

# WEST BALTIMORE REIMAGINING AND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## Imagining Aroused

*An Interactive Virtual and Digital Sculpture of West Baltimore  
Reimagining its Cultural and Economic Development,  
and the Human Flourishing of its Residents.*



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# *Imagining Aroused*<sup>1</sup>

## OVERVIEW

*Imagining Aroused* is an interactive virtual and digital sculpture designed to portray the informed aspirations of West Baltimore community-based stakeholders about their redevelopment, cultural, human flourishing, and economic prosperity aims. The sculpture simultaneously coheres and conciliates the Community's layered heritage, its cultural and economic assets, including latent ones, and the importance of trust and social capital building, decentralized and inclusive knowledge-making and planning, and creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in community transformation and progress. Conceptualized by Professor Lee Boot and his team at the Imaging Research Center (IRC) at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, *Imagining Aroused* presents the instrumentalization of envisaging as a foundational pillar in the West Baltimore community conceptualizing a future that goes beyond the boundedness of merely modernizing its past. It therefore perfectly coheres with the goals of the *West Baltimore Reimagining and Redevelopment Project*, which aims at building local capacity and culture for economic and community development, through the harnessing of knowledge, expertise and cooperation among community and other stakeholders, including academic, non-profit, and governmental institutions.

## SCULPTURE DESIGN PROCESS

The process leading to the sculpture design being readied for public presentation and discussion involves three years of productive and inclusive collaboration with diverse and broad-based stakeholders. *Imagining Aroused* is a working conception, however, and its valuableness is realizable only through it being subjected to intense and contestable scrutiny by stakeholders in the community's "public square." This inclusive democracy process will ensure that the conception of reimagined development the sculpture represents will be dissected and challenged and may end up being either "returned to the drawing board" with recommendations for improvement, or elevated and sharpened as a potential pathway to the community's redevelopment and prosperity, or frankly, mocked and killed. This is the "democracy space" every bold endeavor in imagining inventions or innovations in the social, cultural, and economic life of a community must be prepared to give account in. Engaging this process is also the motive for mounting *Imagining Aroused* for intense public discourse in the community square at "Penn-North".

## INSTALLATION

It is envisioned that the sculpture would be installed at the intersection (West-East corner) of Baltimore City's most travelled intersection – Pennsylvania Avenue and North Avenue - with its 5,000 daily travelers by bus, subway, and pedestrians walking through what is certifiably a latent beacon of extraordinary potential for culture and economic wealth. The sculpture embodies the richness and cleansing power of water, and an appreciation of the cultural and economic power of cultivating synergies and synthesis between people, place, trust, cooperation, and aspirations. Its proposed design will display a 60 feet I-Pad enclosed with touch screen, cradled by metal material, with interactive features to touch, that will give voice through visualization to the aspirations of West Baltimoreans.

The Penn/North intersection is considered the entry point to West Baltimore, Downtown Baltimore and Baltimore Harbor communities and industry. It also represents the rich legacy of Black American's history and heritage, and a remembrance of their cultural imagination. Mounting and discoursing the sculpture in this location would therefore symbolize an intentional interest by a wider network of influential stakeholders in awakening Black Baltimore's heritage, culture, and economic aspirations as a pillar in the economic redevelopment of West Baltimore.

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<sup>1</sup> Important contributions to the project were made by Ryan Zuber, Marion Blackwell, John Harris, Ute Schumacher and Kaleb Tshamba, along with Liza Aleinikova, Iman Asfari, Fahmida Hossain, Christina Lukaszczuk, and Vivian Yeh.

