

**RICK LOWE
LOEB FELLOW 2002
FOUNDER, PROJECT ROW HOUSES
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

A few years after founding Project Row Houses in Houston's Third Ward, artist Rick Lowe knew he'd begun as a naive artist operating on the periphery of community development. He wanted to think more strategically about being an artist working in a redevelopment context, and he needed to dramatically ramp up the scale of Project Row Houses if it was to bring about significant community change.

Although Project Row Houses had received a prestigious Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, Rick hesitated to apply for the Loeb Fellowship. "Here I was this little guy from Texas, I didn't even have a degree and I was intimidated by academic environments," said Rick, "and I didn't know if such a small organization as ours could do without me for the duration." He's very glad now he applied. He says the fellowship experience gave him a sense of being more effective and changed the way he interacts with people at all levels.

Rick signed on as a part time fellow but greatly increased his time commitment once in Cambridge as Project Row Houses staff members were able to grow into their own leadership roles in his absence. He recalls a class he took on business ethics from Richard Tedlow at the Harvard Business School as especially inspirational and invigorating.

Rick describes the impact of the Loeb Fellowship as life changing for him. "It gave me a level of confidence I didn't have before. I have the confidence to be at the table with business people and all other kinds of

folks," says Rick, "when somebody introduces you as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard, automatically people are disarmed by it and look at you in a different way as an equal."

In talking about his Loeb year, Rick returns again and again to the qualities of his interpersonal relationships. He points out that, as opposed to the outside world, the environment of the Loeb Fellowship contains such a high level of respect and regard that his race wasn't a factor. He advises prospective African American applicants that they will thrive in the fellowship.

"There are all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds in the fellowship," he says, "but each one has a deep level of concern about community, and it's a rare experience to be able to share perspectives and gain greater appreciation of different ways to look at things."



"The most rewarding thing for me was getting to know the other fellows; they've become an amazing support network for me both personally and professionally."

<http://www.projectrowhouses.org>
<http://www.thirdwardtx.com>