Ideas and Items of Interest to Arts Grantmakers

GRANTMAKERS IN THE ARTS

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Common Stories

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

One day, neither in the past nor in the future, and not at this moment either, all the people gathered on a high ridge that overlooked the rolling plain of earth, its forest, deserts, rivers unscrolling below them like a painting on parchment. Then the people began speaking one by one, telling the story of a life—everything seen, heard, and felt by each soul. As the voices dreamed, a vast bluish mist enveloped the land and the seas below. Nothing was visible. It was as if the solid earth had evaporated. Now there was nothing but the voices and the stories and the mist; and the people were afraid to stop the storytelling and afraid not to stop, because no one knew where the earth had gone.

Finally, when only a few storytellers remained to take a turn, someone shouted: Stop! Enough, enough of this talk! Enough of us have spoken! We must find the earth again!

Suddenly, the mist cleared. Below the people, the earth had changed. It had grown into the shape of the stories they'd told—a shape as wondrous and new and real as the words they'd spoken. But it was also a world unfinished because not all the stories had been told.

Some say that death and evil entered the world because some of the people had no chance to speak. Some say that the world would be worse than it is if all the stories had been told. Some say that there are no more stories to tell. Some believe that untold stories are the only ones of value and we are lost when they are lost. Some are certain that the storytelling never stops, and this is one more story, and the earth always lies under its blanket of mist being born.

—John Edgar Wideman

IN THIS ISSUE

Telling and listening to communally generated stories anchors historical memory and functions as an act against forgetting. Narratives of origin are especially potent in helping to guide and assess present and future actions.

One cluster of tales yet to be heard concerns the birth and life of San Francisco's art and cultural organizations. A significant number of these art groups form a generational cluster that was conceived in the tumultuous and by now mythical 1960s.

America, itself, functions as a central character in stories of the period. Within many communities, the 1960s mark a historical juncture of deep introspect and collective action. Writers, visual artists, musicians, dancers, and creators, in all disciplines, aligned themselves to social political movements, seeking to re-envision America. Everywhere there was a euphoric sense of reconstruction, redemption, and regeneration.

In San Francisco, cultural/arts organizations, like the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, Southern Exposure, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Paul Dresher Ensemble, Galería de la Raza/Studio 24, and legions of other groups functioned as spaces for gathering and disseminating alternative, regional, and local stories of contemporary culture. These California tales countered, reversed, or de-centered the unified master narrative of "official," supposedly consensual national culture emanating from the East coast.

This was the period of the Beatles, a time when philosophers proclaimed the death of God, and when computer languages and artificial intelligence were launched. Locally, one buoyant strand of influence was the counterculture "Hippie" groups centered in the Haight/Ashbury district. Psychedelic light shows and the music of rock-and-roll joined extravagant self-presentational styles featuring tie-dyed clothes, body painting, and a melange of decorative details from Asian, African, and Native American cultures.

Another seminal influence on the cultural scene were the extravagant theatrical presentations of the Cockettes, an early manifestation of gay culture that mixed the artifice and irony of drag and camp in hallucinatory productions marked by glitz, sleaze, and glamour.

Equally potent, as purveyors of cultural energy, were the socio-political scenarios of the period; the Third World Strikes at San Francisco State, the Free Speech movement at Berkeley, the Farmworkers struggle in the San Joaquin Valley, and countless other massive mobilizations, many of which integrated artists as potent surveyors of the social and artistic imagery.

The recognition of a multicultural, multi-lingual, multifaceted kaleidoscopic society in California engendered multiple yet parallel epics of collective struggle, survival, and imagination While these struggles were anchored in the specific realities of each community, we can discern patterns of connections and confluence as local organizations retrospectively recall their origins and development. One cluster of shared themes in our common stories is of Remembrance, Discovery, and Volition.

Remembrance

For many community-based arts organizations, an initial goal was to consolidate a collective consciousness grounded in issues valued by the community. The reclaiming and preserving of individual and collective history was basic to forming identity and group cohesiveness. Often a first strategy was to constantly tell and retell the story of the group's presence to set the record straight about how, when, and why a particular community evolved in contrast to the history as told by the dominant culture.

A historical amnesia has consistently negated the very presence and contributions of diverse groups in the development and evolution of a national ethos and shared community. A major impulse of the mobilizations and upheavals of the 1960s was to bring unrecognized cultures into light, declaring a historical presence and urging artists to maintain traditions while creating new works. As cartographers of imagination, artists became a key element in cultural and artistic reclamation and Remembrance.

Discovery

Slowly across time, within the sphere of shared experiences and including confrontations and reconciliations, artists began the arduous task of forming artistic networks, alliances, and intercultural collaborations. Collaborations across divides of artistic discipline, concepts, genre, gender, class, race, and ethnicity, were the catalyst for the development of new approaches to these partnerships requiring more thoughtful self-examination and openness before forging these links. From here emerged a dual sense of mutuality, reciprocity, and uniqueness on which to build these efforts.

Coherence came from the mutual realization that artists, in all communities, were speaking in direct ways about the capacity of art and culture to rouse conscience and initiate change. Artists focused their imagination on a range of areas including social realities and the exploration of the artistic process itself. Fusion, layering, and hybridity were consistent elements in the new art forms created. Artists were moved between different landscapes of symbols, values, structures, and styles. Artistic and cultural expression challenged notions of a singular aesthetic, identity, or reality. In doing so, artists affirmed the possibility of inventing and reinventing themselves, their community, and their work.

Volition

If this memory and discovery led to the articulation of shared processes of invention and cultural maintenance, another common thread in the stories of growth and development, was that of volition. On many levels we mobilized and rallied against systems of exclusion within the art world. In the very midst of this work we came to define our individual and collective goals. Our will to be and to remain integral and empowered communities defined our diverse artistry and cultures. In our poems, dances, plays, and music, a *leit motif* is that of human agency acting to preserve, define, create, and persist. Cultural organizations provided safe havens and structure for artists to boldly experiment in continuums of tradition and change.

The triad of Remembrance, Discovery, and Volition functioned differently within the various arts groups, yet

there were common themes in artistic and program development. In diverse ways San Francisco arts and cultural organizations incorporated memory, exploration, identification of shared values, and the will to act.

Today, on the cusp of the millennium, new visions and versions of identity and culture continue to emerge. As opposed to traditional stories stressing coherence, dogma, and closure, the newer narratives opt for processes of cross-referencing and are seen as unbound and fluctuating across a multi-faceted national/international sphere.

The 1990s are a new moment of reflection and cultural re-definition. The massive movement of people and ideas, across borders, create new apertures and emerging affiliations among groups. Presently there is a total reconfiguration, re-mapping and re-imagining of contemporary culture in the United States. In this process, some rejoice in the horizon of hope that permeates international events. The hopes for a common language, of comparison, connection, collaboration, and communication raise the possibility of simultaneous translation of cultural traditions, aesthetic and political priorities. On the other hand, others are wary of a premature attempt at synthesis before the social destiny of difference comes into full flower.

Social structures and critical spaces must fully register the borderline between and within national communities: a turn towards a social practice of multiplicity that is neither assimilative nor separate, but relational—a more interdependent commonality held in place by mutual trust and respect. Embedded in these realities are the contours for many stories yet to be told. Perhaps the central topos is still that of the quest . . . The eternal story of a hero/heroine who sets out in search of a dream and, on the way, encounters strangers who are helpers or obstacles to this quest. Overcoming many trials and proving one's valor, purity, and persistence, the protagonist finds the treasure which may not be recognized as such.

It is this tale which we are still savoring and unraveling as we look back and tell our individual and collective stories of the past. The most potent narrative is still that of the quest and its consequences . . . Let me begin such a story . . .

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto is associate director for arts and humanities, Rockefeller Foundation. This essay was prepared for "Looking Back, Seeing Forward," an event presented by the Education & Community Program of the Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens, and the California Council for the Humanities. The event honored nearly seventy San Francisco nonprofit arts organizations that span a period beginning in 1871. A special tribute was given to the thirty-five nonprofit arts organizations that were established between 1970 and 1975. Ybarra-Frausto's essay was published in conjunction with the event in a booklet that includes a short description of all sixty-eight organizations.

Singing the Alternative Interactivity Blues

George E. Lewis

During the summer of 1995, George E. Lewis was a resident artist at the Western Front, an artist-run center in Vancouver B.C. that focuses on the production and presentation of new art. Lewis used his residency to research the possibilities of the CD-ROM medium for live, interactive performance. The following essay was published originally in the November/December 1995 issue of Front, *a publication of the Western Front. It was updated by Lewis for publication here, and is printed with his permission.*

I, George E. Lewis, have made interactive computer music and intermedia for the past fifteen years and am part of a large community of artist-programmers who incorporate computers into the context of live performance. My particular interest in working with musical computers involves improvised interaction between music-generating computer programs and music-generating people. The work raises questions concerning the nature of music and, in particular, the processes by which improvising musicians produce it. These questions encompass not only technology and music theory, but philosophical, political, cultural, and social concerns as well.

In my four week residency at the Western Front, I developed a fairly large bank of video movies, a set of still images, and a set of new (at least to me) ideas. I was able to pencil in the outlines of a new composition, tentatively called *One Family's Magic* that combines spoken text, image, and music in an interdisciplinary performance that may amount to more than the sum of its parts. I also came away from my residency with a working knowledge of certain multimedia software, as well as a better understanding of how the 1990s notion of "interactivity" differs from earlier notions of "interaction."

Now, even a passing mention of the term "CD-ROM" seems to precipitate a quasi-Pavlovian reaction, nearly identical among a wide range of people. This response usually takes the form of "So, where do I click?" I have gleaned that, despite the relative novelty of the medium, clearly defined notions are already in place among computer-literate people as to where images are to be viewed (on a computer screen) and how a person (recast as a "user") is to make choices (a mouse click on a "virtual" button). At first, the popular view seemed to be that, to take part in the multimedia revolution, all one needed to do was to assemble a set of images, sounds, animations, and videos; develop a path for navigating through them; and set up an array of virtual buttons to facilitate "user choice" or "interactivity." At this point, the first

and only meaningful question that a potential viewer need bother asking would indeed be, "So, where do I click?"

When faced with the opportunity to work with CD-ROM technology, I was unable to visualize myself or anyone else sitting in front of a computer, mousing around between images in my piece. This realization led me to search for a way to extend the medium into an interactive performance context. I began to search for a theoretical grounding for my work that would reflect my concerns with culture, race, class, and oral history. *Changing with the Times* (released on CD in 1993) is a thirty-minute work that I structured as a modern "slave narrative." Centered around the blues as sonic utterance and experience rather than as codified form, the work was strongly influenced by the thought of literary theorist Houston Baker who has written extensively on the slave narrative as an Afro-American literary form.