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## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

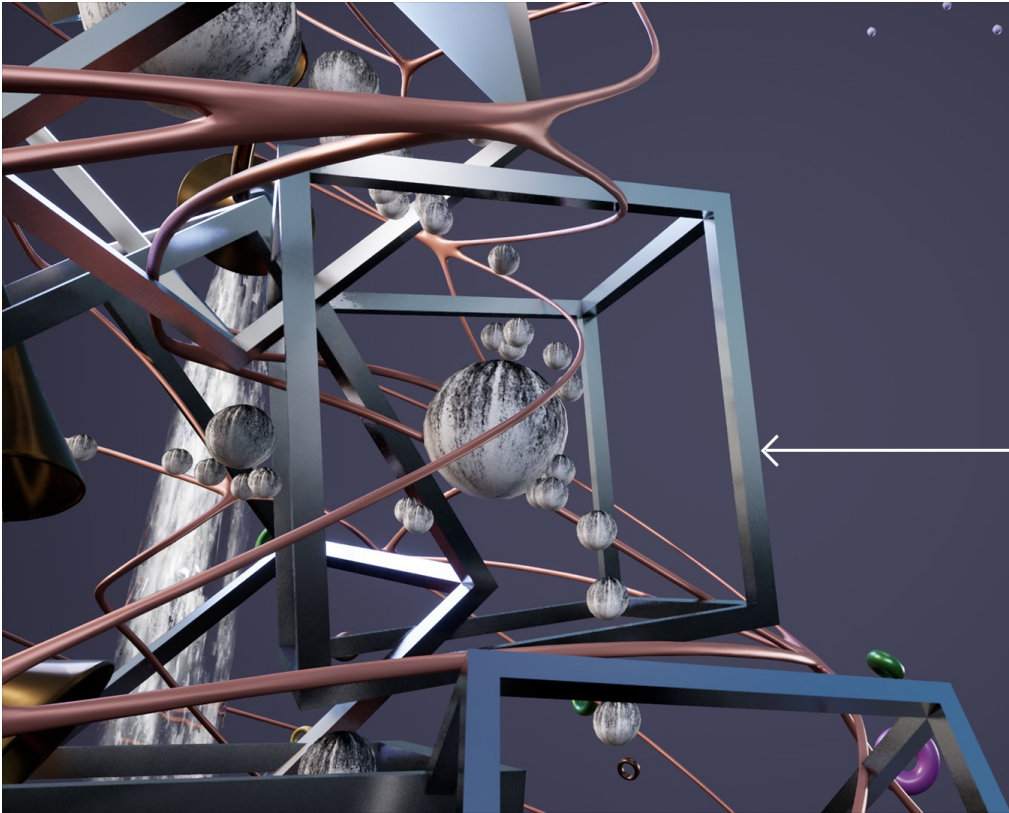
The project envisions organizing town-hall, community and college presentations, and other forms of civic democracy-enhancing activities to complement the “public square” mounting of the *Imagining Aroused* sculpture. The project holds the perspective that all stakeholders, be they local, regional, or national, will be interested in, if not inspired by, the innovative and inventive ways in which the virtual sculpture awakens the productive agitation of the use of art, culture, imagining and agency, to build inclusive cooperation as an asset in community development. And in the specific case of West Baltimore, how the virtual sculpture has encouraged the transformation of the informed and reasoned aspirations of a community in distress, into a collaborative pursuit of their realization as redevelopment outcomes.

The comprehensiveness, determined intentionality, and community ownership of this smart and strategic approach to community reimagining and redevelopment defines the motivation, philosophy, and centrality of the West Baltimore Reimagining and Redevelopment Project. Its innovative paradigm, grounded in culture and community, and focused on investment in trust and social capital and on inclusive wealth creation and localized prosperity, is vividly captured in *Imagining Aroused*.

In this regard the installation of *Imagining Aroused* in the Penn/North Town Square would represent a distinctive and highly influential opportunity for West Baltimoreans to agitate a reimagining and reshaping of the identity and lived experience of West Baltimore.



