



GRANTMAKERS IN THE ARTS

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Artistic Freedom Pressures on the Arts: Ideology, Money, Politics

By Bruce Sievers

What is the foundation for the argument supporting artistic freedom? Does it apply to publicly funded artistic activities? What should be the response to political pressures (from both left and right) that intrude on the operation of arts institutions? Does the arts community have a strategy for approaching these issues when they reach the political arena?

These questions, which lie at the center of current controversies surrounding freedom of expression in the arts, formed the basis for a symposium sponsored by Grantmakers in the Arts in December in San Francisco. Six speakers stimulated thought and discussion for the day-long session and their presentations provide the framework for the following article.

While the celebrated cases of Serrano, Mapplethorpe, and NEA reauthorization have stirred strong responses in defense of artistic freedom, an uneasiness remains in the arts community about the legal and conceptual foundations of that defense. At the heart of this unease is an underlying concern: Is there a coherent intellectual position underlying the defense of free expression in the arts? If so, what are its implications for members of arts institutions? For grantmakers?

The symposium provided an opportunity for grantmakers, arts administrators, artists, activists, and theorists to explore these issues in depth. The discussions sought to examine the complexities of arguments surrounding free speech, censorship, political influences on the arts, and the role of public and private grantmaking. They also sought to assess areas of conceptual agreement and their implications for institutional practices.

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Not surprisingly, the symposium revealed that the arts have much to learn from those who have engaged these issues in other arenas, particularly in the fields of constitutional law and education. Ambiguities about freedom of expression in the arts mirror deeper ambiguities about the nature of free speech and its historical role in the legal and political life of the United States.

The First Amendment and Free Expression in the Arts

Robert C. Post, a professor of law at the University of California, has written extensively on the history and theory of the First Amendment. In the symposium Post pointed out that the entire Anglo-American tradition of the legal control of speech is rooted in the English common law regulating defamation, blasphemy, sedition, and obscenity. Historically, this regulation served two purposes. It acknowledged and protected community norms of responsible speech (norms that made a particular community possible), thus supporting a vision of community life. It also protected individuals who were the target of speech experienced as violent, assaultive, or threatening, speech that threatened to disrupt community values.

The modern theory of First Amendment protection for such threatening or "outrageous speech" only began to be developed in the 1930s and 40s as the Supreme Court grappled with the contradictions between protecting the public arena of free speech and protecting individuals from slander and verbal assault.

Post argues that this modern theory, beginning with Cantwell v. Connecticut, has developed a delicate balance between the principle of preserving public space in which public opinion essential to a democratic society can be freely molded and the opposing principle of defending independent communities in which values also essential to a democratic society (such as respect for the dignity of the individual) can be cultivated. First Amendment protection of a neutral public space acknowledges the peculiarly U.S. experience of many coexisting communities and allows for the proliferation of "multitudes of divergent communities." It safeguards a sort of marketplace of ideas among these communities.

The balancing act involved in sustaining these opposing principles reveals an underlying ambiguity in First Amendment theory. The First Amendment creates a neutral space for public discourse so that a democratic public can select its own values and destiny. The Constitution insures that public discourse is neutral among various forms of community values, so that the law does not itself circumscribe in advance the range of democratic options.

To be democratically meaningful, however, choice must be deliberative; it cannot be experienced as irrational or coercive. Yet the dividing line between deliberation and coercion is established by the very same community norms whose enforcement is suspended by the First Amendment. The First Amendment thus rests on a paradox, for in the name of public deliberation it endangers the very norms that make deliberation possible.

Post argues that First Amendment theory will always oscillate between protecting outrageous speech and protecting the underlying community values that make freedom of speech possible and meaningful. For this reason the line between public discourse and discourse internal to a particular community is inherently blurred and subject to perennial negotiation. Ultimately the law will respond to the felt needs of the society, as they tilt toward maximizing the freedom of democratic choice or the conservation of community stability.

The ambiguities in cases involving freedom of artistic expression reflect these inherent contradictions in the underlying theory of free speech. The primary (non-libertarian) defense of freedom of expression in the arts would seem to derive from First Amendment theory based on the need for public space as a neutral ground wherein divergent communities can freely express themselves and concurrently strive to "alter the terms of community life." The imposition of state regulation on this arena threatens to undermine this public space and allow its usurpation by parochial interests. In the battle over acceptable expression the jury tends to function as the representative of community values and interests, while the judiciary serves as the neutral representative of an overarching constitu-

tional order that subordinates these values and interests to the requirements of public space within a constitutional democracy.

In a discussion following Post's presentation, it was suggested that the recent Federal District Court decision in favor of Bella Lewitzky would appear consistent with this line of reasoning. In this case there was, of course, the additional complexity of the expenditure of government funds, raising other legal issues which go beyond the realm of strict First Amendment theory.

Defending Free Expression from Attacks: From Theory to Practice

Mike Hudson, general counsel for People for the American Way, is a veteran of battles for free expression at the local level. He has struggled in practice with the theoretical issues outlined by Post -- defending the public space of the educational arena against attempts to impose on it the values of particular communities. Hudson has worked with school boards and others throughout the country on issues of textbook selection, curriculum content, and scholarly review. His organization has engaged in information gathering, documentation, and strategic action on behalf of defending the freedom of textbook selection from censorship attempts in local school districts.

Since 1980 People for the American Way has actively defended the free flow of ideas in U.S. society, particularly against attacks from the religious right. It was founded by Norman Lear and others as a response to highly organized and well-funded efforts mounted by the radical right to impose their particular values on the public arena through political action.