Baker's theory of the "blues matrix" provides a background for the interpretation of literary and musical utterance from an African-American perspective. With this matrix as a reference, I began to develop a theoretical structure for my CD-ROM piece in which a blues performer, such as a pianist or saxophonist, could "navigate" through a blues matrix of video movies with text that represented aspects of my African-American experience. The experiences, utterances, sounds, gestures, and images seen and heard would become part of a continually changing network of meanings.

Over the years, I had amassed a small library of 8mm videos documenting my travels, my family, my concerts, my world—about three hundred hours of tape. From this library, I selected scenes of encounters with my extended family. From these scenes, I gradually developed categories of experience—such as "brothers," "sisters," "oral histories," "toasting," "justice," "dancing," and "portraits." Using one of the Front's new Macintosh computers, I first captured selected segments of the videos on a hard disk. Then, I used a variety of multimedia software tools to edit and transform them, and to create still images from selected scenes. The final step in this phase of the project was to actually "burn" the images onto the physical CD-ROM. The result was a series of short clips (thirty seconds or less) that would represent about thirty minutes of video if played back to back.

At present, I am completing software for an April 1997 performance at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's iEAR Studios that utilizes many of these images in the context of a "virtual reading" of Quincy Troupe's poem "North Star Boogaloo." The software aims to allow the "mood" of the blues being played to determine what category of text/image the computer will show during a performance. Perhaps, for example, "boisterous" playing will select "toasting" imagery, while calm, slowly changing sound will cause "portraits" to be shown. The programming amounts to the further development of a type of personal technology that is related to other interactive computer works I have created over the years.

The new piece is not about the exploration of abstract relationships between sound and image. Instead, using the computer to create and interpret ebony moods, the piece will navigate African-American blues experience, creating an intuitive social and cultural environment where dynamic relationships between music, speech, and image can coalesce. The use of computers in this process of musical exploration can be both rigorously logical, and as intuitive and instinctive as breathing.

In describing my vision for this piece to others, I discovered that a kind of "passivity" has evolved along with the notion of "interactivity." It was surprising for me, a lifelong musician, to learn that sitting in concert spaces and simply listening to music or looking at images is regarded by many among the computer literati as "passive," as activities of some lower order, perhaps in need of some "interactive juice."

Certainly, some kinds of music demand passivity from the listener. Having cut my improvisational teeth at the 75th Street jazz clubs on the South Side of Chicago, however, I have come to realize that audiences can be anything but passive, even if they don't whip out musical instruments and play or sing along. For one thing, audiences listen and respond to each other. In the best cases, the experience of music is an intensely communal one. Assuming that audiences are simply passive is a gross oversimplification of the interaction between audience and performer, and amounts to a denial of the role of empathy, imagination, and dialogue in the act of listening and viewing.

Perhaps we have forgotten how to listen, how to empathize—but then, these things take time. I remember one particular point-and-click environment of 1960s Chicago, the Museum of Science and Industry, where you pushed a button and some machine would move or a computer would play tic-tac-toe—wondrous things. So wondrous, in fact, that the simple act of being able to push the buttons was enough for us kids. Sometimes we would race through the museum (in those days it didn't cost anything to enter), madly pushing buttons and pulling levers, without taking the time to actually wait for a response or to see what might develop.

If an imaginatively stimulating and communally informed experience, such as live music, is to be considered "passive," while a detached consumer sitting all alone in front of a screen, provided with a set of prefab "choices" is considered "interactive," then perhaps the real passivity exists elsewhere. Perhaps our passivity consists of the impotence we must all feel in face of the power that has redefined what interactivity means and how we will interact. Indeed, the rapid development of standardized modes for the relationships between humans and computers is unfortunate for such a young and presumably quickly changing technology.

The evolution of the language used to reflect the multimedia revolution is a compelling testament to the power of corporate media. Corporate power has gradually

assumed an important, even dominating role in conditioning our thinking about computers, art, image, and sound. Much of the descriptive language surrounding multimedia (and related areas, such as "cyberspace") serves to hide the power exercised by corporations, ironically through the power to rename. The power to name is part of the power to appropriate, which is in turn part of the power to define and control. Textbook examples include the metamorphosis of musical terms in the hands of the six giant multinational firms that serve as gatekeepers for over 95% of the music that we are permitted to hear over electronic and recorded media. The term "jazz," for instance, now means very different things depending upon the degree to which it is exposed to corporate defining power. "Alternative music" was a term appropriated from one truly alternative and marginalized group of artists and handed to another group which, for a number of reasons, is already showing signs of burnout. And so it goes.

Anyone who remembers the period when "multimedia" did not refer to computers probably also has some notion of the earlier version of computer interactivity in the arts, circa 1975-90. This early period produced a number of "interactive" or "computer-driven" works. These pieces represented a great diversity of approaches to the question of what interaction was, and how it affected viewers, listeners, and audiences. Part of the intellectual excitement of interactive media was in the discovery that artists, listeners, and viewers all had different ideas about how they interacted with their environment. In many cases, works were designed precisely to stimulate this kind of reflection, to explore communication not only, or even primarily, between people and machines, but between people and other people.

My own approach to the exploration of computer interaction was through improvisation. Inviting the listener, through improvisation, to speculate about the nature and meaning of music, is part of the discourse embedded in much of my work with musical computers. "Improvised music" is, for me, music in which the role of personality, feeling, and personal expression may be most directly encountered. As an improvisor, my music emphasizes not only form and technique, but individual life choices, as well as cultural, ethnic, and personal location. Improvisors make reference to a transcultural array of techniques, styles, aesthetic attitudes, narratives, historical antecedents, and networks of cultural and social practice. The study of improvisation will be critical to the development of more sophisticated interactive computer applications simply because improvisation is not only what people do when they play jazz or bluegrass, but also what they are doing when they play *Myst*, surf the Net, or decide how to cross Main Street.

Voyager (originally composed in 1987 and released on CD in 1993) is one of my computer music pieces that is conceived as a nonhierarchical, interactive musical environment based on improvisation. In *Voyager*, an improvisor interacts with a large, computer-driven group of "virtual improvisors." A computer program analyzes aspects of the improvisor's musical behavior in real time and uses the analysis to guide an automatic composing program. The composing program, in turn, generates complex "orchestral" responses to the musician's playing and also generates musical behavior that, while influenced by the improvisor, is ultimately independent of outside input. Thus, a complete performance of *Voyager* may be viewed as one potential outcome of a negotiation process between the improvisor and the computer.

The notions of negotiation and independent computer agency are central to the *Voyager*. The concept of the computer as independent agent is related to a common trope in folklore, science, and art—the idea that certain music somehow plays itself or emerges from a nonhuman intelligence. This concept, in turn, allows the act of playing a musical instrument to represent a dialogue between two intelligences—a kind of animism, or, if you will, "magic." Thus, musical behavior is a carrier for complex symbolic signals. Gesture is construed as an intentional act, that is, an act embodying meaning and announcing emotional and mental intention. Through gesture the emotional state of the improvisor may be mirrored in the behavior of the computer partner—a kind of "emotional transduction" which is essential to a feeling of dialogue.

This dialogic way of working with computers seems to me to be quite far from Hollywood-style interactivity. If all you can do now in most CD-ROM environments is throw popcorn at the screen, perhaps you're in a good position—from the standpoint of hegemonic corporate power. My challenge in creating a piece using CD-ROM technology, however, was to retain an animistic, dialogic interaction characteristic of my computer music works. I wished to extend into the medium of CD-ROM interactivity the musical and personal lessons I had learned as a lifetime denizen of the South Side of Chicago, and as a member for twenty-five years of that area's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). I wished, in short, to work with computers in terms of African-American forms.

Computer programs, like all texts, are not "objective" or "universal," but instead represent the particular ideas of their creators. A closer look at a given musical software system reveals characteristics of the community of thought and culture that produced it. Notions about the nature and function of music are embedded right into the structure of the system. A case in point occurred during the process of conceiving and producing *One Family's Magic*, when I noticed that the industry-standard multimedia authoring tool appeared not to believe in the existence of real time. In addition, it would not recognize the value of any input other than the computer's mouse. The various fix-its ("kludges" in computer parlance) appended to this and other ostensibly interactive multimedia software did not make up for the exclusion of time—and time is where interaction really takes place.

When people have problems using computer programs, very often it's not because "they're dumb" but because

the way of thinking and feeling—the cultural logic embedded in the program—doesn't fit with their own way of living. Many people might well want to interact with a computer in a more complex and meaningful way than the "I hear and obey," military mode—a mode that has become the standard for interactive software. If pushing a button is like giving an order, then compliance (now recast as "interaction") is presumed to be immediate. If compliance is not forthcoming, then society, at least as dictatorial logic can conceive it, has descended into chaos (the computer has crashed).

The term "CD-ROM" has become a metaphor for an interactivity based on information retrieval rather than dialogue. This understanding of interaction has been conditioned, in large measure, by the relatively primitive and slow data rate of the physical medium. Interactive dialogue would have been very slow. Authoring software, then, was designed to create a kind of interaction that incorporates the compromises and limitations imposed by the medium. To a great extent, such conditioning and compromising will occur with any technology.

With multimedia, however, the technical limitations of the physical medium have come to define popular thinking about interactivity as well—that is, "interactivity" is understood to be simple information retrieval rather than a more complex kind of dialogue. It is not difficult to discern the profit motive at work behind this radical redefinition of interactivity. The difficulty in marketing slowly-moving "interactivity" undoubtedly made such a sow's-ear-to-silk-purse redefinition economically imperative. The multimedia industry needed to recoup the enormous investment it had already made, from the development and dissemination of authoring and authored materials to the research necessary to create faster hardware and software.

All of this adds up to a conception of "multimedia" for which I have been unable to work up any great attraction. To create my pieces, I have proceeded by using many different software packages for different stages of the development process, and shifted from CD-ROM to fast hard disk for actual performance. In a sense, I used the limitations of the physical medium (which we hear are temporary in any case, now that the "digital videodisk," or DVD, is on the horizon) to explore the nature of the metaphorical medium. Future generations of software may deal more effectively with a complete combination of image, sound, time, and input, taking into account a wider variety of cultural sensibilities. This would allow more extensive collaboration between artists and across media. Combined with technical advances in data compression and transmission, the resulting multimedia work could be far more humanistically cross-disciplinary and intercultural than what we are currently seeing.

