site that people will remember and return to over and over again.
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Michael Tingley  Title: Principal
Organization: BOORA Architects, Inc.  Telephone: (503) 226-1575
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Signature

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

The architectural and landscape design of the Mesa Arts Center proposes an alternative architectural and urban design that prevalent in Mesa, serving as a model for future architectures in the suburban context, where single story commercial and residential structures interspersed with vacant property predominate. By creating an open space attractor not only at the heart of the site but at the heart of downtown and thus at the heart of the city, the Mesa Arts Center challenges the typical decentralized, passive, and private nature of suburban common spaces, such as large open parks and shopping malls, giving Mesa an interactive shared civic space. The Mesa Arts Center is a new landmark for Mesa – the jewel of downtown – a unique and inviting oasis during the day, and a transparent and luminous beacon at night, with an image both classic and forward thinking.

The Mesa Arts Center's design concept, Shadow Walk, responds to the character and climate of the desert southwest. This plan organizes the ensemble of individual buildings around a shady walkway, defined by rows of trees and a waterway, and punctuated by high canopies extending from the theater lobbies. The design will create patterns of shade and sun that transform the sunlight into an ever changing composition creating a pleasant outdoor public space year-round. The resulting facility creates a comfortable community gathering place. During the day, it is a place to meet friends, eat lunch, and watch informal outdoor performances. In the evenings, the glass walls and waterways are lighted, to display lively colors and highlight the activities within.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

First, the project needed to replace the existing Mesa Arts Center, an arts education and presentation program run by the department of parks and recreation that had long outgrown its home, an adapted former elementary school. To supplement these existing studio arts and exhibition programs, the city envisioned an expansive performing arts presenting program to bring entertainment product to the rapidly expanding market in the east end of Arizona's "Valley of the Sun." Additionally, project leadership envisioned a signature public outdoor space that could host shared city-wide events, festivals and celebrations while also offering a public space for intimate personal experiences, like picnics and promenades. The design also needed to catalyze the redevelopment of downtown Mesa by providing a destination point and a recognizable sense of vitality to Mesa's core. Finally, the complex needed to achieve the status of community icon, improving the city's identity in the minds of its own citizens and the citizens of the broader Phoenix metro area.

The complex designed in response to these goals includes four theaters, a community arts education center, and a gallery for contemporary art. The objectives for the Mesa Arts Center design included a wide range of intentions that the design of the complex responds to. The program for this complex is clearly about celebrating and encouraging the creativity that lives in the community and establishing a place where it can flourish. The incorporation of sophisticated teaching spaces and studios which are used for community classes on such a highly visible site has a very strategic social purpose. Through artistic expression this community can develop and nourish a distinct and original voice and identity. Providing spaces for the creation, exhibit and performance of such a broad range of artistry, accessible to the community is a powerful testimony to its value and meaning for this city.
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The architectural design of the complex is straightforward and economical, with its form following its function. Masses are skinned or glazed as functional parameters dictate. The contemporary art galleries are located below grade to shelter their contents from the intense desert climate, while skylights filter a controlled quantity of natural light into these spaces. Where these skylights have a presence on the plaza above, their glowing presence signals the spaces below. For the adjacent arts education studios they have a series of stepped terraces and courtyards that cascade to the center of the site, where they meet the open space. This building has a circulation spine serving all of these spaces that sits on the west side of the building, where it serves to buffer the studios from the intense afternoon sun. The audience chambers and fly towers of each of the four performance halls is expressed as an independent volume in a bold stucco color derived from the Arizona desert landscape. These are linked by a shared lobby space defined with a folded glass plane shaded with a series of horizontal fabric shade sails.

One challenge presented itself in shaping a site, in collaboration with Martha Schwartz, Inc., in what was a typical suburban environment. Our implementation of the concept of the geode provided an early inspiration for the integration of the architectural and landscape design of the complex and provided a concept for the site's integration and face to Mesa's downtown area. Where this element of desert geology has a taut perimeter, Similarly, the character of the architecture facing the Shadow Walk features terraces, balconies, and courtyards, creating a fragmented and crystalline quality while providing occupiable space on the complex's multiple levels.