In 1989 People For became increasingly involved with issues in the arts to counter attacks on the Serrano and Mapplethorpe exhibitions by Rev. Donald E. Wildmon's American Family Association and other groups on the religious right. The same groups that People For had encountered in the conflicts over educational curriculum now are surfacing in controversies over the arts. People For began to work closely with a coalition of national arts organizations in developing strategies to offset the massive right-wing political efforts such as the huge mail campaign directed against the NEA in the early days of the controversy.

Hudson sees the 90s emerging as a decade of "cultural wars." He predicts that the arena of conflict over values will broaden from education to include the entire spectrum of culture at national, state and local levels. He envisions battles in the coming year on topics ranging from NEA appropriations and administrative decision-making to policies adopted by state arts councils and local governments on obscenity and decency. The ability of the arts

community to raise public awareness and understanding of the importance of First Amendment freedoms looms increasingly important.

PeopleFor's contribution to this effort is the establishment of a National Clearinghouse on Arts Censorship. The Clearinghouse will gather information on incidents of arts censorship, assist local communities in their efforts to defend freedom of expression from sectarian attacks, help pull together a national coalition of groups committed to freedom of expression, and work toward education of the public. In effect these efforts will help defend the "public space" described by Post in upcoming battles over community standards that inevitably will result from new court rulings and the announced strategies of the right.

The Challenges of Organizing around Arts Issues

Jeff Chester, a consultant who has worked both at the state and national levels on freedom of expression issues, described his experience during the past year in the disputes over content restrictions by the NEA. He found the task of organizing the arts community daunting. The individualism, diverse agendas, and political inexperience of people in the arts made it difficult to arrive at a common position that was strong enough to counter the highly organized efforts on the religious right. Indeed, members of the arts community often found themselves fighting each other as much as they fought common opponents. Nevertheless, a National Campaign for Freedom of Expression was created that, in the end, successfully helped to eliminate heavily restrictive language from the NEA reauthorization bill. Chester considers the victory very marginal, however, since the inclusion of "decency" language and other administrative provisions could have a chilling effect on NEA's grantmaking.

Chester sees enormous tasks ahead: developing a coherent and powerful voice for the arts and educating the public on the critical nature of issues surrounding artistic freedom. He views grassroots organizing, such as that occurring in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Seattle, as crucial and recommends three specific strategies: (1) educating the arts community about the tools of political discourse — media, mail, lobbying, and other techniques; (2) educating the public on the importance of fostering a diversity of ideas and allowing dissent in society; and (3) developing resources that allow organizations and individuals to continue this work in addition to their primary activities.

What's an Arts Institution to Do?

Administrators of arts institutions increasingly find themselves at the center of these battles over artistic freedom and competing political agendas. In planning for an art

exhibition, **Harry Parker**, Director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, faced external interference from a source quite different from those previously discussed. In his case, threats to close an exhibition came from those who objected to its funding source. The Museum, through extensive cooperation with Maritshuis in the Netherlands, planned to present the only U.S. showing of a major exhibition, "Great Dutch Masters." The exhibition had been created under the sponsorship of Royal Dutch Shell, an international oil company with extensive holdings in South Africa. When the exhibition was announced, the sponsorship was criticized. The criticism was aided by a threat that Nelson Mandela would bypass San Francisco if the exhibition were allowed to come to the city. As opposition grew, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors determined that the Museum could not proceed with Shell sponsorship. The Museum's board acquiesced and agreed to proceed with the exhibition but to find alternative funding sources. Such sources were found (including private foundations), and the exhibition is scheduled to go forward without mention of Shell.

Parker is deeply troubled by the experience. He sees the city government's demands on the board as being very close to censorship and believes it sets a dangerous precedent by allowing arts activities to be manipulated for their symbolic value. He is also concerned about the problem of consistency. Should the principle be extended to include sponsorship of the arts by other major corporations engaged in what some deem to be undesirable activities, e.g., production of military hardware, pesticides, alcohol and cigarettes? What about private foundations whose endowments derive from similar sources? At the same time, he has concerns about corporations that use the arts for their own symbolic manipulation. The Museum's board has adopted no new policies as a result of the episode, but Parker is considering the establishment of an office of external affairs to monitor social policy concerns.

Peer Review Panels:

Can the "Arms Length" Principle Survive?

State arts councils are no more immune from political pressures than are arts organizations, according to **Paul Manicucci**, a former administrator of the California Arts Council. Manicucci described increasing attacks on CAC grant decisions from both left and right. Groups unhappy with the outcome of the Council's grantmaking process have directed criticism toward decision-making procedures, especially toward peer review. Critics from both sides of the political spectrum charge that peer review is elitist and insufficiently responsive to public desires. Although admitting there is room for improvement, Manicucci defends peer review as the procedure most capable of preserving the integrity of the arts, and he sees the criticism as yet another example of attempts to manipulate the arts for non-artistic purposes. He predicts

that political pressures will increase rather than decrease and, like Hudson, sees the 90s as a "decade of wars about cultural values."

The problem of peer review represents for Manicucci the challenge facing the arts at large in this country — the difficulty of preserving the independent voice in a democratic culture. He cited Peter Coyote's description of the inevitable tension: "Democracy is inclusive and tends toward the mean, while the arts are exclusive and tend toward the unique." The arts require insulation from the controlling ideological and political forces that exert so much influence in the modern state. They therefore depend on that precariously balanced neutral public space described in the Cantwell opinion in which "many types of life, character, opinion, and belief can develop unmolested and unobstructed."