The problem of embedded cultural particularism also appears in the products of the software and in the popular commentary surrounding them. In particular, CD-ROM titles dealing with aspects of an American or African diasporan experience are notably lacking. My reading of the current crop of interactive media products from the USA, including publications such as *Wired* and much of the Internet hype, is that they are largely designed to reflect the sensibilities of that country's white, mostly male, middle-class, 18-to-34-year-old demographic group. This is a natural consequence of the clear lack of cultural diversity and sensitivity at the development and marketing levels of the institutions that create the stuff—institutions largely staffed by members of the same demographic class.

In the media, however, the problem is often portrayed, not in terms of jobs and diversity, but as a purely economic response to the supposed "fact" that this demographic group buys the vast majority of the computers. The current push to identify "one million African-American Internet users"—a cyberspatial "Million Man March"— is one response to this representation.

Moreover, many of the games claiming to be "interactive" might be better described as "impositional," imposing or propagandizing for values characteristic of their creators. In turn, imposition seems to be the behavior most prominently rewarded in many of the interactive games. I remember playing one such game where you wound up in a room with a lamp and a sword sitting nearby. I said, "So what do I do now?" My friend said, "Well, if you don't take that lamp and that sword you won't last long in the game." Very naively, I said, "You mean I'm just supposed to walk into a room and take these things that don't belong to me?" Nowadays this is known as the conquistador mode of interactivity. Before I turned the game off, however, I remember expressing the hope that, in addition to celebrating the King Arthur myth or the search for the Holy Grail—legends long cherished in certain segments of the computer-using community—interactivity might eventually be employed to celebrate other values and cultures.

Interactivity could even be about empowerment. But we might want to ask ourselves why a megabuck Hollywood corporation would want to empower poor schnooks like us! Reviewing the debate over interactive multimedia in the business pages of a good national newspaper (in my case, the *Los Angeles Times*), I found that Hollywood executives seemed largely concerned, not with providing empowerment via alternative narratives, but with making certain that if a narrative were provided, Hollywood corporations would have ultimate control of it.

As we move away from the traditional blockbuster megamovie and as people begin to lean away from home video toward a multiplicity of narrative pathways, artists will once again need to place themselves in critical, if not oppositional, positions in the struggle to control narrative. Artists are going to have to recreate for themselves any new technology if we want to promulgate a freer, more open vision of human possibility. For now, let me

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In the Circle of the Storyteller

Tia Oros

"Now then, enough!" said Earthmaker, "there will be songs, and all of you will have them . . ." But, telling about the world, Meadowlark sang very beautifully. He was the being who saw the dry land. Very beautiful.

Maidu – Myths and Stories of Hanc'bysim

During the mythic time of supernatural powers held by animated spiritual beings, the Earth was created. The Spirit Peoples created "order" and balance on Earth as they did throughout the Universe and prepared the world for Human Beings. They established traditions and customs to govern how Peoples would live. They also created ceremonies, rituals, and practices that reaffirmed their original instructions and continued a highly moral and ethical respect for all life. As Humans entered the Earth, the Spirit Peoples withdrew into the mountains, across the sea, or into the sky. Others became landmarks, birds or animals, or other entities. In a metaphysical or "spiritual" sense, the Spirit Peoples are still present, animate and alive.

Through centuries of discourse with the Spirit Peoples, the concept and practice of reciprocity has evolved in Native life as the key relationship with all creation. Native peoples are keenly aware of and respond to their family members, friends, communities, and tribal nations. The essence of Native cultures is best personified in the act of giving. We know this. It is exemplified in our work at the Seventh Generation Fund. Consistent also with this life process, Native artists partake in the give-and-receive dynamic by feeding their communities artistic creations that embody an individual and collective consciousness through the words, images, and impressions of their peoples' histories, traditions, and purposes. In this way, Native art takes on many forms as it is rendered through an array of expressive media.

At its very core, Native art is a cultural dynamic. It emerges from and reflects the peoples and communities from which it is born. Native aesthetic creation is a fusion between the Native artist and culture. In addition, art creations are living entities and are innovative tools of cultural vitality, communication, healing, and continuity. Art thus reflects our identities as Native peoples, not linearly as in a pan-Indian context of unremarkable commercial headdresses, fringe, or nickel jewelry, but from within the specific context of the individual artist's place in the larger framework of family, clan, and nation. Further, it reaffirms the past and juxtaposes it with the future. In so doing, Native artistic expression is far more than a mirror of contemporary American Indian society. It provides a crucial link with the ancestors that leaves a thread leading to the seventh generation to come.

I begin with the sources of Native art to lay the groundwork for understanding the Native arts projects that the Seventh Generation Fund (SGF) supports. In my role as program coordinator, I have been fortunate to work with a number of exemplary artists and culturally-focused projects that embody underlying principles of Native life both in their creative work and in pursuits with their communities. Although we are intermediary grantmakers, SGF is an Indigenous organization and engages as a peer with the projects we support. We provide a link between the philanthropic arena and the Native world. It is my hope that this essay will help further understanding between the two.

"In every deliberation, you must consider the impact on the seventh generation."

– Great Law of the *Haudenosaunee* Nation and founding precept of the Seventh Generation Fund

In many ways, Native creative expression is where the trauma and the beauty of Indian life merge. Since contact, Indigenous value systems have been forcibly conformed to those of Euro-America. This imposition has effectively dismantled much of our traditional infrastructures, damaging community esteem and personal integrity. Further, for Native peoples, the loss of control to and the domination by Euro-America contributes directly to the general collapse of shared community values, and destroys the potential for positive collective action. This is manifest in the outrageously high number of socioeconomic problems found rampant in every Native community. By all measurements of the human condition, the socioeconomic state of Native America is deplorable. According to the socioeconomic indicators contained in the Bureau of the Census Report, *We Are the First Americans*, the two million Indigenous peoples of the United States (two-thirds of whom live off reservation or tribal lands) comprise North America's most rapidly growing populations—as well as the least educated, most unemployed, and poorest U.S. population. It is no surprise or secret that Native peoples hold a tragic lead in negative indicators of community disintegration such as malnutrition, alcoholism, high suicide rates, family breakdown, substance abuse, unemployment, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and dependency on public assistance, to name just a few. The situation is further exacerbated by the recent influx of youth gangs and drugs.

Despite these brutal truths, or perhaps because of them, a tenacious optimism and hope survives within Native communities. Positive work toward self-determined futures is far more than a lingering testament to the survival of Native peoples and the philosophical values they shelter—it is an active resurgence nurtured and brought forth through the peoples' artistic endeavors. Although no totally positive visions for Native communities may currently exist in contemporary Native

America, dynamic and creative aspects of such a vision are being successfully carried forth in Native communities throughout the United States. At this nexus, art abounds. In the words of artist Thulani Davis, the vision is found in the "*circle of the storyteller.*"

Any choreographer will tell you that staying in one place—intentionally—is a form of movement. But any good leader will advise you not to substitute motion for progress.

– Amalia Mesa-Bains,
California State University, Monterey Bay

Historically, Native communities have largely been overlooked by the philanthropic community. Although some progress has been made over the last few decades, recent trends indicate that grantmaking directed to projects addressing Native concerns has declined about 27%—from $41 million in 1992 to $30 million in 1994. A recent study by Native Americans in Philanthropy indicates that, unfortunately, most of the Native arts funding is given to non-Native organizations without the infrastructure, outreach, or context to link effectively with Native arts programs in grassroots or urban communities. Without a cultural context, the non-Indian organization lacks direct accountability or reciprocity with the Native people it serves. This grantmaking method precludes the unencumbered support of Native arts initiatives and cultural organizations. Grantmakers in the field of arts, humanities, and culture have a unique opportunity to participate in the dynamic resurgence and continuity vibrant in Indian communities by providing direct support to Native artists and arts organizations. As a grantmaker you may ask "How can this best be accomplished?" In the words of *Karuk* artist, Brian Tripp, "If you are looking for bears, go to bear country . . ." Or as Malcolm Bowekaty, of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni said, "Hear history from the horse's mouth!"

The largest and most remote of the New Mexico Pueblos, Zuni is a place of warm, rosy brown earth and ancient, esoteric knowledge—coupled with one of the most rapidly growing populations in Indian Country. With a large percentage of the population under the age of twenty-five, Zuni is facing dramatic social and cultural challenges. Despite the close connection between Zuni youth and their culture, the lure of the outside world is increasing as is its impact and destructiveness. Yet, the Zuni pueblo is also a place where arriving school teachers express amazement at the artistic talent and accomplishment of the children. Perhaps Zunis have an uncommon artistic ability and grace. Or perhaps the outstanding art evident in Zuni classrooms testifies to the tenacity of Zuni survival and reflects the determination of young creative endeavors. By either analysis, the art creates a process that supports cultural continuity and a vision for a healthy future.

The A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, (*a:shiwi a:wan* meaning "belonging to the Zuni people") is an eco-museum [see "The EcoMuseum," by Carla Roberts, *Grantmakers in the Arts Newsletter*, autumn 1993] at harmony with the cultural and environmental values of the Zuni people. It is neither a religious temple nor a storehouse of information. Rather, it is an active community learning center created by the Zuni people to encourage inter-generational sharing—linking the past with the present to better prepare the community for the future. The community itself takes the central role of defining and directing the Center's programs and activities. Local solutions are found for local problems using community oriented program planning and implementation. The strength of Zuni tradition and the wisdom of the elder Zuni community are understood to be remedies for many of today's social ills. Outdoor activities such as the traditional waffle garden and adobe workshop allow community elders to share valued traditions with youth. Center staff collaborate with local community members as well as with national museums to produce a wide range of exhibitions featuring Zuni culture and heritage. The tribal archives established in 1990 serve as a repository for Zuni historical records. A vast wealth of knowledge that was previously unavailable is now accessible to community members.

Based on spoken languages alone, there are an estimated 6,000 distinct cultures in the world. About 5,000 of these are Indigenous—unique cultures that are disappearing at unprecedented rates through annihilation and assimilation. With the disappearance of this dynamic cultural diversity, we are all losing vital, irreplaceable knowledge and experience. For the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, preserving the language is a primary means of maintaining cultural viability and integrity for future generations. The Center works closely with local schools to augment the bilingual and bicultural programs already being developed. The programs will allow active participation by Zuni youth who will learn to document traditional stories and activities of the elders through writing and through video and audio recording. Malcolm says, "we look at the dynamic portion of community process . . . Storytelling doesn't hold the entertainment value anymore. Today it is CD ROM. We try to stay state-of-the-art." The Center has fused contemporary technology with culture by creating an interactive computer language program easily accessible to the Zuni community. Here, technology intersects Zuni stories and culture, and forms a new story.