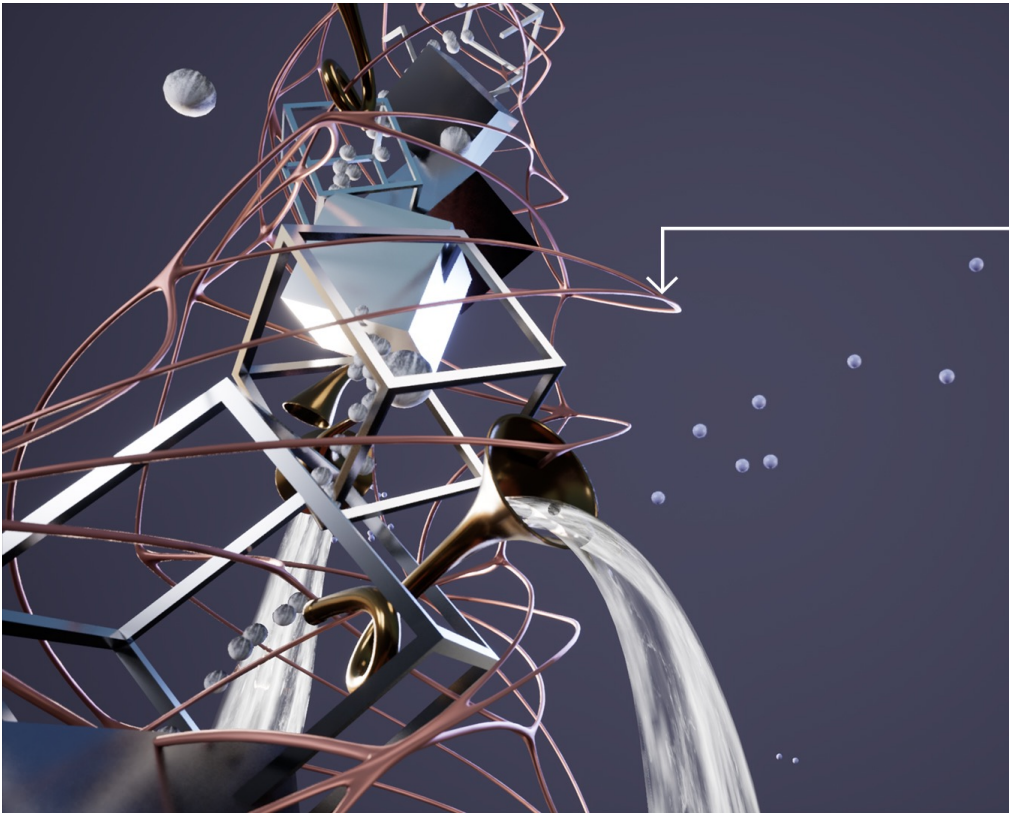




SOCIAL CAPITAL emerges from trust capital. Community members work together for common purposes in groups and organizations, constructing a vibrant economic framework with entrepreneurial aspirations.