Free Expression for Public Broadcasters

Preserving neutral public space has been a primary challenge to the mass media during the past several decades. David Selnicker, Executive Director of the Pacifica Foundation, described Pacifica's involvement in five major legal battles over First Amendment issues related to radio broadcasting, one of which resulted in the establishment of the FCC's "indecent standards." As a pervasive social force, the media cross the boundary between public and community realms. Their capacity to "alter the terms of community life" (to use Post's phrase) makes them vulnerable to attack and subject to potential influence from many directions. For Pacifica this vulnerability has had important consequences. The organization has been forced to expend over \$500,000 and vast amounts of staff time for legal defense. It has seen the need to refuse grants of any kind for program support. It has developed arduously crafted policies on such topics as "insensitive language." Pacifica's experience provides an important lesson to other organizations: defending the public space for freedom of expression can exact a high institutional cost.

Observations for Grantmakers

The symposium was not intended to reach definitive conclusions on the theory and practice of artistic freedom. Nevertheless, some areas of common agreement emerged during the day long interchange among presenters and grantmakers. There was common understanding that the right to freedom of expression is similar to other basic rights — it is not absolute but is an essential balancing component of the modern democratic state. There was agreement that the strongest defense of artistic freedom lies in the concept of maintaining public space in which divergent communities can coexist, a principle anchored both in modern constitutional law and U.S. values. There was consensus that a broad public education campaign

based on this principle is an essential task for the entire arts community. And there was agreement on the need for grantmakers to support individual institutions in their efforts to defend artistic freedom and insulate themselves from external controls on the content of their work.

For grantmakers in the arts, public education and advocacy often seem distant from the immediate problems of supporting projects and maintaining arts organizations. The symposium suggested, however, that the welfare of the arts over the long term may well depend on their supporters' ability to develop and pursue strategies that emphasize the critical role the arts play in a free democratic society.

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Artistic Freedom: Further Reading

Suggestions for further reading on legal questions related to artistic freedom include:

- An article by Robert C. Post, "Outrageous Speech and the Constitution," published in *Dissent*, Summer 1990. Copies of the magazine can be obtained from its publisher, the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, (212) 687-0890.
- An article by Sheldon H. Nahmod, "Artistic Expression and Aesthetic Theory: The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the First Amendment," published in the *Wisconsin Law Review*, 1987. The Review is published by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School, 975 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI, 53706, (608) 262-2240.
- The United States District Court decision in the case of *Bella Lewitzky Dance Foundation v. John E. Frohnmayer, et al. and of Newport Harbor Art Museum v. National Endowment for the Arts, et al.* Bruce Sievers has copies and will send you one on request. Contact him at the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, 1160 Battery St., Suite 400, San Francisco, CA., (415) 986-4779.

Fighting Back/ Fighting Among Ourselves

By David Mendoza

David Mendoza is the Executive Director of Artist Trust. Artist Trust is a non-profit organization that serves artists in all disciplines in Washington state with a range of programs including fellowships, information and grants for artists' projects. It has also become a strong voice for artists both within and beyond the arts community.

Through David's leadership, Artist Trust has participated vigorously in national and regional debate about public funding of the arts and freedom of artistic expression. Throughout these advocacy efforts, Artist Trust has presented and defended the perspective of the individual artist. In recognition of the effectiveness of this work, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has just announced the award of a special, unsolicited President's Grant of \$25,000 to Artist Trust.

David also serves on the boards of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression and Art Matters, Inc./National Trust for the Visual Arts. Whenever opportunities arise, he accepts speaking engagements that allow him to share his experience as an advocate for artists. He was a panelist for the Council on Foundation's Annual Conference in Boston last year. The following essay was written specifically for this newsletter.

This past November, I was invited to attend and to be a panelist for the American Assembly. The overall Assembly topic was "The Arts and Government: Questions for the Nineties." The panel topic was "Who decides?: The grantmaking process, artistic freedom, and the right to apply," moderated by Schuyler Chapin. My remarks here are derived from my presentation on that panel, which itself grew out of a perspective gained from eighteen months of activity surrounding the reauthorization of the NEA and the fight for freedom of artistic expression. The NEA reauthorization and the 1990 elections both had taken place just a few weeks prior to this conference.

My observation was that the real topic of this American Assembly session was not "Arts and Government" but, rather, "Arts and Democracy in the 90s." Various forms of government, past and present, have had a relationship to the art and artists of their time, but this session was really about the current and future relationship of art (in the U.S.) to democracy (in the U.S.). Indeed, the political and legal battles of the past year and a half are specifically a function

of art and artistic expression in a democratic society. The challenges are not just challenges for art and artists but for democracy itself.