Although its programs are innovative, the Center faces great challenges as it moves forward. Maintaining human resources is foremost. Finding and training qualified staff who also keep the philosophy of the Center intact is difficult and requires a sizable investment of time and money. Generating financial support is also difficult. Some community based fundraising takes place—even at a dollar a person, with the Zuni population at about 10,000, successful community donations could result in a good contribution to the general fund. Foundation support is another significant and necessary piece for survival. Unfortunately, the odds of receiving grant monies is about one in every 150 applications. Preparing so many applications is a lot of activity for a grass-

roots project with a small staff and limited technical capacity. Center staff find themselves juggling one program against another since foundation support to small institutions tends to be directed solely to programs, and overlooks the dire need for general operating support.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Janeen Antoine, Sicangu Lakota, executive director of American Indian Contemporary Arts (AICA) located in San Francisco. Janeen said that despite its solid fourteen-year history, one of AICA's primary challenges is raising sufficient general support money. AICA is one of a small handful of Indian arts service organizations located in urban settings that are dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of traditional and contemporary art forms. These organizations typically provide services to artists for exhibitions, referrals, educational programs, technical assistance, advocacy, and marketing. They are often responsive not only to urban-based Native artists, but also to artists living in rural reservation communities.

Formed in 1983, AICA's mission is to promote contemporary Native American artists through exhibitions, educational programs, referral activities, services, and publications. At AICA, contemporary Native art is defined as any art created by a living Native artist. AICA works actively with Native arts organizations, Native artists, and mainstream arts institutions locally, regionally, and nationally to promote Native voices within larger artistic and economic arenas.

AICA is dedicated to Native community participation. Among its programs, AICA has a bimonthly lecture series, free to Native peoples, that features noted Native scholars on artistic, educational, cultural, social, and literary topics. In its fourteen years, AICA has presented over ninety exhibitions. The current exhibition program consists of five local exhibits each year including one-person, thematic, and regional shows, as well as three nationally and internationally traveling exhibits. AICA has developed a computer database of 1,000 artists and a slide registry of 8,000 slides, both of which serve artists and the public, and augment the lecture series. Periodically, AICA also sponsors an arts program geared to urban Indian youth.

Janeen admits that raising funds to cover annual costs is no easy feat. In-kind donations such as printing and volunteers are extremely valuable. Support from foundations is also critical. Despite a 100 to one response on donor appeals, AICA has developed a strong group of Bay Area-based allies in philanthropy. The San Francisco Foundation, Vanguard Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, and LEF Foundation, as well as the California Arts Council, have all supported AICA's work. Even with this support, AICA faces challenges. Janeen has found that some grantmakers are not interested in funding arts and culture within a Native context, particularly in an urban setting. Although AICA, like some other Native arts groups, works both with rural reservation-based and with urban Indian communities, prospective funders do not always understand that serving both communities is possible. Their reticence may be founded on a stereotypical misunderstanding of where "real Indians really are." In fact, as a result of federal relocation and acculturation policies combined with severe rural poverty, nearly two-thirds of all Native Americans actually live "off the rez."

Contemporary Native art is an act of self-determination. Form fuses with function very differently than it did in the precontact past. While today many Indian artists explore material without a concern for function, non-Indians are often purists in defining Native art. Valid, creative contributions of Native artists are often discounted because the work does not copy the past. In fact, many Native artists incorporate a variety of themes and mediums in a single creative piece.

An atlatl is a wooden tool used to hurl a spear with greater strength and accuracy.

Today's Native arts organizations reflect many of the same forces that shape Native art. The transformation in the form and function of Native arts organizations is evident at Atlatl, one of the oldest Native-controlled cultural groups in the United States. Atlatl is a leader in the development of Native American arts today. Its mission is to promote the vitality of contemporary Native American art through self-determination in cultural expression. The concept for Atlatl emerged from the Indian community. Formed in December 1977, at a meeting of Indian cultural coordinators from several western states, it was originally funded with federal funds. Based in Phoenix, Atlatl breaks through the stereotypical misconception that urban organizations are helplessly out of touch with Native grassroots community. Through networking activities that create an informational link among Native artists and arts organizations, from the rez to the city, Atlatl heightens the awareness of Indigenous aesthetics and modes of expression. It also encourages the development of leadership among Native cultural workers, whether in tribal museums or at larger cultural centers.

Executive Director Carla Roberts, Eastern Delaware, describes Atlatl as a unique arts organization with an inherently Native premise: its approach is based fundamentally on consensus. Carla attributes Atlatl's success to making consensus integral to everything it does. She believes that some foundations have begun to understand this concept, but mentioned, "it was difficult to develop great relationships with foundations." In her words, "Funders need to realize that we are a people who are used to taking nothing and making it into something. People put their hearts and selves fully into it." This type of full investment—where the 8-5 workaday world is exceeded, and personal time and energy is given—is nothing new to gras sroots organizing efforts. Such valuable though intangible investment is hard to measure. Yet, this is how Atlatl was created. It has been a hard road. Fortunately, the organization is now on fairly solid financial footing, thanks in part to some of the bigger national philanthropic institutions. Fundraising is still

labor intensive, however, and raising general support money is difficult as is travel subsidy to forums and conferences. Carla says that finding support to develop concepts is extremely difficult—"there is no venture capital." Without support for new ideas, many Native organizations cannot grow effectively, even if they are ready to explore new avenues or broaden their scope. Atlatl, like the Center at Zuni, must often juggle programs against each other when seeking funds.

Especially since Native concerns are now on the minds of certain foundations, Carla sees the possibility that Native art can take its place as part of contemporary art. As Atlatl turns twenty years old, it is wrestling with the question of how to move Native artists into the 21st century on their own terms. How this will be accomplished has yet to be determined, but if Native art exemplifies anything, it is the continuity of Native peoples. This continuum of expression pulls Native arts out of the box of "folk arts" and into the stream of consciousness that informs a larger vision of artistic endeavor.

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Native art lives everywhere. It is inextricably entwined with all aspects of our lives. It is part of the process by which we live and conduct our lives. It is in the masterful curve of wood in a kachina doll carving and in the stream of consciousness in the spoken words of John Trudell. It is found in the songs of our ancestors reawakened in the voices of our mothers, and in the ancient patterns woven into Jumpdance baskets that contain the health and vitality of the contemporary dancer and his family and that can renew the world through the *Welaga*. It appears as much in the fancydancer's shawl as in the airbrush imagery of a student at the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe. It is in every strand of a dentilium necklace—each piece strung with a prayer or good thought. And it is clear in the poetic words of Joy Harjo. With vibrancy, it resonates with a people's social consciousness. As translator, the artist brings it forth in a form that is molded by culture, identity, and a collective history and knowledge.

Native arts will always continue and grow—with or without philanthropic support. This is crucial to understand. The continuity of creation causes basketweavers of Native California to continue gathering materials for Jumpdance baskets, and potters in Zuni to revisit Pia Mesa to find good clay. This art lives alongside the contemporary characters in Sherman Alexie's novels and at the spring 1997 opening of the Native American exhibit at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh featuring the detailed beadwork of Seventh Generation Fund board chairperson, Rosalie LittleThunder, and her family. The significance of Native arts can no longer be shrouded in the nondescript subcategories of "folk arts" or "crafts." It is incumbent upon all of us in the arts, culture, and humanities to become more aware of the vitality of art as a significant denominator in Indian life. We might, then, take this understanding beyond, into our relationships with others.

Recommendations

- Hear the Native voice. Find ways to bring Native peoples to the table—on boards, as staff, and through conferences and forums.
- Educate yourself about Indian Country. Don't just read a book; GO THERE. With this experience you can and must avoid a pan-Indian approach.
- Understand that, for Native communities, art is central to the quality of life.
- Work directly with local, regional, and national Native arts groups that have ample grassroots input. Non-Indian organizations cannot adequately represent the Native voice, and they often are unaccountable to the Native communities they serve.
- Provide support that allows Native arts organizations to develop infrastructure. Sometimes they just need a computer and a typist.
- Don't always look for a big bang for your bucks! Positive results may take longer than expected.
- Think holistically and fund beyond the threshold needs of the organization. At the same time, don't dump a lot of money on one project at the expense of the whole organization.
- Create special initiatives for Native arts. Include culturally-appropriate and hands-on technical assistance coupled with implementation funds.
- Be gutsy. Move beyond the constraints of program objectives, beyond the glass box.

All people desire acknowledgement of their lives and they struggle to understand what cannot be understood. Ask any actor or performer, they will tell you, when you step on the stage the audience is pulling for you, they want you to be good. They want to enjoy you. They want to know. That is why art has the power to get people to listen to the songs of their enemies. It is being shut out that we fear.

– Thulani Davis, Artist

What do my recommendations mean practically? Let's say this. You cannot fund a culture. You cannot fund a ceremony. Yet, if you want to participate in the dynamic revitalization occurring in Indian Country today, you can find ways to support the essential aspects of the culture, or ceremony, that help buttress the thriving process of culture. You can support a *Yowlumni* language renewal program, a travel grant to allow collaboration among Yurok basketweavers, a Blackfoot repatriation project to retrieve objects of cultural patrimony, or the life work of an individual artist like Alex Seotewa who recounts Zuni ceremonial life as a mural on the walls of the Pueblo's old Catholic Church. You can support the few Native arts organizations that have a direct link with Native communities, artists, and cultural resource people. National groups such as Atlatl and American Indian Contemporary Arts provide excellent resources to Native artists as

well as much needed services to a wider arts community. You can support a program like the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center that stretches the common understanding of museums and that reconciles the history of museums as repositories of artifacts in a vacuum with a community-based understanding of a living learning space. In any such support, I encourage you to open the door and engage yourselves. Here, reciprocity can take real form and shape. But, it will require some work.

The words in this essary are seeds I plant now. They must be nurtured in program planning and implementation by foundation boards and staff if they are to come to fruition. Then we can harvest.

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Singing the Alternative Interactivity Blues

Continued from page 6

say that when I interact with a computer, I'm looking for an experience that will let me explore my many worlds. I don't want to be patronized or talked down to or directed or mystified or imposed upon or propagandized or followed around in a silly way. I want to create my own narrative rather than being told what narrative is good for me. I want to create my own fantasy, not be handed someone else's to accept or reject. That's what computers mean to me—the dream machine, the spirit catcher. Rather than remix someone else's music, I'd like to create my own.

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Managing Change

"Managing Change" was the title of a panel discussion held on the last day of the 1996 GIA Conference in Pittsburgh. The conference program introduced the session this way:

> *"When the ground shifts and the environment changes, institutions must reposition themselves in response. How foundations are helped by their program staff to deal with change, to move in difficult or controversial directions—or even just to modify ineffective funding habits of long standing—are issues almost every funder has confronted . . . This session will be a professional development exercise designed to help line staff effectively manage a process of change that is responsive to the political context of their foundation's internal framework."*

Panelists were Cynthia Mayeda, foundation and arts advisor; Alison Bernstein, Vice President, Ford Foundation; Tim McClimon, Executive Director, AT&T Foundation; Steven Minter, Executive Director/President, The Cleveland Foundation; and Bruce Sievers, Executive Director, Walter & Elise Haas Fund. The session was not recorded on audiotape, but was summarized by Mary Brignano in the notes published here.