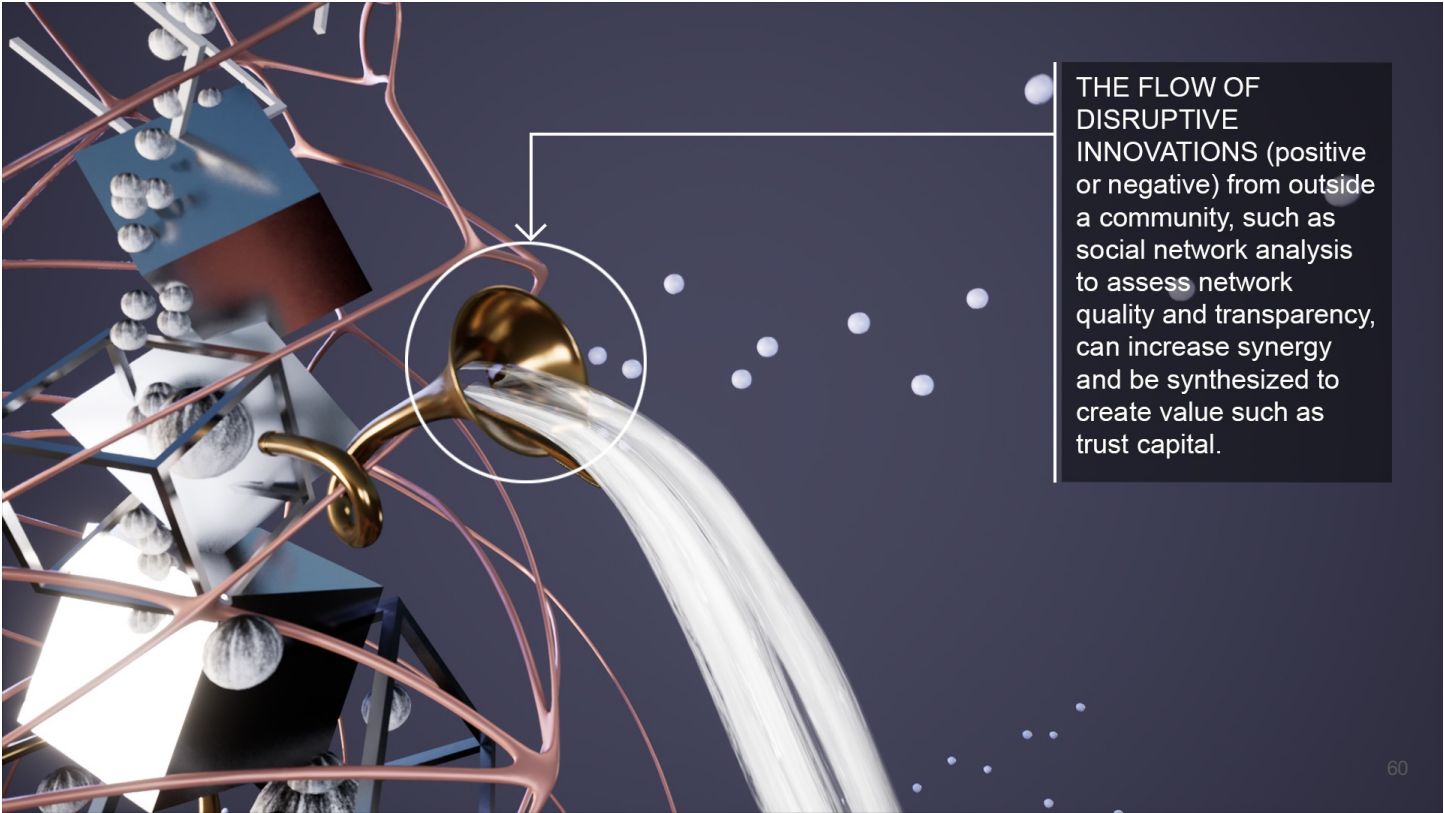
Social capital can also be spurred and catalyzed by efforts that originate outside the community.

