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THE HEIDELBERG PROJECT

Mission

The Heidelberg Project (“HP”) is a Detroit-based community organization designed to improve the lives of people and neighborhoods through art. Our mission is to inspire people to appreciate and use artistic expression to enrich their lives and to improve the social and economic health of their greater community.



Vision:

The HP's theory of belief is that a community can re-develop and sustain itself, from the inside out, by utilizing its culture and creativity as the essential building blocks.

To accomplish its mission, the HP is actively engaged in Art Production, Art & Educational Programming and Community Development.



Historical Background

- + HP founder and Detroit artist Tyree Guyton grew up on Heidelberg Street and this is the neighborhood where he was born and raised.
- + The Heidelberg Project (HP) is located in one of the oldest African American communities in Detroit.
- + The area is called Black Bottom because the soil here is very rich and fertile.
- + Once home to more than 300 African-American owned businesses.
- + The community was virtually destroyed as a result of urban renewal projects and the 1967 riots.

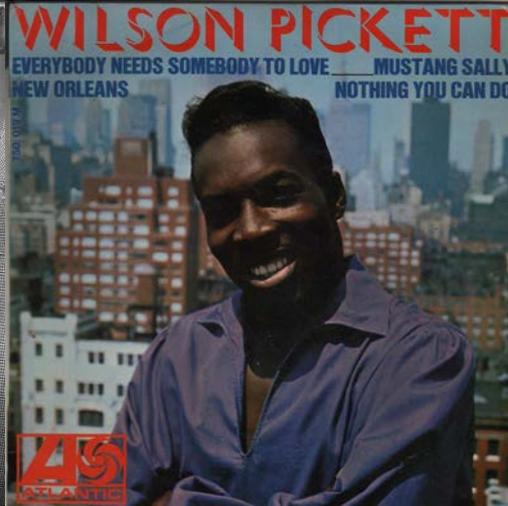


Notable Residents



Helen Thomas

White House correspondent. Covered the administrations of eleven U.S. presidents—from the final years of the Eisenhower administration to the second year of the Obama administration.



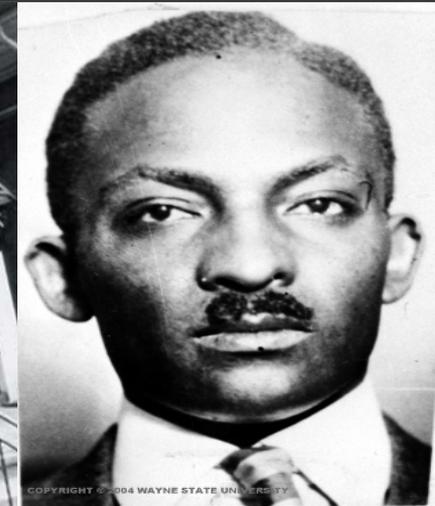
Wilson Pickett

Singer and songwriter. Recorded over 50 songs which hit the US R&B charts, and frequently crossed over to the US Billboard Hot 100. His best known hits include *In the Midnight Hour* and *Mustang Sally*.



Berry Gordy

Record producer and songwriter. Founder of the Motown record label. Gordy signed many notable artists, including the Miracles, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and the Jackson 5.



Dr. Ossian Sweet

Distinguished physician. Acquitted of murder after the armed self-defense of his newly purchased home in a white neighborhood against a mob trying to force him out in 1925.

Detroit: 48207

- + According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation as reported in May 2013 on WDIV News, the McDougall-Hunt community (48207) is one of the top three most dangerous neighborhoods in the country.
- + Vacancy rates are among Detroit's highest with 90% of its residents living below the poverty line and 75% of its residents unemployed. (2010 US Census)



