Ashley Clemmer Hoffman

I was fortunate to have been raised in a community where people not only knew each others’ names, but felt a personal responsibility for supporting each other in their success. It was a place where people worked with their hands and mastered their craft, where people volunteered together and organized fundraisers to help a neighbor who had fallen ill, where time felt still and there was nothing more important than sitting on an old drink box telling stories, or sitting by a fire listening to someone play an instrument. Looking back, I see that this environment influenced my passion for community-based work and demonstrated Joseph Beuys’s principles of "Social Sculpture"---the idea that we, as creative beings, have the ability to shape the environment around us.

I have witnessed the power that art has to bring people together, foster conversations, tackle difficult topics, and alter the way in which we see the world. My role in this artistic process includes serving as an instigator, curator, facilitator, manager, administrator, and connector.

For the past six years my work has existed within the context of two internationally recognized art spaces in Houston: as the Public Art Director at Project Row Houses and now as the Community Engagement Director at the Rothko Chapel. The form that my work takes is guided by both the needs of the host organization and the community members for whom I serve. These events, projects, and programs have included film screenings, dialogues, artist installations, artist residencies, volunteer experiences, and more. The ultimate product of my work is social transformation---the magical ripple effect of arts-based engagement transforming both individual and community alike.