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## For Nonprofit Arts Groups, the Show Must Go On— Elsewhere



Anne Eigeman

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January 12, 2012; **Source:** [The Bay Citizen](#) | Although the challenge of inadequate space is nothing new for nonprofits, some San Francisco-based theater and dance companies have begun to convert this problem into an opportunity to extend the artistic impact of individual works and to draw new audiences. In a recent story, the *Bay Citizen* reports that many experimental arts organizations with limited budgets are getting creative with venues.

The story points out that nontraditional performance spaces are not unique to San Francisco, but that the recent economic challenges facing nonprofits along with increasing interest in the trend of “placemaking” by arts funders has produced a local resurgence of the form. For example, [the Home Theater Festival](#) supports theatrical events in private homes; [We Players](#), a site-specific theater company, presented a production of “Hamlet” on Alcatraz Island in 2011; [and dance company Raw Dance](#) has used mall and restaurant storefronts for performance spaces.

However, there are certainly behind-the-scenes challenges that come with finding artistic venues within the city. [Mugwumpin](#), an eight-year-old nonprofit theater company that was founded “with the aim of reinvigorating live performance as a communal event,” found this out when producing a play about the life of inventor Nicholas Tesla. The play, “Future Power Motive,” had to relocate when allergy-producing black mold was found in the walls.

Still, the *Bay Citizen* reports, many arts groups are finding that “the rewards of working outside conventional theaters outweigh the headaches.”

[The “placemaking” initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts](#) includes support for artistic performances in spaces “not normally used for such purposes.” As private foundations, including [the Knight Foundation](#), support similar projects, it will be interesting to watch how arts funding in this new area develops.—Anne Eigeman

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### About the author



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Anne Eigeman is a Washington, DC-based consultant focusing on fund development an...

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