An Excess of Democracy

As an adjunct to my remarks, I recommend *Democracy: A Project by Group Material*, a book published in 1990 by Bay Press (Seattle), edited by Brian Wallis and part of the Dia Art Foundation series, Discussions in Contemporary Culture. In his introduction, "Democracy and Cultural Activism," Wallis refers to a 1975 report by the Trilateral Commission, assembled by David Rockefeller in 1973 to coordinate a political and economic partnership among North America, Western Europe, and Japan:

"Their report, 'The Crisis of Democracy,' was an attempt to determine the root causes of the worldwide outbreak of civil unrest and demand for political participation that was creating international economic stagnation... For Samuel P. Huntington, noted professor of government at Harvard and author of the section of the report on the U.S., the crisis of democracy was a result of what he called "an excess of democracy"... Without irony, Huntington observed that as more people became involved in the political process in the 1960s, challenges to authority, disappointments, and crises were inevitable because 'democratic societies cannot work when the citizenry is not passive.' "

In my opinion, the problems that developed surrounding the reauthorization of the NEA and, in particular, the attacks on the well-respected peer panel review process are a direct outcome of an "excess of democracy." If you viewed the names and faces, ethnicity, gender, economic status, and sexual preference of the hundreds of individuals who have served on NEA panels, you would see a more accurate mirror of the United States than you would if you peered from the gallery onto the floor of the U.S. Senate where Jesse Helms mounted his attacks or, for that matter, into the chambers of most state legislatures. (City councils seem to be gradually gaining a better representation of the electorate.) This is not to suggest that cultural representation on NEA panels cannot be improved, it is merely to propose that the panels more closely reflect the people of this country than does Congress. Having completed a stint on jury duty just two weeks before the American Assembly conference, I was newly aware of that epitome of peer panels—and even that was not a perfect sample of citizen representation.

Is it surprising, then, that some artists and art funded by the NEA in fact represent the voices, visions, and cultural expression of members of the public whose same voices are not fully heard or recognized by the larger political body?

We must look directly at the artists and the art that have been at the center of this battle. First, the work of a gay male artist/photographer who died of AIDS—Robert Mapplethorpe. Then, the work of a Latino artist who is Catholic—Andres Serrano. Followed by the work of another gay male artist who has AIDS—David Wojnaworicz, and by an exhibition about the devastating effect of AIDS in one community—“Witness Against our Dying” at Artist Space in New York City curated by Nan Goldin. Later, four artists who are known as the “NEA Four” because NEA Chair John Frohnmayer withheld their grants over the recommendations of a peer panel—two gay men (Tim Miller and John Fleck), one lesbian (Holly Hughes), and a feminist performance artist (Karen Finley).

Can we really be surprised that these artists are the targets of this battle? Is it surprising that a Congress of mostly middle-aged and older, white heterosexual males did not come to the defense of these artists’ right to free expression?

At the core of this battle is homophobia, bigotry, racism and misogyny—the same fears that fuel the abortion debate, the AIDS crisis, the drug problem, and the sad state of many children in America. The people at the heart of these battles have no “peers” in the panel that is Congress. To paraphrase Samuel Huntington (and Brian Wallis), as more people, these people without peers, become involved in the political process, crises and challenges to authority are inevitable.

Current Conflicts

The conflicts that concern me most are tied directly to the dangers of a democracy facing ever-broader participation. These conflicts persist despite the victories of the Dennis Barrie/Mapplethorpe trial, the ruling on the unconstitutionality of the NEA obscenity oath, and the reauthorization of the NEA (notwithstanding the “standards of decency” language and the shift of federal dollars to the states). In the helter-skelter of political grandstanding, artists becoming activists, mass media attention, and the retrenchment of allies, we have become prey to an insidious divide-to-conquer tactic. We have become prey, but we must not become victims.

Conflicts that threaten to divide us include:

- The escalating ill-will in multi-cultural communities for “cutting-edge/ avant-garde” artists, and vice-versa;
- The retreat of some large arts institutions from the defense of individual artists’ freedom of expression;
- The romance of the rural masking a contempt for “urban/downtown” culture (read gay/lesbian, feminist, liberal).

These dichotomies are most apparent in the proposed and now partially legislated new funding policies of the NEA that were posited as harmless compromises with the far right to save the NEA—increased support for multi-cultural programs, for large arts institutions, and for rural arts activities. The truth is, of course, that undercurrents of dissent in each of these areas preceded the attacks by Helms and Rohrabacher. These attacks have merely cast a light on and exaggerated preexisting problems. We must address them now, both because they represent real dissension and also because we must not help the opposition win the war through philosophic and artistic divisions among ourselves.

I only begin to describe the nature of these conflicts here. Solutions will require contemplation, coordination, and collaboration of many acting together.

The Multi-Cultural and Cutting-Edge

This division is dramatized through the following dialogue:

Multi-Cultural: Hey, this is your problem (the “NEA Four,” for example). Now you know what it’s like for us. Our voices have always been censored by the NEA, and now just because it’s hitting the downtown avant-garde white artists, you expect us to jump on the train and help you fight. Besides, you’re getting a larger share of the dollars than we are.

Cutting-Edge: Hey, come on and help us. We need you to write and lobby your congressional rep. And get more people from your community to do the same. You have a vested interest because your groups have been getting sizeable support from the NEA when you can’t get it from those other corporate types. We’re in this together, you know. They’re after all of us.

This is a particularly painful split because one might assume that artists, arts community, and members of multi-cultural communities would have more in common with each other than, say, with Jesse Helms or the Reverend Donald Wildmon. At the core of this historically wrong assumption, though, is a truth: although those in power tend to lump all the have-nots together, the have-nots themselves may have little in common with each other except oppression. In the concentration camps, the Jews, communists, and homosexuals had their own pecking order and conflicts with each other.