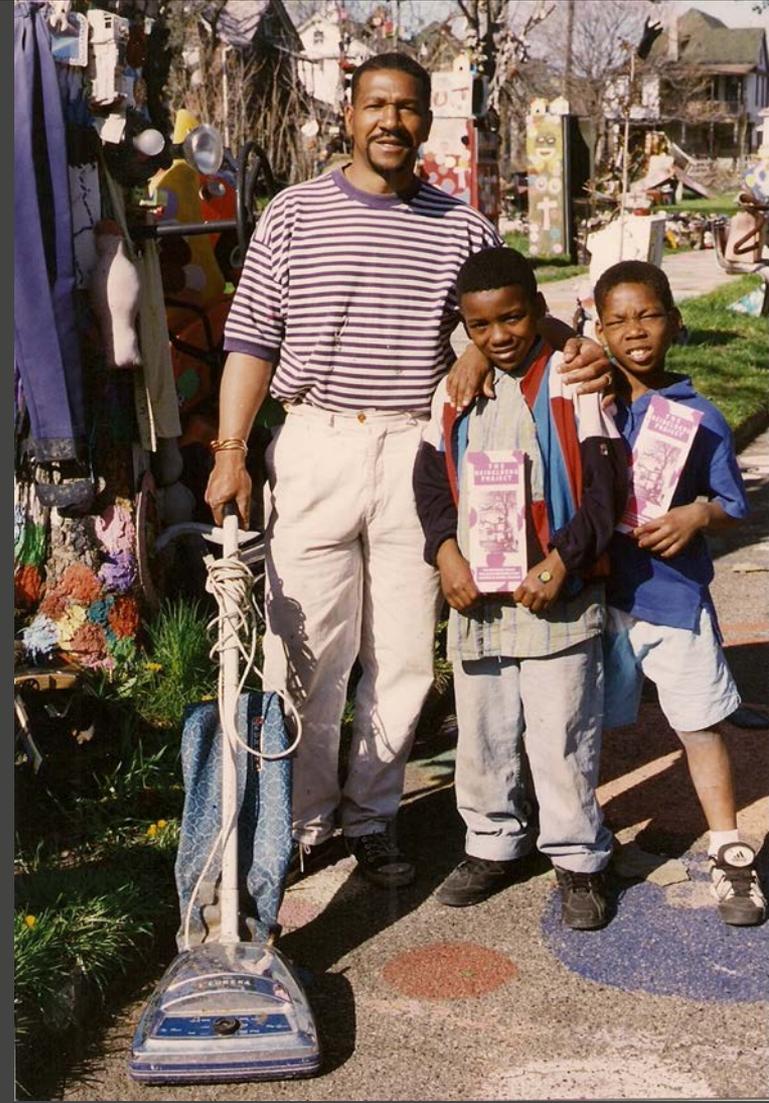
The Story of the Heidelberg Project

In 1986, artist Tyree Guyton returned to Heidelberg, the street where he grew up on Detroit's East Side, and found it in shambles, riddled with drugs and deepening poverty. Bruised by the loss of three brothers to the streets, Guyton was encouraged by his grandfather to pick up a paintbrush instead of a weapon and look for a solution.



The Story of the Heidelberg Project

Armed with a paintbrush, a broom and the neighborhood children, Guyton began by cleaning up vacant lots on Heidelberg Street. From the refuse they collected, Guyton transformed the street into a massive art environment. Vacant lots literally became "lots of art" and abandoned houses became "gigantic art sculptures." Guyton not only transformed vacant houses and lots, he integrated the street, sidewalks and trees into his mammoth installation and called the work, the Heidelberg Project ("HP").



The Story of the Heidelberg Project

In 1988, supporters of Guyton helped to organize his effort and the Heidelberg Project was officially incorporated. Although the project was demolished by the city of Detroit in 1991 and 1999, the Heidelberg Project did not abandon the vision for change in the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood. Now, more than 30 years later the Heidelberg Project continues to utilize art as a catalyst to re-envision ourselves, our environment and our community.



Community Impact

+ Today, the HP attracts more than 275,000 visitors from 140 countries annually and is recognized as the third most visited cultural institution in Detroit.

+The Heidelberg Project is also a catalyst for economic growth in the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood. In 2011, Williams College (Williamstown, MA) performed an economic impact study on behalf of the HP which revealed that the project contributes \$3.4 million to the Wayne County Region and \$2.7 million to the local community.



The People's House

- + Considered the most famous house on Heidelberg Street.
- + Tyree grew up in this house with his nine brothers and sisters, his mom, and his grandfather Sam Mackey.
- + The house has been in Tyree's family since 1947 and Tyree's sisters live here today.
- + Where Tyree's Grandfather, Sam Mackey, first placed a paintbrush in Tyree's hand at the age of nine.
- + Formerly known as "The Dotty Wotty House." In 2009 it was re-envisioned when our own polka-dot president, Barack Obama said that he wanted the American People to think of the White House as "The People's House."



Symbolism: “The Polka Dot”

- + Represents the circle of life, the fact that everything is connected.
- + Also represents all the different people that live together in the world. We are all different, but in the end, we really are all the same.
- + What other things in our world are circular? (moon, sun, cell)



Heidelberg Residents

- + Farmer John -- Has curated a garden next to his house for the past thirty years. He is from the south and grows cotton.
- + Erma Hollingsworth - Celebrated her 105th birthday in June, 2017. Lives with her son, Moses, who does not look a day over 40.
- + Betty Guyton -- Lives in the most famous house on Heidelberg Street, where Tyree was born and raised.
- + Ms. Bell -- Invites visitors to sign the house where she lives, called the Yellow House Guest Book.

The Number House

- + There was a family who lived in the house that wanted to be a part of the Heidelberg Project so they asked Tyree to paint their home.
- + Ms. Thelma Woods who lived in this house loved to play the lottery. The children in the neighborhood learned how to count with the numbers painted on the house.
- + When Thelma passed away, her children donated the house to the Heidelberg Project.
- + The Number House is now our on-site headquarters and is also home to our gift shop and POST-HAB gallery.



