TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Big C and little c culture: building sustainable and civil communities

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
In this talk, I will reflect on my cultural assets mapping practice via the following question: what does this type of planning work actually “do” for communities, particularly small cities and rural communities? I will argue that in order for cultural planning to be a proactive process that engages a community in the building of a civil society that we must acknowledge and celebrate what I call Big C (museums, high end galleries or high brow stuff of the city) and little c (small arts and crafts business, local restaurants serving local cuisine) culture. As such, three things are critical to how we think about culture. First, culture is ordinary1. Culture is not just an amenity that cities provide... nor is it only the domain of, or controlled by, an elite. Culture is a part of our everyday lives. Second,

culture is spatial. As Don Mitchell notes: “...it insinuates itself into our daily worlds as part of the spaces and spatial practices that define our lives.” Culture becomes the medium through which we make sense of and transform the material and social world into interactions and places that have meaning and value. That is, all of these resources are located in space and time; particularly obvious are the tangible ones, such as the museums and galleries and historic properties. But the intangible ones are equally important. Third, culture is inextricably tied to economy. Today “culture” sells, particularly in its most reified form. Someone has to create or produce that which we claim to be culture—someone has to create these; that is, it is the work of many people, working in various fields. Zukin refers to these people as the “critical infrastructure” of a cultural economy. They are the ones who set tastes and high or low style; they produce the images and things that become a part of our lives.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

joni m palmer, PhD, is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Community and Regional Planning, as well as an Adjunct Associate Professor in Geography & Environmental Studies, at the University of New Mexico. For over 25 years her professional life has been a blend of practice and academia. Her book (with Martin Zebracki, University of Leeds), Public Art Encounters: Art, Space and Identity (Routledge), was published in September 2017. Palmer’s professional practice experience in planning and design practice (working in both the public and private sectors) includes working for municipal, state and federal government, and private firms in Boston, Seattle and San Francisco. Her practice ranges from urban park design and campus planning to arts and cultural planning. Dr. Palmer teaches design and planning studios, site and environmental planning, site engineering, landscape theory, research methods, visual thinking and representation(s), as well as courses in human geography, including world regional geography, global cities, and cultural landscapes.

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