



# Spirit & Place Festival

New connections. New directions.

## 2016 Spirit & Place Festival explores the many meanings of “Home” for Hoosiers

21<sup>st</sup> annual Public Conversation will feature best-selling author and MacArthur Genius Matthew Desmond, Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz, community activist Allison Luthe, and political science professor Terri Jett  
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016  
Indiana Landmarks Center, 4 p.m., Free Admission

INDIANAPOLIS – The public is invited to be a “fly on the wall” as a sociologist, sculptor, community activist, and political scientist discuss the essence of home from their unique perspectives. This year’s Public Conversation examines the nuances of home to understand the opportunities and challenges society faces when it comes to creating just communities. Speakers include Matthew Desmond, author of *New York Times* bestseller *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in an American City*; Canadian sculptor, Timothy Schmalz; Allison Luthe, executive director of the Martin Luther King Community Center; and Terri Jett, associate professor of political science at Butler University. The speakers will discuss topics of poverty, homelessness, public policy, and the human spirit.

The 21st annual Public Conversation will close the 10-day Spirit & Place Festival on Sunday, Nov. 13 at 4 p.m. at Indiana Landmarks Center (1201 Central Ave). The event is made possible by Eskenazi Health, Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Roberts Park United Methodist Church, and the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI as part of the John D. Barlow Lecture in the Humanities, in partnership with the Spirit & Place Festival.

Celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year, the Spirit & Place Festival is Indianapolis’ largest collaborative festival that uses the arts, religion, and humanities as vehicles for shaping individual and community life through 10 days of experiences presented in partnership with upwards of 100 partner organizations. An initiative of The Polis Center, part of the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, the festival offers performances, exhibits, documentaries, and conversations that aim to spark meaningful discussions among diverse neighborhoods, voices, faiths, and organizations in Central Indiana.

The 2016 festival theme is “Home” and features events that explore everything from pet ownership to affordable housing, mass transit, art therapy, homelessness, race relations, public health, religion, home renovations, and more. These 40 events are presented through the lenses of elders and youth, veterans, immigrants and refugees, environmentalists, foodies, musicians and poets, and others. Participating organizations and audiences alike are given the chance to see and celebrate the variety of communities that call Indianapolis home beginning Friday, Nov. 4 with a debut performance of “Homework” by spoken word artist Tony Styxx at the Tube Factory artspace as part of the festival’s opening kick-off event.

### More on the Public Conversation speakers:

Harvard sociologist and MacArthur ‘Genius’ **Matthew Desmond’s** *New York Times* bestselling book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in an American City* paints a vivid and heartbreaking story of life on the edge for America’s poor. Even in the most desolate areas of American cities, evictions used to be rare. But today, most poor renting families are spending more than half of their income on housing, and eviction has become ordinary, especially for single mothers. Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. He has published several articles on the topic of poverty, housing, and social suffering and is the author of *The Racial Order* and *Race in America*.

World-renowned Canadian sculptor **Timothy Schmalz’s** “Homeless Jesus” piece outside Roberts Park United Methodist Church (UMC) downtown has caused many people to stop and stare over the past several months. Schmalz, a Catholic, describes his work as visual translations of the Gospels. He believes the more powerful—and truthful—the art, the more powerful the questions of the viewer become and the more likely they are to see

marginalized people as God sees them. Roberts Park UMC will host an exhibition of Schmalz's six "Matthew 25" sculptures side-by-side, for the first time in North American, from Nov. 11-13 along with additional programming.

**Allison Luthe** serves as the executive director of the Martin Luther King Community Center (MLK Center) located in Butler-Tarkington. Allison represents the MLK Center in community collaborations to bring about comprehensive social and economic advancement for families in the area surrounding 38<sup>th</sup> and Illinois and the mid-north area. During her more than 15-year career, she has tackled a wide range of social justice issues working for or volunteering with organizations such as Central Indiana Jobs for Justice, Greater Indianapolis NAACP, Forest Manor Multi-Service Center, and the United Way of Central Indiana.

Acting as moderator for the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Public Conversation, **Terri Jett** is the associate professor of political science and special assistant to the provost for diversity and inclusivity at Butler University. Jett is the board president of the ACLU of Indiana and also serves on the Indiana Debate Commission.

For details on the Public Conversation and all Spirit & Place programs and events, visit [www.spiritandplace.org](http://www.spiritandplace.org).

### **About the Spirit & Place Festival**

Celebrating the theme of HOME in 2016, Spirit & Place honors the role the arts, humanities, and religion play in shaping individual and community life. Through its November festival, people-centered community engagement, and year-round activities, Spirit & Place links people, places, ideas, and organizations to stimulate collaboration, experimentation, and conversation. A national model for building civically-engaged communities, Spirit & Place is an initiative of The Polis Center, part of the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Major partners include Lilly Endowment Inc.; Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, Inc.; Bohlsen Group; Indiana Landmarks; The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate; IUPUI; IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI; The Polis Center at IUPUI; WFYI Public Media; and more than 200 other community partners and donors. For more information, call The Polis Center at (317) 274-2455 or visit [www.spiritandplace.org](http://www.spiritandplace.org).

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