Taxi House

- + Covered in images of colorful taxi cabs and police cars.
- + Poses the question: "where do you want to go?"



Motor City Lot

- + Tyree's tribute to Detroit's auto industry, including the good things and the bad.
- + Acts as a reminder to consider riding a bike or even walking to get from place to place. After all, where are we really going?



Codepink Hummer

- + One month after the last Hummer rolled off the assembly line, the women's peace group CODE-PINK wanted to give the Hummer a proper burial.
- + The Hummer was painted pink to symbolize peace and overflows with plants and flowers.
- + Makes us think about the idea of being more sustainable and green by riding a bicycle instead.



Art as a Medicine

- + Tyree believes that art is like a medicine, and that you can't heal a community unless you heal the minds of the people.
- + Sometimes items, neighborhoods, and even people can be discarded. If you pick people up, give them a fresh coat of paint and new perspective, it is possible to recycle the human spirit.



Souls of the Most High

- + Inspired by Tyree's grandfather, Sam Mackey, and his recollections of lynching's in the South.
- + When Tyree asked his grandfather if he could see the people Sam said that he could see the souls.
- + We all wear shoes on our feet and every shoe has a sole.
- + Today, we are lifting up the souls of the community.



Symbolism: Shoes

- + “You never really know someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes.”
- + In 2011, Tyree painted and placed more than 10,000 shoes on a city street to highlight the issue of homelessness in a temporary installation called “Street Folk.”
- + Shoes can represent where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going.
- + Every shoe has a story.



Heidelbergology:

+ The study of artist materials, i.e. found objects, that are weaved into the fabric and landscape of an urban community and its effect on that community.



Yellow House Guest Book

- + A significant community achievement was realized in 2012 when a detractor and often hostile resident of 25 years had a change of heart and joined forces with HP.
- + Mrs. Otila Bell and her daughter Tajuana found a creative way of becoming part of the HP through gardening, selling bottled water, and by inviting guests from all over the world to sign their home.
- + Victories such as this demonstrate the relevance and importance of art as a catalyst for change.



Obstruction of Justice (O.J.)

- + Although the Heidelberg Project was demolished by the city of Detroit in 1991 and 1999, Tyree Guyton did not give up his vision for change in the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood.
- + The O.J. House is an example of how the Heidelberg Project has evolved over time and bounced back after setbacks.
- + The original house was covered in hundreds of found objects and was claimed by arson not once but twice in 2013.



Unauthorized Transformations

In 2013/2014, the Heidelberg Project endured nine fires— an act of arson, over the course of eleven months. As a result of the fires, the HP lost six prominent installations, including:

- + OJ House
- + House of Soul
- + War Room
- + Penny House (House that Makes Sense)
- + Clock House
- + Party Animal House



Site Security

In the wake of the fires the HP launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for security to ensure the safety of our residents and to protect the remaining installations at the site.

With the help from our global family of donors and support through the Erb Family Foundation, the Heidelberg Project was able to install solar power lighting and security cameras for surveillance.



Heidelberg Project Television (HPTV)

- + A television studio without walls.
- + Broadcasted live from Heidelberg Street, the television concept was created to document experiences of neighborhood residents and guests as seen through the lens of the Heidelberg Project.
- + Is a literal translation of the dialogue between art and audience.
- + Sometimes visitors are invited to be part of the show.



Sundial

- + The largest clock on Heidelberg. Symbolizes the power of art and community togetherness.
- + If you stand in the foot prints in the middle of the dial, your shadow will cast the time of day.
- + Made from all recycled materials found in the area and built by community members.
- + This project was produced by a former artist in residence, Lisa Rodriguez.



Symbolism: Clocks

- + The great philosopher Plato said that "time is a moving image of reality."
- + Time is how we measure the past, the present, and the future.
- + Time, like ourselves and our world is always changing.

In the words of TG: "What time is it?"

- + There are many clocks on Heidelberg Street.



Animal Farm Tree

- + This tree represents all of the animals that run wild in the neighborhood, including dogs, cats, birds, bats, rabbits, raccoons, pheasants, and even foxes.
- + With so many abandoned spaces and vacant lots, our community is becoming much like an urban prairie.



Noah's Ark

+ The ark is a symbol of safety. Contained within this universal vessel is a portrait of innocent childhood coexisting with malevolent forces.



Doors of Opportunity

- + In life we are faced with many challenges and walk through many doors.
- + Some of those doors are open to us and some are not.
- + Here on Heidelberg Street, our doors are open to everyone.



Faces in the Hood



Elba/Ellery Playground

+ A favorite destination for neighborhood youth.



Community Gardens





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www.heidelberg.org