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Cynthia Mayeda opened the conversation-style panel with the observation that foundations are not usually shy about asking their grantees to change and restructure. She suggested that it's only fair that we ask ourselves how good we are about making changes, whether in response to internal or external demands. What tools, resources, and skills does the program officer need to make changes within the institution?

Mayeda: *How do you think we, as a community, fare in making change?*

Tim McClimon: Foundations are good at forcing change, and I think program officers are able to cause change within their program areas. But I'm not sure how ready foundations are for self-induced change. Some foundations have changes forced upon us. At AT&T we had no choice. [AT&T recently underwent the largest corporate restructuring in this country's history.]

Bruce Sievers: I don't think we're very good at it. One problem is that the feedback process for foundations isn't very good. We find it hard to know when to change.

Alison Bernstein: I disagree. After spending many years in education, I find that changes in philanthropy are fast moving. One of my colleagues characterizes the changes of recent years as "the velvet revolution." Changes can occur when a new program officer arrives, when a board has concerns, and when a fresh look is needed. Philanthropy is capable of shifting focus. At the Ford Foundation, we expect new program officers to look at the agency and then refashion their program area. In my

own experience, I have found the foundation quite open to suggestions. It depends on how the program officer understands the politics. No one succeeds, at least at Ford, as a solitary being.

Steven Minter: By and large, with the exception of some of the corporate foundations, we haven't seen great change. We can predict steady and predictable growth. It takes a lot to have dramatic change.

Mayeda: *We talk about making change as though it isn't incremental. I think it's more accurate to say that we make incremental change.*

McClimon: Changes at the AT&T Foundation were forced on us as a result of the company's restructuring. Change was top-down throughout the whole company. We decided that to reflect those changes we needed to restructure along the same lines as the company did. But most program officers, hopefully, are responsive to the field for which they are advocates.

Bernstein: When I returned to the Ford Foundation after an absence of two and a half years, a change I saw was a new attention to Islamic societies. This was partly a response to external affairs, but it also was the result of efforts by a new program officer who recognized changes in the new post-Cold War world. Her task was difficult because there weren't many other people to help her. I also saw more attention to human sexuality. In this case, the change was program driven but also responded to trustees' concerns. The foundation's media agenda has changed significantly in the last ten years. Changes are both top down and bottom up. We used to joke that steering the Ford Foundation was like steering the Queen Mary. Today, there is almost an expectation that cyclical change is built into a program officer's career.

Minter: The most critical decisions we make are choosing program officers. When I was first hired at The Cleveland Foundation, the executive director wasn't interested in being the program director for social services. He told me to go do it. While today we have strategic frameworks in place, the real question is how long it takes the program officer to understand that he or she has a lot of influence in shaping the agenda, particularly if the person has background knowledge about the field and wants to make a difference.

Mayeda: *Let me give you a hypothetical situation. You are convinced your horticulture program needs to change from A to B—a significant change. The program officer you have announces he's moving to Australia. Now you can hire a new program officer. Beyond expertise in the field, what skills will this person need to make the change happen?*

Sievers: To a high degree, it's a matter of organizational culture. My predilection is to find someone who is first and foremost a listener. Good listening skills are important, followed by the ability to strategize with the board and staff.

McClimon: I think a program officer has to have a point of view, and passion about his or her work. One should not necessarily be blinded to any other point of view, though, because all our institutions are in a constant state of change. So together with having a point of view, you have to be open-minded—because no matter what you think you'll be able to accomplish, something—perhaps some kind of institutional change—will steer you off course. It's difficult to be both passionate and flexible.

Bernstein: I like the metaphor of steering because when you steer you need to know not only where you want to go, but also how to tack. Depending on a variety of winds and climactic conditions, your route may not seem straightforward, but it is political in the best sense of the word—especially in large complex organizations. I agree with Steve that knowing the organizational culture is very important.

Mayeda: *Let's assume you believe a program officer is a star, but doesn't understand the culture and therefore can't move the agenda . What do you advise?*

Minter: Know your constituents. Know the history of your organization. Look at the annual reports, and see who is getting the grants. I think it's terribly important to do your homework. Who has preceded you? Try to understand the background.

McClimon: You have to get a grip on your internal constituents—board members, shareholders, executives. You have to persuade the internal constituents of the external needs.

Sievers: A lot of it is asking questions, interacting, figuring out ways to get information to the board. It may be circulating information or scheduling meetings. But some things can't be taught. You need to know your constituents and to have basic substantive knowledge about your field.

Bernstein: There is a delicate balance between a program officer and the program director; reciprocity is involved. I've seen some supervisors leave program officers out on limbs and watch them get sawed off. A good supervisor is near you on the limb.

McClimon: Speaking as a supervisor, it's sometimes difficult to decide whether to jump in and save the program officer. You have to allow people enough room to fail.

Mayeda: *The people at this conference are interested in an arts agenda. What are the unique opportunities or the unique barriers for a program officer dealing with the arts in a multipurpose foundation?*

Bernstein: This is one woman's perception. For many years, the arts were marginal to the work of the Ford Foundation. The arts were considered a lovely "boutique" that had its own internal logic and did fine work

. . . but it went on pretty much in isolation from the rest of the organization. It didn't change much; it never grew. I always wondered whether arts program officers liked it this way, whether this didn't reflect an unstated accommodation to overall foundation goals. I've seen arts program officers struggle with how much they wanted to be part of the big picture.

Minter: From both a program officer's and a foundation director's perspective, I'd say the arts program is the most emotionally difficult of the program areas. Arts program officers need an enormous amount of passion. In my twenty-one years at The Cleveland Foundation, month in and month out, the cultural affairs load presents a constant stream of emergencies, crises, and opportunities.

Sievers: In a foundation like ours, the arts program officer has the toughest challenge because the arts are considered something we do, but the board isn't as invested in them as it is in other areas. When it comes to competing with social services, the arts have a harder sell to the board. The board sees arts organization problems as important—but not as important as food distribution.

McClimon: AT&T has supported the arts for years. We used to have a president who was committed to the arts; the arts were an integral part of what the company and the foundation were about. Now there is an effort to marginalize the arts and not expend as many resources on them as a company and a foundation. Our program officer has to fight for the agenda all the time. A cloud has descended over the arts. It's no one's fault, but it's there. The company believes our customers aren't as interested in the arts. It's a problem not only for arts program officers but for the whole staff. How can we keep our rich history and support our constituents, and also be responsive to our internal constituents?

Mayeda: *What are the unique opportunities or advantages for arts program officers within the foundation?*

McClimon: Within our company and our foundation, the arts are seen as the only means of spreading diversity of culture. Diversity is where people at AT&T find real value in the arts. This is definitely very positive, and it goes beyond supporting the arts because they are good for community or because they create opportunity for customer positioning. If there is a way of breaking out of the cloud I mentioned, it is with diversity.

Bernstein: At the Ford Foundation, we went through the period that Steven was talking about. We're coming out of it because of a growing recognition that the arts are part of broader considerations of "culture." If the arts can be reimagined so they relate to community development, human rights, and the health of society, then arts program officers can join in foundation discussion in ways they haven't in the past. Problems are not going to be solved with social science models of income redistribution. We need to think about culture in a very different way.

Question from the audience: *Are we changing for the sake of change? Does the ability to stand for constancy require different approaches?*

Sievers: There can be good change and bad change. There is lots of rhetoric in the air about measurable and quantitative differences that may be misplaced in the arts. You need to engage people in discussion, and refine your own thinking. Have a clear sense of where you want to go; have the ability to interact with all layers of your organization—the same as if you were advocating change.

Bernstein: You might be going along doing the same thing you always did—and then the political climate changes. An example is the Hopwood decision, which caused questions about whether a foundation can continue to have racial- and gender-specific programs. So if you do not change, staying the course becomes more politically difficult. An old program becomes highly controversial. One has to be constantly on the alert for a program that has seemed mild mannered but suddenly becomes a hot button.

Question from the audience: *What do you do when the foundation changes but your arts constituencies have become comfortable with your old funding? How do you deal with the difficulties they have with your changes?*

Minter: Context, context, context. We try to figure out what we're doing in terms of the larger context. You need a sense of the environment changing around you. In the performing arts, we've educated ourselves and are trying to do the job of educating community leaders. It's going to take a lot of handholding to bring groups along. It's a primary obligation of foundations.

McClimon: It's really important to determine who your primary customer is. For many foundations, it's the organizations you support. A corporate foundation, has business customers as well. We try to find the intersection between the two interests. But as the chairman of our company says, the intersection moves. We've moved a little bit from the nonprofit to the business needs. You should ask, who are you changing for? only for your trustees? for nonprofits? for business?

Bernstein: We hear a lot of talk about partnering, but who's kidding who? It's not a partnership of equals as long as the foundation hands out the check. But I do think that a funder has the obligation to explain the changed context to the grant seeker. Just how arrogant does the foundation get with its analysis of the context? On the one hand, we talk partnership but on other we are arrogant because we hand out the check. A statement by Morris Udall probably can be applied to the arts as well: "The environment needs fewer uncritical lovers and more loving critics."

Mayeda closed the session by thanking the panelists for a fine discussion. "I could feel the audience really listen, which is a great tribute to the four of you."

A [Re]Movable Feast . . .

Marcia Tucker

Marcia Tucker, director of The New Museum in New York City, wrote the following text for presentation verbally at a lunch for museum donors in the spring, 1996. During the lunch, Tucker moved from table to table, giving each table one of the following sections as a short talk. With the help of a staff member seated at each table, the talks stimulated lively discussion throughout the rest of the lunch. At the end of the event, each donor received a copy of the entire text. Copyright is retained by Marcia Tucker, who gave GIA permission to publish the talk here.

I.
Lost and Found:
The Art Museum and Its Audience

> *The museums that reached out to the general public in the last decades of the nineteenth century only to retrench with the coming of the new century, would reach out again at various times in the twentieth century . . . What was transpiring was something more fundamental than mere outreach programs. The meaning of culture itself was being defined . . .*
>
> – Lawrence Levine[1]

Did you know that in the first half of the nineteenth-century, the two most widely attended forms of entertainment, ranging across the full class spectrum, were Shakespearean drama and the opera? As writer Lawrence Levine points out in his engaging book, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, these forms were simultaneously popular *and* elite; they were attended by large numbers of people who enjoyed and experienced them routinely, in the context of their everyday lives, and also by smaller socially and economically elite groups who derived both pleasure and social confirmation from them.[2]

As an alternative, the nineteenth-century cultural citizen could also participate in one of the 500- to 600-voice musical extravaganzas that were common during the period; because they were composed mostly of local, non-professional participants, they blurred the line between performer and audience.[3] Or one could settle down with a good book of fiction or poetry by Dickens, or Twain, or Longfellow, all of whom enjoyed both wide popularity and high cultural status.

