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Interview with Helena Fruscio, Director Berkshire Creative

By IAN DAVID MOSS | *Published: August 23rd, 2010*

Note to readers: today, I'm introducing a new interview series on Createquity. Even so often, I'm going to conduct some email correspondence with interesting folks who you (probably) haven't heard of about issues pertaining to this blog, and share the results with everyone here. Since this is a new feature, please do let me know how it going with a comment or a private message. I'm interested in any and all feedback you may have.



Helena Fruscio, Director of Berkshire Creative

I met Helena Fruscio when she spoke on a panel at the Connecting New England's Creative Communities conference in Providence this past March that was about looking "beyond our borders" for productive collaborations. I was impressed with the innovative range of programs offered by Berkshire Creative as well as its unique (as far as I know) role as a local council for the creative economy, not just the arts or culture. Helena's career path is equally notable: she is Berkshire Creative's director and has evolved the position from internship in summer 2007 in the fledgling organization to the paid position of Program Coordinator in late 2007, to the Director of Operations in 2008, finally leading the organization as she does today.

In 2008, Helena was appointed to the Massachusetts Creative Economy Council by Governor Deval Patrick. She is the Chair of the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce's Film and Performing Arts Award, she sits on Berkshire Navigation-Berkshire Data Collection Steering committee, Berkshire Blueprint Steering Committee, and is an active steering committee member of the Berkshire Young Professionals. Helena received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) School of Imaging Arts and Sciences in Ceramic Sculpture, with a concentration in Anthropology/Sociology.

Can you tell us about how you came to be the founding director of Berkshire Creative? What was the initiative that led to its formation and how did you first become involved?

The idea for the Berkshire Creative Economy Council (Berkshire Creative) was first conceived in 2006 by the brilliant and driven Director and CEO of the Norman Rockwell Museum, Laurie Norton Moffatt, and the President of the Hancock Shaker Village, Ed Spear. They happened to be sitting side by side at a meeting about a countywide economic development plan for the Berkshires. They realized their organizations and similar creative businesses needed to have a unified voice around their economic impact and the role creativity plays in Berkshire County.

Fast-forward to March 2007: A steering committee of 45 creative business owners and non-profit directors was formed, a grant from Massachusetts Technology Collaborative was received and the Berkshire Creative Economy Report produced by Mt. Auburn Associates had been unveiled. This report outlined the creative economy as one of the top industries in Berkshire County with over 6,000 jobs and millions being generated