Other challenges included budgetary compromises which were handled through value engineering of the architectural and site components; however, through careful planning, no budget shortfall critically wounded the project's completion.

4. Describe the ways in which the project relates to its urban context.

Upon the buildable area of the site, BOORA placed those spaces that are active during the daytime, specifically the gallery and studio education building, along the public street, allowing the street environment to borrow the vitality of the buildings. As the theaters will be used primarily during the evenings, when the gallery and studio are closed, they have been placed at the center of the site, creating a logical draw to the heart of the site. Along with their fly towers, which are cantilevered in gesture to the mountains surrounding the Phoenix basin, their glass lobbies rise above the studio building and gallery, extending the complex's vitality into the evening and the surrounding environment. The entire site connects to Mesa's mid-block downtown pedestrian network, further connecting the site to its surroundings. By increasing the complex's building density to reserve sufficient space at the heart of the complex for the large landscape space elevated the physical presence of the whole complex within Mesa's existing architectural landscape, providing a new precedence for the approaching to massing and organizing the built environment in this context.

The buildings are arranged in counterpoint to the Shadow Walk. The transparent qualities of the theater lobbies, placed along the walk, provide beacons of light at night, and draw on the lush quality of the site for visual interest from the inside. The Studios, located along Center Street, are connected to the Shadow Walk through a series of outdoor terraces. Mesa Contemporary Arts, located on the northwest corner of the site, opens out to a sunken courtyard that provides additional space for exhibits, informal performances and social events. The gallery is located below grade, capturing natural light through carefully designed skylights.

Three artists created public artworks for the new Center: Ned Kahn of Sebastopol, California, who has created two shade screens for the west-facing wall of the theater building; Beth Galston of Somerville, Massachusetts, who will be responsible for enlivening the west wall of the educational building; and Catherine Wilgery of Truro, Massachusetts, who will design an art project that links the theater lobbies with the exterior plaza terraces.
5. Visual Representation of the Project
2006 Rudy Bruner Award

Photo Credits:

1. MSI Site Plan, Martha Schwartz, Inc.
2. BOORA Site Plan, courtesy BOORA Architects
3. Aerial photo, existing conditions, image courtesy of BOORA.
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5. 3D rendering, courtesy BOORA.
6. Shadow textures, image by Martha Schwartz, Inc.
7. View of Shadow Walk under canopy, image by Martha Schwartz, Inc.
8. Entrance view of planters, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
11. People enjoying Arroyo, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
13. Water table, view from above, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
14. Water table, view from below, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
15. Stainless steel canopy, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
16. Blue glass and tree, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
17. Crushed red glass and cactus, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
18. Yellow garden, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
19. Red garden, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
20. Blue garden, image Martha Schwartz, Inc.
6.
Optional Supplementary Pages
Mission and Vision

• The mission of the Mesa Arts Center is to inspire people through impacting and engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant, and that enhance the quality of life and vitality of the greater region. We honor our workplace unity of purpose and our interconnectedness, while valuing the significance of individual talents.

• The vision of the Mesa Arts Center is to become the premier arts center in the West.

Unique Niche

The new Mesa Arts Center is the largest arts center in the State of Arizona and the only center offering comprehensive professional performing arts, visual arts and arts education programming on one state-of-the-art campus.

Mesa Arts Center:

• Mesa’s new gathering place
• A downtown landmark and destination
• The heart and soul of the Mesa Town Center
• The anchor of the arts and cultural district
• An economic development engine for downtown Mesa

Location

1 East Main Street – Southeast corner of Main and Center Streets in downtown Mesa

Capital Funding: $97.9 Million

• Public: $94.2 million City of Mesa (Quality of Life sales tax, voter approved 1998)
• Private: $3.7 million Mesa Arts Alliance (capital campaign)

The Campus

• Three buildings located on seven acres; 212,775 square feet

• Theaters Complex: 4 theaters – 1,600-seat Tom and Janet Ikeda Theater, 550-seat Virginia G. Piper Repertory Theater, 200-seat Nesbitt/Elliot Playhouse, 99-seat Arlita Cox Farnsworth Studio Theater; box office, continuous lobby, concessions areas, 17 dressing rooms, back of house and technical support spaces