Museums were a bit slower to encourage a broad public following. It was only in 1891 that the Metropolitan museum finally succumbed to widespread pressure to open on Sunday afternoons to the "general" public, who brought babies, picnic baskets, dirty hands, and a general disregard for proper decorum to its hallowed halls. But once the doors were open, the museum didn't like what happened, and set out to control the public's rowdy behavior. Orchestras, theaters, and even the custodians of Central Park also found it more convenient when crowds behaved properly.

In fact, the great feat of the late nineteenth century was the taming of audiences. No food or drink, no umbrellas or satchels, no noise, no hanging out, and no walking on the grass. Mark Twain was reputed to have said, when asked to check his cane at the museum, "Leave my cane? Leave my cane?!!! Then how do you expect me to poke holes through the paintings?"[4] In other words, *the public was rendered passive in relation to the artistic production.* These reformist practices actually transformed the concept of culture to the point that, as Levine says, "anything that produced a group atmosphere, a mass ethos, was culturally suspect."[5] As public life became more fragmented socially and people became increasingly isolated from each other, culture became more hierarchic, less shared, less accessible. And a conversion of audiences from collective responses to individual responses was the result.

What I'm pointing to is that our concept of culture—of the role of its producers, purveyors, and public—isn't natural, necessary, or fixed. Now, we think that appropriate museum behavior is clearly circumscribed as "reverential," but it wasn't always that way. There was a time when the appropriate behavior was active and vocal participation in and enjoyment of theater, music, and art.

The heritage of the nineteenth century Cultural Reformists that we virtually take for granted in most art museum experiences today is evident in a top-down relationship to the public prescribed by an absolute authority: the "we don't really want you here anyhow," or the "we know what's good for you and what an art experience really is" attitude. There's no place to sit down, the labels are incomprehensible or boring, and you can't touch, interact with, or even look too long at one work before you have to move along. I was a curator at the Whitney Museum when the 1969 Sculpture Annual opened and a huge ruckus began brewing on the other end of the floor. I ran to see what had happened and found two guards wrestling a disheveled man to the ground because he was trying to destroy a particularly fragile piece of sculpture made of wire mesh. It seems they had tackled the artist Alan Saret, who was rearranging his piece because he wasn't quite satisfied with the way it looked!

How could we fashion a different relationship with audiences, with artists, or with culture itself? Is there a way to rethink the museum not as a temple, a sanitarium, a shopping mall, or an airport, but as a social space in which the interaction between the institution and the visitor isn't limited to asking where the bathroom is? At The New Museum, we've been trying to create unconventional kinds of interactions between visitors and

staff, and among museum visitors themselves. Is this kind of interaction necessary? Engaging? Or just plain annoying?

II.
"Art for Art's Sake:" The True Story of Life before Clement Greenberg

> *Museums would be better off to leave complaints about "elitism" at the door, instead of asking, "Have we served the needs of one-legged Chicana lesbians today?"*
>
> – Robert Hughes, "Why Art Museums Matter," speech to the members of the Association of Art Museum Directors, June 1995

The Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century brought profound change to both Europe and America, not only in the form of new waves of immigration and the gradual transformation from a rural to an urban economy, but also in terms of a new emphasis on economic and monetary value. An emergent monied class realized that it could purchase services rather than relying on one another, creating an economic independence that threatened the network of cooperative relations that formed the backbone of European society.[6]

Consequently, artists rebelled against an emphasis on a materialistic society, and began to identify poverty as a sign of purity and artistic integrity. At the same time, they were severed from the audiences who were their sources of support, and as a result became increasingly out of touch with what the people needed and wanted from them. A deeper rift emerged between artist and audience, so that eventually the mass of people couldn't understand what artists were doing, and artists didn't particularly care if they were understood or not.[7] Feeling disenfranchised from fine artists and their work, people turned to the popular arts for a sense of communality and community, while artists themselves struggled to recoup a diminishing sense of power and authority by designating their work as "high" art,[8] out of the reach and understanding of ordinary people.

High art had, ostensibly, no attachments to political, economic, racial, moral, or ethical issues. It was pleasurable to engage with, and the middle class latched onto it as a sign of economic status ("I'm above these kinds of material concerns") and intellectual value ("I can understand this stuff, comment informatively on it, and distinguish myself by my familiarity with it and the key players, without having to have a Ph.D. in art history or aesthetics; this makes me culturally superior.)[9]

As painting and music, previously the preserve of the upper classes, became the purview of the middle class as well, the nineteenth century saw the growth of public art galleries, museums, and concert halls (architecturally rendered as versions of aristocratic houses or salons), and of public parks as accessible versions of the private parklands of the landed gentry.[10]

Culture became, at least in theory, available to all. But the price of admission for the common folk was to leave pleasure at the door. Middle class sensibility held that the value of museums, galleries, and concert halls was that they improved and educated the masses, a function whose earnestness didn't lend itself to picnics in front of the Mona Lisa, theatrical critique by tomato, or the interruption of hallowed musical events by loud public outcries for renderings of popular melodies like "Home Sweet Home."

John Fiske, writing on popular culture, argues that these cultural institutions have hardly changed at all, despite changes in their architecture. He notes that art museums in their modern design reincarnation and the profoundly visible presence of security guards "have added the connotations of a bank or Fort Knox to those of aristocracy and religion, as befits a society where the investment, aesthetic, and spiritual values of art are inseparable."[11]

Concomitantly, the measure of a successful artist today has become largely economic. What sells is clearly not art that promotes revolution, or even social unrest. Abstract, non-objective work with no subject matter or overt "content," work that's free of the demands and torments of everyday life is better, is easier to live with, and, of course, is easier to market.[12]

III.
"How Much Is that Doggie in the Window?" The "Value" of Art

> *In fields from literature to history, from painting to dance, the uncritical embrace of deconstruction and postmodernism has led to the rejection of the most basic notions of artistic quality and scholarly objectivity.*
>
> – Lynne A. Munson, research associate, American Enterprise Institute, *The New York Times*, September 21, 1995, Op-Ed page

Ever since I can remember, I had raging arguments about art with my Uncle Harold, who was a wine merchant in Cincinnati. He would sit down at the family dinner table and demand that I explain to him why a Barnett Newman painting was "art"—much less commanded a price well above what my uncle made during the course of a very good business year. When I couldn't go the distance, I'd tell him *he* was an expert on wines but *I* was an expert on art, and that would usually stop him in his tracks.

I'd never say that now—unless my uncle came back to earth and I just couldn't stand going through *Art*

Appreciation 101 one more time. That's because I've come to realize not just *how* relative value is, but *why* it's so slippery. The fine arts don't exist alone, separate and autonomous from the rest of the world. Art comes from and is part of our everyday lives, and the boundaries we impose on the arts reflect the social interests of those lives. What distinguishes fine arts from the popular arts of movies, television, novels, or hobby arts aren't necessary distinctions, but simply convenient ones. Similarly with "good" and "bad" art, what we value isn't based on purely aesthetic matters, but on the same criteria that determine our everyday interests and concerns.[13] There's no metaphysical basis for these distinctions; they exist because people need and want them.

The art world itself is a community, a cluster of social relations which embodies and reflects certain artistic and social interests while it subverts or undermines others. Art isn't pure, and never was. It's always affected, or mediated, by moral, intellectual, economic, religious, or gender considerations. Therefore, in my argument with my uncle, stating that I'm the expert isn't quite enough. Art and wine aren't the same thing. Try to explain that art has nothing to do with the concerns and interests of everyday social life, and you're in trouble. Like the everyday, the boundaries of art aren't all that stable.[14]

Value is always contingent. The way we interpret a work and the way we value it are mutually dependent. For example, we could look at Courbet's painting "L'Atelier du Peintre," rejected from the Salon of 1885. The art historian Kenneth Clark describes it in formal terms:

> Take the central group alone. Courbet has portrayed himself almost in profile, with his arm stretched out horizontally, and has related this hieratic stiffness to a series of interlocking rectangles, so that he seems to be a stable element in the midst of the floating population which surrounds him. More than that, he is a plastic element, a relief from Persepolis, and this feeling of timeless plasticity is enhanced by the nude model, also in profile, whose grandiose outline is a perfect foil to the thin geometric shapes of chair and canvas. This is not the fruit of a vegetable procedure, but of a rigorous devotion to the tradition of art.[15]

Another art historian, Linda Nochlin, some years and many mini-revolutions later, analyzes it through a feminist lens, seeing a gendered metaphor of political power and control, via Freud.

> [In this central group] the major players literally replicate the Oedipal triangle . . . the artist-father, Courbet, his Assyrian profile tilted at a confident angle, brush in hand, is unequivocally male, unambiguously active. The model-mother, to his right, and upon whom he turns his back, is equally unambiguously female, and passive. The pupil-son, follower or representative of the next generation who looks up at the artist's work, presumably with awe and admiration, like his alter ego, the little boy artist sprawled out sketching on the floor to the right . . .[16]

Both interpretations are valid, although we may prefer one over the other. Some meanings become visible as the interests and values of a particular community, like the art world, change. Add to that the assumptions, prejudices, knowledge, expectations, and capabilities of each individual viewer and it becomes clear just how contingent, how relative to other factors, meaning really is.[17]

I use the word "contingent" rather than "subjective" because contingency has to do with many different variables rather than with the individual whims of a particular person. Evaluation, or how you determine value, isn't detached, but is a form of social behavior, because it involves people other than oneself. Barbara Herrenstein Smith suggests that what we are doing when we make an explicit value judgment of a work of art is "(a) giving an estimate of how well that work will serve certain implicitly defined functions (b) for a specific implicitly defined audience, (c) who are conceived of as experiencing the work under certain implicitly defined conditions."[18]

But how do we decide which artworks and practices have value, if everything is contingent? If everything is leveled out because there's no one "correct" interpretation, does that mean there's no way of establishing value, or quality, at all? This would appear to support Allan Bloom's argument in *The Closing of the American Mind* that the arts and humanities in this country are being poisoned by a dangerous relativism, preventing anyone subject to its devastating influence from recognizing the moral and ethical, not to mention cultural, superiority of the West.[19] Does it mean we have to throw value (the baby) out with hierarchies (the bathwater)? And are we then left with a level playing field, or just an empty bathtub?