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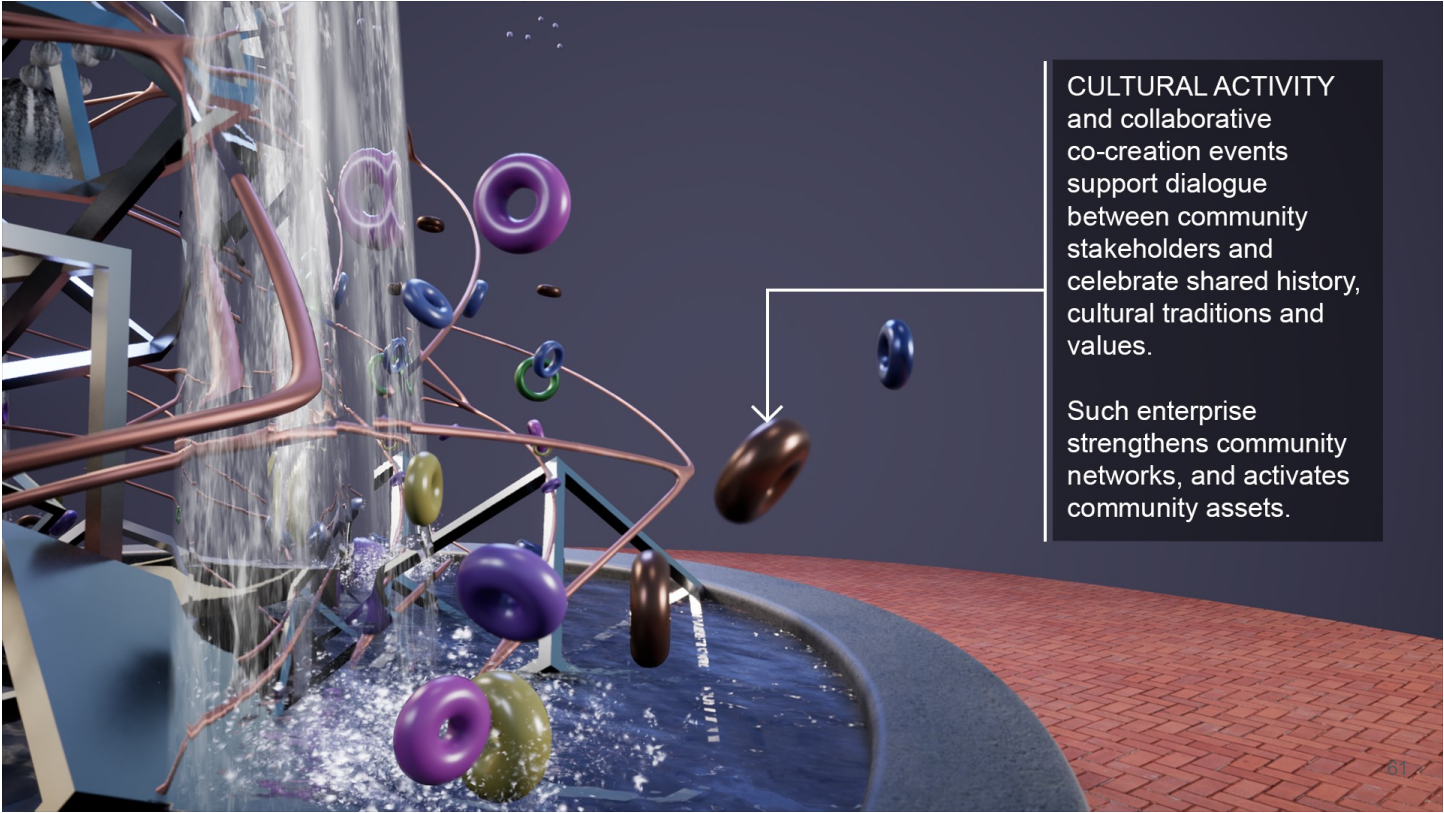


Strong COMMUNITY NETWORKS, if transparent to the community, build TRUST CAPITAL: confidence that community members and organizations will act positively and with goodwill, allowing community members to feel safe, take risks, and cooperate with one another. Trust capital promotes synergy.