• Mesa Contemporary Arts: 5,500 square feet exhibition space in 5 galleries – Wilson and Ruby Dobson Main Gallery (2,400 s.f.), South Gallery (1,400 s.f.), Dr. Ruth Tan Lim Project Room (500 s.f.), SRP Permanent Collection Gallery (500 s.f.), North Gallery (700 s.f.); meeting space, lecture hall, lobby atrium for artwork, sculpture courtyard, back of house and collection storage spaces (3,500 s.f.)

• Art Studios: 14 visual and performing arts studios and classrooms – Ceramics, Painting, Printmaking, Glass, Jewelry, Sculpture, Photography, Multimedia, Children’s/Multipurpose, Acting, Drama, Dance, and Music Studios; informal performance spaces, administrative offices

• Shadow Walk: outdoor gardens, sunken courtyards, private gathering places, informal performance areas

Unique Design Features

• A unique and inviting oasis during the day, and a transparent and luminous beacon at night, with an image both classic and forward thinking

• Design concept: was inspired by and reflects the unique character of the Sonoran Desert – a rich desert, mountain and canyon environment

• Architectural features: jagged angles, cantilevered walls, sloping roofs, glass walls, regional colors and materials

• Outdoor features: a terraced, desert oasis with a graceful arc of trees, exotic gardens, a running arroyo and other water features, abundant shade from giant canopies and glass pergolas that cast colorful shadows on the walkways

(continued >)
About the Center

• Public Art: lobby shade screens that shimmer like water and reflect swirling desert sand dunes (Artist Ned Kahn); colored glass panels inspired by sunset-colored storm clouds on a bridged walkway (Artist Beth Galston); silver lobby floor medallions that dissolve with changing light (Artist Catherine Widger)

Types of Programming

• In the Theaters: Performing Live presents world-class professional touring entertainment including classical and popular music, ethnic and western artists, dance, family entertainment, and a free concert series; Stageworks produces educational plays for young audiences and showcases its improvisational theater and dance troupes

• Mesa Contemporary Arts: four galleries for changing exhibitions of prominent and emerging artists in sculpture, painting, Installations, ceramics and the Permanent Collection; a community gallery to showcase work of local artists

• Art Studios: over 700 performing and visual arts education classes for youth and adults

• Programming Philosophy: The Mesa Arts Center believes the arts are inclusive and for everyone, and will strive for diversity in all programming

Theaters Showcase Local Performing Arts Companies

• “Home” Venue for Mesa companies: Ballet Etudes, East Valley Children’s Theatre, Mesa Encore Theatre, Mesa Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Southwest Shakespeare Company, Xicanindio Artes

• East Valley Expansion Market for regional companies: Arizona Opera, Arizona Theatre Company, Citrus Valley Playhouse, Phoenix Boys Choir, Phoenix Symphony, Theater League

Audiences and Markets

• East Valley: within 0-30 minutes drive time of the Center (Mesa, Tempe, Chandler, Gilbert, Ahwatukee, Apache Junction, Gold Canyon, Scottsdale, Phoenix)

• Regional: as the largest arts center in the state and with its unique architectural features, envisioned as a cultural tourism destination for visitors from around the state and throughout the Southwest region

World-class Facility Design Team

• BOORA Architects of Portland and DWL Architects & Planners of Phoenix, architects

• Martha Schwartz, Inc, landscape architect

• Auerbach and Associates, theater consultant

• McKay, Conant Brook, acoustical consultant

• Kitchell CEM, construction management

• Layton Construction of Arizona, general contractor

Mesa Arts Center by the Numbers

• People: 350,000-500,000 estimated annual attendance (1,000-2,000 people/day)

• Events: 600-800 performances annually, galleries open year-round, classes offered year-round

• Size: Three-building complex, 212,775 square feet on seven acres

• Capitol Budget: $94.5 million

• Groundbreaking: May 20, 2002

• Opening: Spring 2005

Contact Mesa Arts Center

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