Of course things have value, but it may be that, as Herrenstein Smith suggests, our experience of the value of the work *is* its value. Or, put another way, "our experience of 'the value of the work' is equivalent to *our experience of the work in relation to the total economy of our existence*. And the reason our estimates of its probable value for other people may be quite accurate is that the total economy of *their* existence may, in fact, be quite similar to that of our own."[20]

IV.
What You Like Is What You Get

> *There's no accounting for taste.*
>
> – Anonymous

Robert Hughes, speaking last year to the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) on "Why Art Museums Matter," commented that "taste is essentially

amoral." And the writer Jeanette Winterson, in her book *Art [Objects]*, says: "People who claim to like pictures and books will often only respond to those pictures and books in which they can clearly find themselves. This is ego masquerading as taste. To recognize the worth of a thing is more than recognizing its worth to you."[21]

Is this really what taste is? Is it so lowly as to be discarded, willy-nilly, as merely a poor substitute for knowledge? In terms of the philosophy of art, "taste" is considered the faculty which exercises powers of discrimination in aesthetic experiences. (Aesthetic experiences aren't, of course, limited to art, but happen everywhere: in the garden, at the thrift store, in the supermarket, or staring at your child. Anything, from music to mathematics, can be seen aesthetically.) Everyone has taste, and everyone exercises it, but in the development of artistic value, it's held to be the refined person with highly developed taste who can perceive and recognize sophisticated and subtle artistic expressions that are lost on the uncultured person with poorly developed taste.[22]

The cultural critic Pierre Bordieu puts it another way: "Like the so-called naïve painter who, operating outside the field and its specific traditions, remains external to the history of the art, the 'naïve' spectator cannot attain a specific grasp of works of art which only have meaning—or value—in relation to the specific history of an artistic tradition . . . This mastery is, for the most part, acquired simply by contact with works of art . . . and it generally remains at a practical level,"[23] making it possible for someone to identify styles, characteristics, modes of expression associated with various schools without necessarily being able to say *why* something is the way it is.

Bordieu goes on to say that a popular aesthetic is based on an affirmation of the continuity between art and life, in which function is more important than form, so that, for example, working class audiences will reject experimental forms in theater and novels, preferring a traditional narrative that allows them to believe in and identify with the characters. (This implies, of course, that "the working class" is a singular, easily definable, unified body, which is highly arguable. But for the moment, let's accept his premise.) Intellectuals, on the other hand, tend to be interested in the representation itself, rather than in the things being represented. In other words, they will stress form over function, preferring an aesthetic removed from the necessities and vagaries of the "real" or social world.[24]

According to Bordieu these structural oppositions are found not just in aesthetic tastes, but in such other cultural practices as, for example, our eating habits.

> The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition . . . between the taste of necessity, which favours the most "filling" and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty—or luxury—which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function.[25]

This class analysis concludes on a provocative note: only by abolishing the frontier between "legitimate" culture and other popular cultural forms can we discover the startling parallels between our tastes "in music and food, painting and sport, literature and hairstyle."[26]

Last, but hardly least, Bordieu speculates that the sacred sphere of high culture is imbued with a denial of enjoyment, separating out as culturally superior those who can be satisfied with what he calls "the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane."[27]

Are we having fun yet?

V.
The Idea of the Popular:
"Which Twin Has the 'Toni'?"

> *Culture, you know, is anything too boring to be regarded as entertainment.*
>
> – Quentin Crisp[28]

Why is there a prejudice that if it's "entertaining," it can't be good? Must we always sacrifice artistic quality if we want popular appeal? In *The Washington Post* several years ago, a former presidential counselor to Richard Nixon described the Endowment under Carter as becoming "lock, stock and cyanide the contaminating idea of a 'populist' art culture, [in which] historically validated artistic excellence increasingly had to elbow its way through crowds of mediocrity."[29]

There's a history for this. With the Industrial Revolution, the shared and accessible art forms of the earlier part of the nineteenth century became less and less accessible to large segments of the American population. With the increasing professionalization of theater and music, and the growth of private patronage to support it, an elite cultural class emerged. Why the sudden craving for professionals, rather than the hundreds of local participants and enthusiasts who crammed the theaters, opera, and concert halls of the past? Amateurs have varying degrees of skill, talent, and knowledge. They don't always know the music, follow the conductor, stay till the end. Enthusiastic theater audiences are disruptive, prevent the discriminating from being able to hear the actors, and sometimes try to change the outcome of the drama if the ending is unappealing or an actor is unpopular. Works of art can't be contemplated in an appropriately reverential setting when there are noisy crowds swarming around the place.

As these cultural activities became more professionalized, they also became more expensive to attend, because it costs money to hire people who will devote themselves

exclusively to the task at hand and who are specifically trained to carry it out. What happened to the millions of people who got left out, who couldn't afford the theater, or Shakespearean plays, or the concert hall any longer?

Their cravings were met and satisfied by a number of new forms that were accessible to the masses, and therefore considered outside the domain of high culture. They included such musical forms as jazz, the blues, musical comedy; the movies, radio, and later television; photography, film, comics, and the antics of popular comedians, all of which still contained a great deal of fresh, imaginative, intellectually stimulating, and innovative ideas.[30]

They still do. Comedy, for instance, is a form that provides real enjoyment while being intensely subversive, because it's based on exposing and unsettling commonly held stereotypes, behaviors, or attitudes about class, economics, gender, race, age, childbearing, childrearing, appearance—or almost anything else, but especially things we hold sacred. There are very few things comedians haven't dealt with: the Holocaust is one, and love of one's country is another. (Remember Roseanne singing "God Bless America" at a baseball game and grabbing her crotch? "That's *not* funny!")

But why does the popular still sit against the wall, waiting for high culture to invite it to dance? Is it because it's occasionally invited for a whirl, but only until something better comes along? (The Museum of Modern Art's *High and Low* was a bit like that, everyone knew that Low was the one with the glasses, braces, and bad haircut and that if it weren't for the invitation, she wouldn't be dancing at all.) Or maybe it's because artists and intellectuals themselves are of two minds about the whole thing. On the one hand, they'd love to gain a bigger market for their work—which means widening their audience—and on the other, the only way they can distinguish themselves is on the basis of the rarity and "specialness" of their work, which demands that it be culturally distinct,[31] different from popular art forms. When it comes to the democratization of culture they're ambivalent. If you choose to work entirely outside the marketplace, eventually you lose access to it and to the mechanisms supporting the marketplace—the reviews, the opportunities for gallery and museum exhibitions, private and public funds, the whole nine yards.

But what about the public? Should we try to convince them of the value of the high art experience to their lives? Do we believe in what Victor Hugo called "the civilizing power of art?" Here's how novelist Jeanette Winterson describes the situation:

> Looking at paintings is equivalent to being dropped in a foreign city, where gradually, out of desire and despair, a few key words, then a little syntax make a clearing in the silence. Art, all art, not just painting, is a foreign city, and we deceive ourselves when we think it familiar. No one is surprised to find that a foreign city follows its own customs and speaks its own language. Only a boor would ignore both and blame his defaulting on the place. Every day, this happens to the artist and the art.[32]

Or should we be trying to make our work intelligible to non-professionals, non-artists, non-academics, in order to reclaim populist grounds for artists whose work has been attacked as elitist, incomprehensible, and unpopular?[33] If we could make it intelligible, does that mean it would then be popular?

VI.
"High" and "Low:"
Art and Blood Pressure on the Front Lines

> *The exaggerated antithesis between art and life, between the aesthetic and the Philistine, the worthy and the unworthy, the pure and the tainted, embodied in the host of adjectival categories so firmly established at the turn of the century, has unquestionably colored our view of culture ever since.*
>
> – Lawrence Levine[34]

We understand from listening to Pat Buchanan and Morley Safer that your taste in art isn't just an aesthetic choice, it's a moral value. If you like work with "bad" subject matter and if you demonstrate this affinity by exhibiting, publishing, writing about, or even buying it, you're morally and spiritually bankrupt. On the other hand, if you like work with no discernible subject matter (like that of Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, or even Felix Gonzalez-Torres, according to Safer) and if you exhibit, write about, or buy it, then you're a snob, an elitist, and a jerk who's being conned by a bunch of snickering artists, getting rich from your gullibility.

For Buchanan and Safer, or Hilton Kramer for that matter, art has a moral and ethical imperative to adhere to *their* moral and ethical (not to mention political) imperatives. But it's not only these guys who feel that way. We all do, to a greater or lesser extent. "Good" and "bad" art doesn't exist separately from the values, interests, and aspirations that make up our everyday lives. The boundaries between high and low, similarly, are constructions that exist not of necessity, but because certain people benefit from them and have the power to reinforce them.

In the past ten years or so, particularly in academia, people have begun to question the moral urgency with which the categorical distinctions of high and low, aesthetic and non-aesthetic, have been enforced, largely because of their clear relationship to the distinctions and stratifications found in society at large.[35]

The critic Barbara Herrenstein Smith has been attacked by conservatives in academia because her book, *Contingencies of Value*, argues that the criteria used to distin-

guish between what is and what isn't "aesthetic" always operate in relation to each other. She points out that whenever hierarchical strata begin to break down, splinter and multiply under the weight of contingency, people who create and control the strata from above see only a flattening, a breakdown of value, a loss of any and all distinction.[36]

Why are questions of value and merit, or quality, so important right now? At a moment when the arts and humanities are under attack, when resources are dwindling and the competition for them is fierce, when what Jeanette Winterson calls "a money culture where goods are worth more than time and where things are more important than ideas"[37] is gaining currency, what can be done to contain and clean up the oil spill?

Michael Bérubé, an English professor at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, thinks that our effectiveness is dependent largely on our ability to recognize and win new constituencies among aspiring educators and professionals.[38] I would add, among *anyone* who aspires to a richer, more critical and engaged life, which is what the arts can provide. A broader and more diverse public sphere means opportunities, access, education, and engagement with the arts for ordinary people. It means that the populist grounds might be recaptured and put to use to open up, rather than shut down, the debate.[39]

VII.
The Art Museum and You: What to Expect from Your Visit

> *A collection of science is gathered primarily in the interest of the real; a collection of art primarily in the interest of the ideal. . . . A museum of science is in essence a school; a museum of art is in essence a temple.*
>
> – Benjamin Ives Gilman, Secretary of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, c.1905[40]

During the early years of the nineteenth century a variety of museums sprang up which mixed up natural history, waxworks, ornaments and decorative arts, panoramas, paintings and sculpture, theater, and a considerable number of peculiar practices borrowed from the medicine show. Needless to say, attendance was high. Audiences were attracted to these museums not only by the regular exhibits but also by learned lectures, sensational scientific demonstrations, and enticing performances of music and drama. The New Museum's attempts to cross audiences seem overwhelmingly subtle in comparison to what, say, was the strategy of Boston's Gallery of Fine Arts a century and a half ago, when an exhibition of Hogarth engraving also featured two "genteel and intelligent" musical dwarfs, billed as "The Lilliputian Songsters."[41]

Matthew Stewart Prichard, assistant director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the first decade of the twentieth century, was determined to stem the tide of popularity. The museum's great commandment, he announced, "is to establish and maintain in the community a high standard of aesthetic taste," to which all other aims, including supplying public information, were secondary.