Further, the assumptions of the predominantly white, middle-class avant-garde that Catholic Hispanics or Black Baptists would embrace Mapplethorpe or Serrano any more readily than their own parents would, is a naive but no less harmful form of racism or cultural insensitivity. Likewise, homosexuality is no more—often less—acceptable in Asian- or Afro-American communities. In fact, gay and lesbian artists of color have more often found a “home and

family" (both artistic and emotional) in the urban avant-garde artist community than in their own ethnic communities. The result is a residue of resentment on both sides.

Large Institutions and Artists

This scenario took shape in the earliest days of the attack on the NEA, Mapplethorpe, and Serrano. The Corcoran set the tone and standard for the retreat of many large arts institutions from the defense of artists. The first and most passionate voices of defense for free artistic expression came from individual artists and the organizations that work most closely with them (represented by NAAO, the National Association of Artists' Organizations). In the early days, many of the major institutions were more than willing to jump on the bandwagon to compromise. The script:

Institutions: Don't punish all of us just because of a few mistakes in grantmaking at the NEA. After 25 years and over 80,000 grants there have only been a handful of mistakes. If you don't pipe down and stop defending these artists (who quite frankly we find disgusting), you'll ruin it for all of us. Congress won't reauthorize the NEA, or they will reduce the funding. Is that what you want?

Artists: Sure, you guys don't have to worry. No matter what the final compromise, the 'national treasures' are sure to get funding—maybe even more because they'll take it away from us. Can you really hold your heads up when you won't defend the right to free artistic expression for artists whose work your institution depends on? (Albeit, the artists you present are mostly dead.)

This debate is one that we could all ignore in more passive times. The boards of major arts institutions in America are not very different from, for example, the U.S. Senate—a few more women and a little more money perhaps, but not many or much more. They include the CEOs of corporations and the holders of much of the nation's wealth. Just because they give dollars to the opera and symphony doesn't make them that much keener on gay writers or feminist performance artists. For some of them, avant-garde often means Robert Rauschenberg and Helen Frankenthaler.

The schism was revealed as people fighting for freedom of artistic expression approached board presidents and staff of large arts institutions for help in reaching local congressional delegations or funds to support the effort. The stone-walling and patronizing that the artists sometimes encountered were stinging blows. As major donors not only to art institutions but also to political campaigns, these board members could carry a larger "vote" with a senator than would thousands of names on petitions from artists. The difficulty arose because some arts boards members helped support the election of the very legislators attacking artists, and the pleas from artists was met

either with lip service or a flat no.

While large institutions in some communities did play an active role in support of artists and other institutions finally did move away from willing compromise with the far right, many of them never took a leadership role equal to the power they hold within their respective communities. The result is a lingering animosity among colleagues within the arts community.

Rural and Urban

This script permeates U.S. myth: things are much nicer, cleaner, better, and morally superior in the country than in the urban metropolitan centers. Life can be nice in the country. There are families, churches, gardens, and schools. These also exist in urban centers and, ironically, urban artist lofts are full of grown children from these country towns because their independent or unconventional behavior or viewpoints was not tolerated in their hometowns. We must not forget that life can be difficult and unpleasant in the country, too.

Artists themselves have taught us about some of the less-than-romantic aspects of rural life including the usual laundry list of incest, child and wife abuse, racism, homophobia, and misogyny. The plays of Sam Shepard and the novels of Russell Banks and Alice Walker tell the other side of the "folk" tale. In fact, David Wojnarowicz' exhibition, "Tongues of Flame" at Illinois State University, was an example of a program that had a profound impact on residents in this rural community, yet I doubt that this is what the members of Congress had in mind when they urged more federal dollars for "rural arts programs."

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I hesitate to articulate these schisms for fear of promoting or prolonging them, yet I sense that without being aired these sore spots will fester. We must begin a meaningful dialogue so that we can recognize and understand these conflicts among us. Only then can we achieve cultural equity and cultural democracy, and only then can we play a meaningful role in the constant defense of democracy here at home. How, indeed, can democracy in the United States be separated from this nation's culture? The remarkable and profound flourishing of art in the United States during the past thirty years, nourished in part by the NEA, has brought us to a crisis in democracy through an excess of democracy. Our living artists are an integral part of this country's dynamic and diverse culture, and, as such, manifest a magnificent excess of democracy.

News . . .

Earthquake: The Arts Recovery Fund

Just three weeks after the devastating October 1989 earthquake in the San Francisco area, A.B. Spellman from the National Endowment for the Arts contacted private grantmakers in the area to offer NEA support to help the Bay Area arts community recover from the damage.

With this stimulus, the Arts Recovery Fund was established under the direction of a committee comprised of representatives of Bay Area funders including the Fleishhacker Foundation, Grants for the Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, San Francisco Foundation (financial agent for the Fund), and Northern California Grantmakers (administering agent for the Fund). The committee functioned with very little bureaucracy. It raised money, established a selection process, set up decision-making panels of artists and arts administrators, received requests, distributed grants, managed the money, and kept all the records.

The NEA made a \$555,000 grant to the Arts Recovery Fund with a three-to-one matching requirement. (The grant was made from 1989 NEA funds so the support came with no restrictions on re-granting and no content restrictions.) By the end of 1990, the entire match was raised creating a total fund of \$2.22 million. Grants were made on the recommendation of peer-panels set up specifically for this purpose. More than 80 arts organizations and 90 individual artists received support. The Arts Recovery Fund was able to support more than 90% of its applicants, and the sizes of grants were meaningful. Individual artists, for example, received grants of up to \$25,000.