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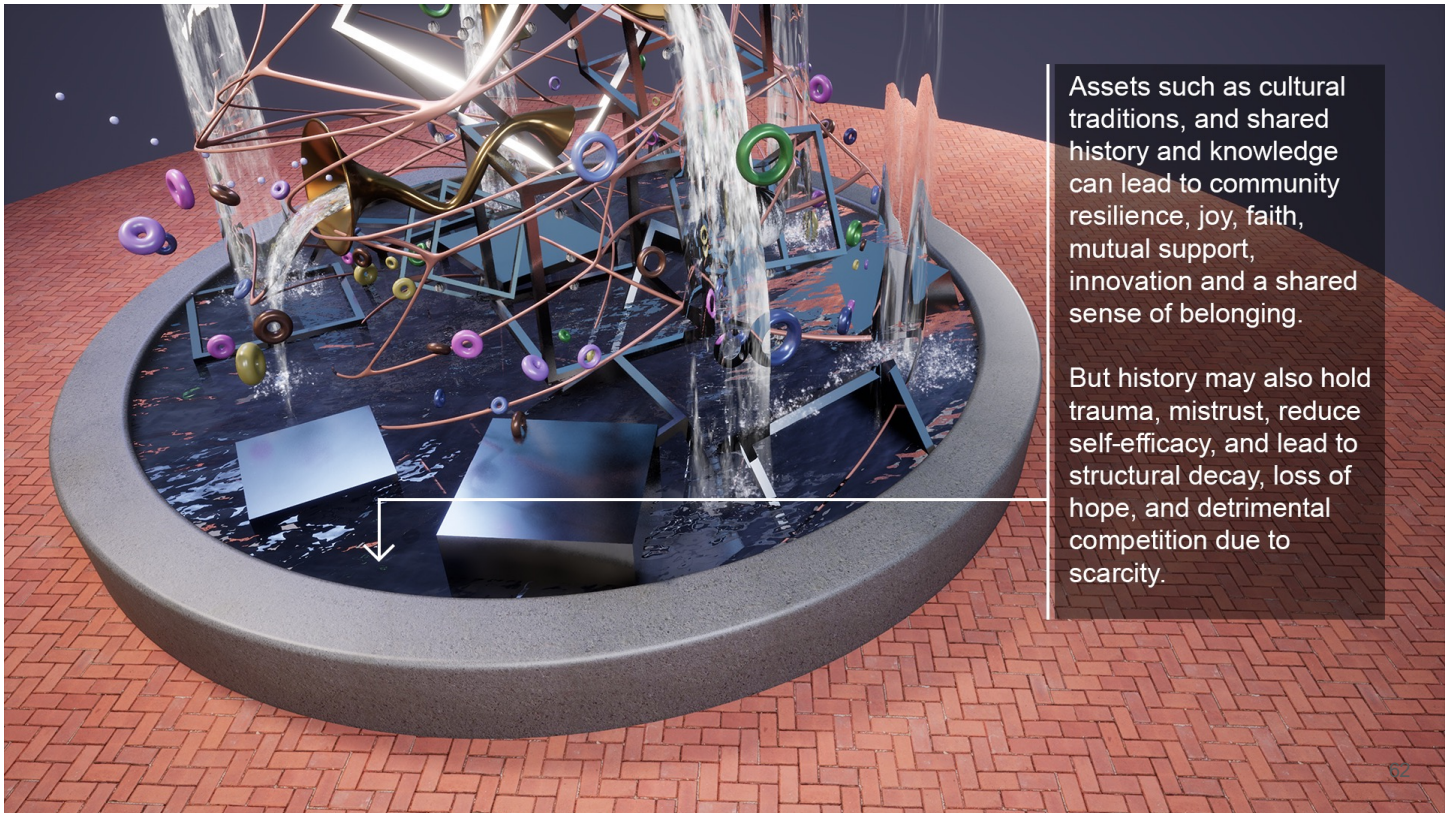
THE FLOW OF  
DISRUPTIVE  
INNOVATIONS (positive  
or negative) from outside  
a community, such as  
social network analysis  
to assess network  
quality and transparency,  
can increase synergy  
and be synthesized to  
create value such as  
trust capital.



CULTURAL ACTIVITY  
and collaborative  
co-creation events  
support dialogue  
between community  
stakeholders and  
celebrate shared history,  
cultural traditions and  
values.

Such enterprise  
strengthens community  
networks, and activates  
community assets.





Assets such as cultural traditions, and shared history and knowledge can lead to community resilience, joy, faith, mutual support, innovation and a shared sense of belonging.

But history may also hold trauma, mistrust, reduce self-efficacy, and lead to structural decay, loss of hope, and detrimental competition due to scarcity.

*“Aspiration is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned.”*

Light paraphrasing of the words of Emile Durkheim (1858–1917)

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## Notes

To download additional documents, and learn more about  
The West Baltimore Reimagining and Redevelopment Project,  
scan the QR code below.



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