

## The arts as an economic engine for Central New York

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By **Kheli R. Willetts, Post-Standard guest columnist**



This mural has QR codes, each linking to a CNY arts group. The codes can be read by a [smartphone](#) to access the websites. They are part of a **mural on M. Lemp's**, a downtown jewelry store at South Warren and East Fayette streets.

**"As they say on my own Cape Cod, a rising tide lifts all the boats. And a partnership, by definition, serves both partners, without domination or unfair advantage. Together we have been partners in adversity — let us also be partners in prosperity."** — *President John F. Kennedy, June 25, 1963, Frankfurt, Germany*

When President Kennedy made that analogy, he was talking about the mutually beneficial concept of a Common Market and efforts to encourage expansion of trade in Western Europe.

The idea of a rising tide lifting all boats is applicable to many aspects of our society. It's most commonly used when referring to our economy.

The economic tides — rising or falling — affect all of us. We've felt the impact of rising costs, shrinking jobs and a floundering fiscal state.

Candidates running for office and the political talking heads examine, explore and debate plenty of solutions. They rarely talk about one sector of our market that has a creative impact but is often overlooked: the arts.

This summer, Americans for the Arts, a non-profit organization devoted to advancing arts and [arts education](#), published "**Arts & Economic Prosperity IV Study**."

The study, conducted in 2010, looked at the economic impact of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences. The study found:

"America's arts industry is not only resilient in times of economic uncertainty but is also a key component to our nation's economic [recovery](#) and future prosperity. Business and elected leaders need not feel that a choice must be made between arts funding and economic prosperity. This study proves that they can choose both."

Robert L. Lynch is president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. In a **blog post**, **Lynch summarized the findings**

this way:

“Of the \$135.2 billion of economic activity generated by America’s arts industry, \$61.1 billion comes from the nation’s nonprofit arts and culture organizations and \$74.1 billion from event-related expenditures by their audiences. This economic activity supports 4.1 million full-time jobs and produces \$22.3 billion in revenue to local, state and federal governments every year — a yield well beyond their collective \$4 billion in arts allocations.”

Forty-five arts and cultural organizations from the greater Syracuse area participated in this national study and confirmed what we in the arts already knew: Arts and cultural tourism make a significant **impact on our local and regional economy**.

Our most recent endeavor to increase cultural tourism and do our part to raise the economic tide is a community-wide biennial called **“The Other New York: 2012.”**

TONY: 2012, as it is commonly called, is a multi-venue art exhibition organized by the **Everson Museum of Art** in partnership with 14 arts and cultural organizations featuring the wealth of talent of artists from Central New York.

In addition to 14 venues, art will be on view in outdoor public spaces and in freight containers placed throughout the city. Each institution’s exhibition will be on view for most of the fall. Some sites are opening their shows this month; some won’t close until January.

Each venue will host its own opening reception and affiliated public programming.

### **TONY 2012 is an artistic feast for the senses.**

At the venues, you will be able to view the spectrum of contemporary art. Many venues will feature expressions including ranging from traditional painting and sculpture to experimental work, including new media and performance art. Through their work, the artists are inviting the public to engage in a conversation.

I encourage you to join this celebration of Central New York art.

Your participation and support in the arts and cultural life of our communities confirms that there is so much more than sports teams and Destiny USA to attract people to our region.

And with that, you’re helping **raise the tide of economic development**.



Brett Snyder

Architecture students, Trevor Schur (recent graduate from University of Buffalo and native of Syracuse) and Dalton Iannuzzo, (SU Architecture student) [apply](#) vinyl templates used to create the downtown Syracuse mural. The vinyl templates allowed the detailed design to be applied to the masonry wall.

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### **The Other New York: 2012**

Participating institutions: Everson Museum of Art; ArtRage — The Norton Putter Gallery; Community Folk Art Center; Erie Canal Museum; Light Work; Onondaga Historical Association; Punto de Contacto/Point of Contact; Rosamond Gifford Zoo; Stone Quarry Hill Art Park; SUArt Galleries; Urban Video Project; The Warehouse Gallery; City of Syracuse; and XL Projects.

Light Work was the first venue to open, Aug. 15. Two venues — the Community Folk Art Center and Rosamond Gifford Zoo — open shows today. SUArt Galleries opens Aug. 30.

To learn more about The Other New York: 2012 and to learn about the artists and programming hosted by each organization, go to [everson.org](http://everson.org) and click the TONY 2012 link.

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