"The Arts Recovery Fund was a wonderful experience of funders coming together," says John Kreidler of the San Francisco Foundation, "and the

NEA deserves great credit. Their timely gesture made the Recovery Fund happen and helped it happen effectively."

New Fellowship Program for Artists

The Board of Trustees of the Pew Charitable Trusts has just approved a grant of \$3,475,000 to establish the first three and a half year cycle of a new fellowship program for artists. In this cycle, \$50,000 fellowships will be available to artists in the five-county Philadelphia area. Over the course of the cycle, applications will be reviewed in twelve arts disciplines, four disciplines each year. Artists will be able to use the fellowships during a period of up to two years.

After many years of planning, the program will be fully developed over the course of 1991 and will be one of the largest private philanthropic fellowship programs for artists in the country. It will be administered by the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and guidelines will be available later this year. The Trusts is also exploring opportunities for the expansion of the program on a regional basis throughout the country.

Arts Loan Fund Turns Down NEA Grant

The Arts Loan Fund in Northern California turned down a \$75,000 Challenge III grant from the National Endowment for the Arts principally because of the content restrictions placed on 1990 NEA funds.

The Arts Loan Fund is a cooperative effort of twenty-four funding sources in Northern California. In the past ten years, the Fund has made loans totaling \$5 million to small and mid-sized non-profit arts organizations. Through its parent organization, the Northern California Grantmakers, the Fund applied for \$75,000 from the NEA to increase its capitalization and to make changes in its operations. After evaluation by NEA grants panels, the Arts Loan Fund was awarded a matching grant of \$75,000.

Then, the Arts Loan Fund began to feel the impact of the restrictions placed on NEA funds in that fiscal year, 1990. Grant documents did not arrive. The NEA apparently could not decide whether the activities of the Fund constituted re-granting, which was restricted in 1990. Representatives of arts groups served by the Fund started calling with concern about the content restrictions that would be placed on the funds.

Members of the Fund determined to support the concerns of their local constituency. In many respects the Fund was less vulnerable than the artists and small groups it served and was in a stronger position to take a stand. Fund representatives began by asking many questions. In response, they were informed by NEA staff that the content restrictions would apply to all the loans they made and that the Fund would have to monitor the activities of each arts borrower, acting in essence as the NEA's "content cop." They also learned that all their matching funds would be bound by the same restrictions.

Based on the information they gathered and on a belief that, overall, the content restrictions were wrong, the boards of both the Arts Loan Fund and the Northern California Grantmakers voted unanimously to reject the grant.

Information Hotline Established for Visual Artists

The Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation, in cooperation with the American Council for the Arts, has launched a nationwide toll-free information hotline (800-232-2789) to serve visual artists. The hotline service was initiated by the Artists Advisory Committee of the Foundation as part of its mission to assist visual artists.

Artists can call the number from anywhere in the U.S. and reach the Arts Resource Consortium Library at the American Council for the Arts in New York City. The hotline's hours of operation are 2-5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. During these hours library staff members

take calls from artists and match their specific needs with the information available at the library. Primarily a referral service, the hotline provides access to information on where to go and whom to contact regarding such topics as funding, housing, insurance, health and law.

Public Money & the Muse

Public Money & the Muse: Essays on Government Funding for the Arts is a new book developed by the American Assembly in conjunction with its November 1990 session titled, "The Arts and Government: Questions for the Nineties." For this session, the American Assembly brought together 71 people from government, business, universities, labor, media, the law, and the arts for three days of rigorous discussion of the relationship between government and the arts in the United States. *Public Money & the Muse* is a compilation of papers prepared for participants as background reading for the Assembly session. It was edited by Stephen Benedict, who was co-director with Steven Lavine of the Assembly session. The book will be published in the spring, 1991, and can be ordered from its publisher, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110.

The "Arts and Government" session itself included panel discussions, small group working sessions, an address by John E. Frohnmayer, Chairman of the NEA, and a performance piece by Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Participants identified emerging issues that will confront the arts in the decade ahead and made policy recommendations that address these needs. A short report from the session is available free of charge from the American Assembly, 412 Altschul Hall, Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027-6598. A draft of the report was reviewed by Assembly participants at the close of the session and includes a statement of basic principles, findings and recommendations, and a complete list of participants.

The American Assembly was estab-

lished by Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University in 1950. It holds at least two national meetings on selected topics each year. Background papers are commissioned, and individuals representing a broad range of experience are invited to meet for several days to discuss the topic and consider alternatives for national policy. At the close of the session, participants adopt a final report of findings and recommendations.

Study of Local Participation in the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts has initiated a pilot project designed to help local communities and arts organizations learn who does and does not participate in the arts. *The Study of Local Participation in the Arts* will be implemented in ten to twelve sites nationwide, and the NEA is now in the process of identifying the specific communities to be included. Local surveys will take place in 1992 and will parallel a national Survey of Public Participation in the Arts that will be conducted by the Census Bureau.

The NEA Research Division has conducted national surveys of participation since 1982. These studies document the level of arts participation by art form and by key demographic characteristics. This new pilot project will give the communities involved the opportunity to compare local responses with the larger national sample and will also allow them to include questions related to specific topics of interest in their own area.

Communities interested in participating must demonstrate a commitment to conducting the surveys and a capacity to raise partial funding for the project. The NEA will provide technical assistance in the design of the local surveys along with modest funding. The Endowment has contracted with an independent research firm to provide assistance to local communities in implementing this project. Anyone interested in more information should contact Tom Bradshaw at the NEA's Research Division, (202) 682-5432.

