

# The Center for Enchantment

The Center for Enchantment is located on Grand Street and seeks to create offerings & collaborations that animate the communities (past & present, human & non-human) of this place.

## A STORY ABOUT ENCHANTMENT

Once upon a time, the whole world was made of songs. There were rocks and wood and water and fire and lightning and wind and all the things of the world, living and non-living—but it was song that wove them into a whole, into a world, that kept the globe together and alive. Along the way, something changed: Now, our world is made of things, of matter—of magma, of elements—and the forces that bind them—magnetism, gravity. But, even today, there are still lands of enchantment, places where sky and land and soil and water and animals and plants and living people and ancestors and buildings all sing together. If you are very lucky, you can wander into one—a mysterious cave, a sacred grove, a hidden valley where harmony turns you round right and you can't help but sense that there are fairies or angels nearby. Some of these places do still exist on Earth, but more and more disappear every year. They are endangered places, like an endangered species, like polar bears and tigers. That's why it is very important for us to create new enchanted places.

The Center for Enchantment believes that re-enchantment is possible and that it can happen right here at Grand and Madison in the shadow of the Empire State Plaza.

We know that re-enchantment is possible because there are new enchanted places on Earth. For example, the Grafton Peace Pagoda, located about 25 miles east of here, near the Massachusetts border. That is a new place which is made of a song.

As you arrive at the Peace Pagoda, you first pass the gendaihoto, or "standing stone," that bears the mantra "Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo." It is this song which has created the Peace Pagoda, which has brought the whole place into being. At sunrise, people sing this song to the Peace Pagoda and to the first light of day, and they sing it again at the evening light. The song lives here within this gendaihoto, which keeps singing for people when there is no one there. Long after people are gone from the earth, the stone will keep singing.

What are the songs that would create an enchanted land here in the shadow of the Empire State Plaza?

## If this Street were a Song: a street interview radio show

If this street were a song, what would it sound like? A new radio show, *If this Street were a Song*, will launch May 2020 on **WCAA 107.3 fm**, the community radio station that broadcasts from **Grand Street Community Arts**.

Will you be a part of it? Our show is about the fabric of life on Grand Street—the voices, sounds, and stories of those of us who live, work, or spend time here (who sit on the stoops, commute on the sidewalks, or plant things in the ragtag community garden...)

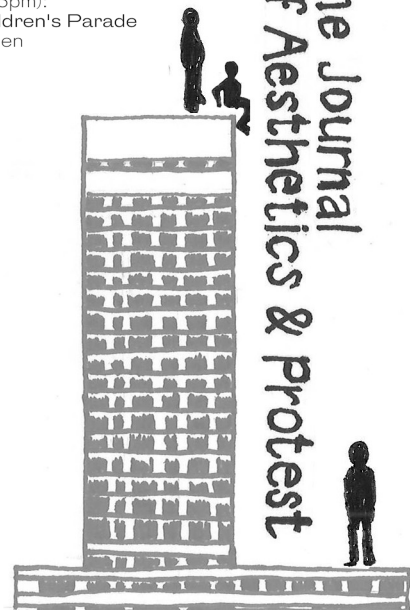
We are curious about things like: How long have you been spending time here? What brought you here? What sounds, smells or memories are connected to this street? What do you love or hate about it? Maybe you don't want to talk about that: Then, tell us your favorite songs? Sing one for us? We will sing one back for you.

### Contact the Center for Enchantment:

Tabling	Or, whenever you see Stephanie or Lex out with a microphone.
April 22 (3–5pm): Earth Day Rally West Capitol Park	(Or meet Lex in Gabi's Garden on Sunday morning!)
April 25 (1pm – 3pm): South End Earth Day Radix Center	April 25 (3pm–5pm): Earth Day Children's Parade to Gabi's Garden

culture beside itself  
as a part of issue #11

The Journal  
of Aesthetics & Protest



**we share a soundscape\***

all the sounds are surrounded by silence it's so quiet it's so loud

\* Sonic descriptions of Grand Street excerpted from interviews conducted at the Radix Center South End Earth Day (March 29 2017)

**Photos and images:**

Header background photo, p. 1: **Lake Tear of the Clouds**. Bottom photo, p. 1: **Gendaihoto & Peace Pagoda**. SOS ad background photo, far right: **Occupy Albany meeting at Grand Street Community Arts, 2011**. Image, near right: **Black Madonna of Tindari**. Image, below: **Abdul, photo by Bhawin (Life is Grand)**. Image, center right: **Arendt van Curler**. Image, center far right: **Photo of 8 Elm St., from Historic Albany Walking Tour Guide, 1980s**. Footer background photo, p. 2: **St. Anthony's Procession of the Feast of Our Lady of Tindari, 1930s**.

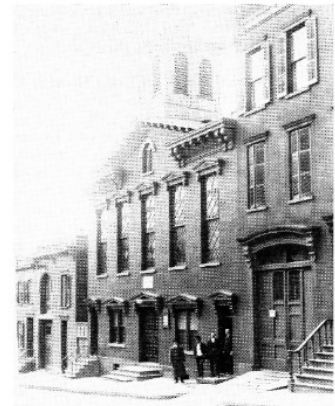


buildings. These five buildings were the last of the high style *Greek Revival* groups built in the Mansion district. Although there are similarities among rowhouses of all styles, characteristics which distinguish the *Greek Revival* are: very flat surfaces, enlivened only by slightly projecting sandstone sills, recessed doorways with *pilasters* and sidelights, a brick *frieze*, *dentiled cornice*, and a flat roof.

23) **St. Anthony's Church**. This church was built by the Italian community in 1908 and was designed, appropriately, in the *Italian Renaissance Revival* style. The church closed in 1974 following an exodus from the neighborhood in the 1960's. For many years the blocks around the church would be closed off for the annual Italian Festival.

► **Proceed South on Grand Street to Elm Street**

24) **78-92 Grand Street**. This eight building row on the east side of Grand Street was built in 1853 by James Eaton, a prominent Albany contractor. The unusual *Gothic* detail here features *drip molding* about the windows and a tall *finial* at the center of the row. The row represents a shift in style in the mid-19th century from classical to more romantic forms such as the *Gothic* and *Italianate* (styles which will be discussed below).



► **Proceed West on Elm Street to Number 8 Elm Street**

Notice the elegant and unaltered cast iron storefront at 77 Grand Street dating from the 1870's.

25) **8 Elm Street (1869)**. This structure was built originally as the Church of the Evangelical German Association. As the picture here indicates, a church steeple has been removed. In keeping with the changing ethnic composition of the neighborhood, St. Anthony's Church purchased the building in 1910 for use as a school. The structure is now used by the Free School Association of Albany.

Former Church of the Evangelical German Association; 8 Elm Street