Arts Funding in Central and Eastern Europe

The Getty Grant Program and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation recently organized a meeting in New York on the subject of funding for the visual arts and related disciplines in Central and Eastern Europe. Among the eleven funding organizations represented were some with a long history of funding in this area as well as others with no past experience but with an interest. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information about what has been done in the past and to look for ways that funders might collaborate in the future.

An underlying goal of the meeting was to highlight the need for arts support in this part of the world. As organizations in the West develop economic assistance plans for these countries, it may be easy to overlook the need for arts funding. Central and Eastern European arts organizations may find themselves in even more difficult financial straits after the transition to a more democratic society if the state support they've previously received is not replaced.

The informal meeting successfully began to explore possible cooperative efforts. A second session is in the works and anyone with an interest in this topic should contact Deborah Marrow at the Getty Grant Program, 401 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1000, Santa Monica, CA 90401, (213) 393-4244, telefax (213) 451-5570.

Arts and AIDS

The AIDS Working Group of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Dayton Hudson Foundation hosted a one day forum of 30 key individuals and organizations actively concerned with the effects of HIV/AIDS on the arts and on people working in the arts. The forum, held on March 8 in Washington D.C., provided an opportunity for attendees to exchange information and ideas and to promote cooperation in shaping public awareness of the epidemic and its impact on the arts.

More News . . .

Support for the Arts in Unsupportive Times

In December 1990, the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation sponsored a workshop titled "Support for the Arts in Unsupportive Times." Participants included private and public funders as well as arts administrators, artists, and individual philanthropists. The purposes of the workshop included exploring new approaches to supporting the arts, identifying the gaps in current programs of arts support, and, in general, discussing the need to rethink priorities. Prominent among the suggested priorities for support were multi-cultural activities, individual artists, museum acquisitions, and strengthening freedom in the arts.

This workshop was the fifth in the series of Weisman Workshops in the Arts. The Foundation sponsors two workshops each year that bring together approximately eighteen people who are knowledgeable on a particular theme. Each group meets and debates the topic over a two-day period. The discussion is transcribed, edited, and published. The proceedings from the most recent workshop will be available in about four months. Two other workshop reports are currently available: "Collaboration between Artists and Architects" and "Art, Architecture, and Society," on the social responsibility of architecture. For more information contact Henry Hopkins at the Weisman Foundation, 10350 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 160, Los Angeles, CA 90025, (213) 277-5321.

Art Matters Inc./National Trust for the Visual Arts

Art Matters Inc. has initiated plans for an endowment to provide increased financial support for artists and innovative visual arts. The fund, Art Matters Inc./National Trust for the Visual Arts, will be used to provide the fol-

lowing: fellowships that enable artists to work in uninterrupted and concentrated circumstances; grants to organizations that directly support the work of artists; and projects that encourage greater interaction between artists and the public.

The Board of Art Matters is establishing the endowment in response to the erosion of support available to individual artists, especially from public sources. The Board believes that events of the past several years threaten to both politicize and restrict public support for artists. Art Matters was created in 1985 to provide fellowships for individual artists and grants to arts organizations that support artists' work. Especially now, while plans are being laid, Art Matters welcomes ideas, comments, and suggestions. For further information contact board members Cee Brown (212-619-1955) or Philip Yenawine (212-708-9780).

A History of Cultural Activity in St. Paul

From Generation to Generation: Exploring a Community's Regard for its Arts and Culture is the title of a new report issued by the St. Paul Foundation. The report's two sections first document the development of the arts in the St. Paul area from 1955 to 1985, and then discuss challenges facing future cultural development. The report was researched through interviews with people involved in the arts in St. Paul and review of historical documentation available in the St. Paul Foundation's files. One goal of the report is to bring the history of St. Paul's cultural activity to light at a time when many of the individuals involved in St. Paul's arts organizations are either new to the area, to the arts, or are too young to be familiar with past patterns of cultural development. Copies of the report may be obtained by writing to Bob Tracy, Program Officer, The St.

Paul Foundation, 1120 Norwest Center, St. Paul, MN 55101.

MacArthur Foundation Report Available

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation engaged The Conservation Company, a consulting firm specializing in non-profit and foundation work, to review the funding patterns of major regional foundations in the United States. A recently published report on The Conservation Company's findings includes profiles of recent initiatives organized by major foundations in their communities and discusses the differences inherent in a local focus, as opposed to a national one. Copies of the report are available by contacting Rebecca Riley at the MacArthur Foundation, 140 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL, 60603, (312) 726-8000.

Grantmakers in the Arts Memberships

Watch for Grantmakers in the Arts' membership brochures at the Council on Foundations Conference. If you would like membership information but aren't attending the conference, call Francine Cabonargi at the MacArthur Foundation, (312) 726-8000.

News from Grantmakers in the Arts

1991 Conference October 9-11, 1991

The 1991 Conference of Grantmakers in the Arts is being planned for October 9-11 in Philadelphia. With a preliminary title, "Broadening the Dialogue," the conference will focus on arts organizations and activities that frequently have been outside funders' main concerns or beyond their guidelines. Conference topics currently under consideration include community-based arts activities, methods of evaluation and determination of "quality," alternative organizational structures, and the viability of earned income as a standard of accomplishment. The proposed conference will emphasize one-on-one interaction with arts workers who are exploring new ways of working within their communities and disciplines. The program will focus on site visits offering conferencees "hands-on" experience with ten to twelve organizations or programs. The Grantmakers in the Arts' contact is Ella King Torrey at the Pew Charitable Trusts, 3 Parkway, Suite 501, Philadelphia, PA 19102, (215) 587-4015.

A Benchmark Study of Arts Philanthropy

Arts grantmakers have a strong interest in the study of arts philanthropy, according to a survey of participants at the 1987 Grantmakers in the Arts Conference in San Francisco. Can data about arts grantmaking in different cities and regions be compared? How true is the assumption that some arts disciplines are underserved, and is this consistent in all parts of the country? These and other areas of research were identified as important to professional arts grantmakers as well as to grantseekers in their efforts to secure support for arts programs.

The survey results convinced Grantmakers in the Arts to consider initiating a research program, with the full knowledge that, organizationally, Grantmakers is not large or experienced enough to conduct significant research on its own. Meetings in 1988 and 1989 with Loren Renz, the Director of Research for The Foundation Center, have resulted in plans for a benchmark study in arts philanthropy. Since 1956, the Foundation Center has served as the primary source of public information about private and community foundations. The Center's Office of Research has produced benchmark studies in other fields, the first having been completed in 1989.

This benchmark study will be the first comprehensive study of the statistics and practice of private arts philanthropy in this country. It will provide a reference point, a benchmark, against which future information can be compared. It is anticipated that the results of this study will be useful to grantmakers as they design, position, and implement their arts giving programs. For grantseekers, the information should be an invaluable resource and an indication of trends. The study will be designed with public sector grantmakers in mind as well, and the resulting data base should allow for productive comparisons and complementary decision-making. Above all, this benchmark study will mark a responsible attitude toward cooperative data analysis within the field of private arts philanthropy.

An Advisory Committee of approximately 10 individuals, jointly appointed by Grantmakers in the Arts and The Foundation Center, will provide direction for the arts research study. The administration of the study and the production of the findings in book form will be managed by The Foundation Center's Office of Research.

The study will require substantial funding. Grantmakers in the Arts is presently in the process of raising the necessary funds and will proceed with the benchmark study only if sufficient subsidy is raised to support the effort. If all goes well, the benchmark analysis will begin in mid-1991. The Grantmakers' contact for this study is Cynthia Gehrig, at the Jerome Foundation, W-1050 First National Bank Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55101, (612) 224-9431.

About the Newsletter

The next issue of the Grantmakers in the Arts Newsletter will be published right after Labor Day. The deadline for information is July 1, 1991. Copy should be sent to Sarah Lutman, Chair of the Newsletter Committee, the Bush Foundation, E-900 First National Bank Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55101, (612) 227-0891 or to Anne Focke, Consulting Editor, 811 First Ave. #403, Seattle, WA 98104, (206) 343-0769.

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Arts Programming

at the 1991 Council on Foundations Conference

The 1991 Council on Foundations Conference will take place at the Chicago Hilton and Towers, April 22-24, 1991. For information about the conference, including registration materials, call the Council on Foundations at (202) 466-6512.

Grantmakers in the Arts Hosts an Evening at the Field Museum

As part of the 1991 Council on Foundations Conference, the Grantmakers in the Arts are sponsoring a lecture/tour and reception at the Field Museum of Natural History from 6-8 p.m., on Tuesday, April 23. This event will allow arts funders and others to explore behind-the-scenes preparation for a comprehensive exhibition on the natural history of Africa and its peoples, scheduled to open in 1993. Michael Spock, Vice President of Public Programs, and Karen Hutt, co-developer of the Africa exhibit, will lead the tour and discussion. Participants will also visit the Anthropology and Conservation Departments where more than 54,000 objects and specimens are housed.

Following these presentations and tour, a reception will be held in the lobby just outside the Museum's Pacific Exhibit, which visitors are also invited to tour. Further details about this event will be available at the opening session of the conference.

Optional Tours

The Council's Optional Tours program this year will include:

- An Architectural Walking Tour focused on the "Loop" (downtown business district) and the area north to the Chicago River on Sunday morning, April 21.
- Visits to three Chicago museums: the Polish Museum of America, the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, and the DuSable Museum of African American History, on Sunday afternoon, April 21.
- A tour of the residential architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park and River Forest including an early home and studio of his own on Monday morning, April 22.
- An evening visit to the Chicago Historical Society to view a new exhibit

about Chicago in the 1890s on Tuesday, April 23.

- Visits to the Museum of Contemporary Art and to galleries in River North and River West on Tuesday afternoon, April 23.

Other Sessions of Interest

One of the 1991 Host Committee's site sessions is titled "Cultural Institutions in the 1990s: Diversifying Resources and Audiences." It will be held from 3-6 on Monday, April 22. Participants will visit two thriving Chicago arts organizations: ETA Creative Arts Foundation (an African American community theatre located on the South Side) and the Mexican American Fine Arts Center located in the Hispanic community of Pilsen. The session will include panel discussions on the approaches that community-based and mid-size Chicago cultural institutions are developing to meet basic organizational needs.

Other conference sessions of interest to cultural grantmakers include: "Culture and Community Empowerment" at 3:30 on Monday, April 22; a host event at 6:30 on Monday evening at the Shedd Aquarium; "The American Museum in the 1990s and Beyond" at 10:30 on Tuesday, April 23; and "How Far Can We Go? Boundaries of Advocacy" at 3:00 on Tuesday, April 23.

Grantmakers in the Arts Newsletter

c/o John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
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Chicago, IL 60603