When Frick and Carnegie, for example, founded their respective institutions, they hoped art would prove socially therapeutic. The American art museum of the period was characterized by transcendental, noble, even moral ideas about the role of art in the public domain. Today, art museums are situated along a spectrum anchored on the one end to the ideal of the museum as a purveyor of high culture, taste, and knowledge to which all people should aspire; and on the other end to a belief that the museum really should be a kind of community art center, by and for the people, without mediation by so-called experts and connoisseurs.

Both models, of course, have embedded in them the idea of the museum as inherently educational and, by definition, open, accessible, and potentially intelligible to all, but each interprets the term "education" differently. The high art model is class-based and holds that people should have access to art because it is a "civilizing" force, thus seeing arts education as a top-down activity (although the education department somehow usually winds up in the basement). The populist model claims that multiple perspectives and knowledges should be brought to the study of many different kinds of artistic expressions, and that it is only by analyzing the culture of the present—which includes a range of popular art forms—that we can understand that of the past. This model of education is democratic and participatory, empowering voices and expressive modes that have been otherwise silenced or marginalized.

As Robert Hughes noted in his speech to the AAMD, the museum became a kind of secular church which replaced the church proper as the center of civic pride in most cities by 1960. Since 1983, he pointed out, more people have been to museums than have attended all sports events. As the museum became mesmerized by the size of its own audience, it began to transmute to a "cultural center," much to its detriment. He himself likes the smaller "chapel" museums, where you can find "the real thing," rather than the simulacra created when public and private spaces become collapsed into each other.

Some people, like Hilton Kramer, Helen Frankenthaller, or Robert Hughes fight tooth and nail for the high art model. Others, like James Clifford, Amalia Mesa-Bains, or Julie Ault of Group Material look to the cultural center model for ideas about public access to and participation in art and culture. (It's ironic that in fact substantial amounts of government monies are being redirected toward local community art centers across the country, in an attempt to ward off attacks of elitism. We have a peculiar double bind in which one part of the Right

complains bitterly about elitism at the same time as another part howls in outrage at the dissolution of its beloved canons.)

What are some of the new populist models?

- The Contemporary Art Museum in Baltimore has no permanent facility, and used a bus station for one of its most successful exhibitions. Other curators are using train stations, libraries, airplanes, stadiums. . . .
- There's increased interest in collaborations with non-art institutions, like anthropological, historical, and ethnographic museums. Imagine working with a zoo! (Of course, I'd like to see the zoo brought into the museum, rather than vice-versa, but there might be a few problems we'd have to solve first. . . .)
- Jerome Sans organized an exhibition on gallery answering machines in Paris two years ago; if you called the number, you got a "piece." And he has plans for an artist-written newspaper, where Hans Haacke might write the business page, Sylvie Fleury the "Style" section, Alfredo Jaar the international news, and Linda Montano the theater reviews.
- Hans-Ulrich Obrist, a young German curator, mounted a show that consisted only of artists' instructions to the public; and another, called "Take Me, I'm Yours," that ideally should have been empty by its last day.
- In France, Michel Reilhac organized *Les Art Etonnants*, which sponsored an exhibition in the Paris Metro, organized another in a huge hall where the public learned dances, and presented *Dark/Noir*, an exhibition for all the senses except sight.
- Catalogues (or even shows) are being circulated as newspaper inserts. Catalogues aren't necessarily in book form—CD ROMs are more and more common; even the Guerrilla Girls are doing one, so you *know* we're talking popular. I'd still like to see a show where the public gets to write the wall labels. We could choose the most interesting ones and change them all the time. Maybe they could be collected into what would be the catalogue for the show. . . .
- Curator Elizabeth Brown at the University of California, Santa Barbara organized an exhibition about death called "Terminal," which takes place online and is accessible through computer stations at a number of different venues, in different settings.
- Increasing numbers of exhibitions and art "events" are taking place in the space of the computer terminal, and many museums are experimenting with electronic interfaces and advanced computer technologies as a resource for new modes of communication, education, and public interaction. Cyberspace offers the possibility of a new kind of audience entirely, thus raising new issues: Will information come to substitute for experience? Isn't the experience of the console a socially isolated one? Is it really that democratic? Can it expand access to and understanding of art in new ways? (And what will happen to those who aren't computer literate? Will they be doomed to wander the dusty storerooms of archaic museums forever?)
- alt.youth.media, an exhibition organized by Brian Goldfarb, The New Museum's curator of education, allowed youth producers to speak for themselves rather than letting images of the young by, say, Calvin Klein, speak for them. This kind of show counters the idea that all meaningful statements are made by "mature" artists. Not, of course, "old" ones. As the performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña notes, "The art world . . . is a particularly strange community. It has no elders or children. The elders are ignored and the children are seen as a nuisance."[42] So what happens when the young speak for themselves, about themselves, with agency?

Does it work? Are there new kinds of audiences for these new practices? Will they, ultimately, change the perception of culture as elite to that of culture as belonging to a broad range of people? Or are these kinds of exhibition practices just creating another kind of elite? What kind of experience do you hope to have when you visit an art museum?

VIII.
Art and Politics:
Too Much, Too Soon? Too Little, Too Late?

> *The dominant classes . . . find high art congenial. Art that raises disturbing political, moral, economic, or religious issues, that questions gender relations, or points a finger at the racism or economic injustices that abound in our society, is sometimes dismissed as mere propaganda, or, at best, as popular or political art. Whatever else it is,it is not the "real" thing: it is not high art.*
>
> – David Novitz, *The Boundaries of Art*

What a work of art "says" is inseparable from *how* it says it.[43] The view that artists shouldn't propagandize, proselytize, or instruct, came about in the wake of the nineteenth century aesthetic movement that separated the aesthetic from other kinds of experience, and considered it to be of a higher order, free from any engagement with daily life. But if we look back to history, we find that the religious art of the Middle Ages, or later, the official art of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, didn't have such scruples. Art has always served to express and repress any number of ideologies and political doctrines, and it continues so today. The idea that this isn't really art, but propaganda disguised as art, doesn't hold. Think about the content of works by William Blake, Tolstoy, Wordsworth, or Yeats—or Michelangelo, Durer, Goya, or Toulouse Lautrec; the message of the work is hardly incidental to its artistic value.[44]

There's no intrinsic reason for thinking that works of art have to be entirely removed from the contingencies of

everyday life to be considered works of art. They can be propagandistic, instructive, didactic, proselytizing, and moralistic. A work of art can champion the customs of Judaism (Chagall) or mock them (Cary Leibowitz, in *Too Jewish*); support the welfare of children (Louis Hine) or challenge their innocence (Larry Clark's *Kids*); advocate revolution (J.L. David) or condemn it (Goya). Works of art can persuasively encourage support of gay and lesbian civil rights (Gran Fury, Reno, David Wojnarwicz), racial justice (David Hammons, Faith Ringgold, Luis Jimenez), and gender equity (Mary Kelly, Nancy Spero, Larry Krone, or Charles LeDray) or reinforce stereotypes (J.L. Gérôme, Pablo Picasso, Jeff Koons) unwittingly or, conversely, as an artistic strategy.

They can be good or bad, more or less interesting, relevant or irrelevant, but they're still works of art. In fact, the artist and the political propagandist have something substantial in common; both try "to produce something that is intended to seduce its audience into embracing certain values."[45] The political role that works of art play in our lives is a substantial one because art can destabilize our very basic ideas and attitudes in a way that doesn't elicit the usual defensiveness that a public challenge to democracy, or capitalism, or religion might. (Except in the case of Andres Serrano, or Robert Mapplethorpe, or Karen Finley, or Bob Flanagan. But that's because some people tend to confuse a representation of something with the thing itself. Fortunately, they are very few in number, albeit quite vociferous.)

In general, the new ways of understanding that works of art seduce us into don't involve the pain that the real experience would. They can create an empathetic realm (what used to be referred to as the "willful suspension of disbelief") that allows us to experience entirely different norms, standards, ways of thinking and feeling that we're normally guarded against. Unlike tanks, guns, imprisonment, or torture, art can thus succeed in changing some of our fundamental beliefs.[46] It can also, in its official forms, affirm the status quo. (No wonder it's a central, highly contested area in today's political debates.)

Where did we evolve the idea that, as Edward Said puts it, "true" knowledge is fundamentally non-political—and conversely, that overtly political knowledge is not "true" knowledge? What happens when a work of art is discredited by being called "political" simply because it refuses the protocol of objectivity and disinterestedness?[47]

Notes

1. Levine, Lawrence, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass & London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p.167.
2. Levine, p.86.
3. See Levine, p.110.
4. Levine, p.185.
5. Levine, p.164.
6. See Novitz, David, *The Boundaries of Art* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), p.30.
7. See Novitz, pp.31-32.
8. See Novitz, p.34.
9. See Novitz, pp.31, 35.
10. See Fiske, John, *Understanding Popular Culture* (Boston: Unwin, 1989), p.78.
11. Fiske, p.79.
12. See Novitz, *The Boundaries of Art*, pp.36, 37.
13. See Novitz, p.64.
14. See Novitz, p.84.
15. Clark, Kenneth, *Looking at Pictures* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p.175.
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18. Smith, p.13.
19. See Bérubé, Michael, *Public Access: Literary Theory and American Cultural Politics* (Verso: London & NY, 1994), p.97.
20. See Smith, *Contingencies of Value*, p.16.
21. Winterson, Jeanette, *Art [Objects]: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), p.147.
22. See Timothy Binkley, "Piece: Contra Aesthetics," in *Philosophy Looks at the Arts*, ed. J. Margolis, reprinted from *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XXXV (1977), p.29.
23. Bordieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), p.4.
24. See Bordieu, pp.4-5.
25. Bordieu, p.6.
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28. Quoted in Ruby Rich, "Dissed and Disconnected: Notes on Present Ills and Future Dreams" in *The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society, and Social Responsibility*, ed. Carol Becker (Routledge: New York and London, 1994), p.246.
29. Garment, Leonard, "The Feds and the Arts: Where It Went Wrong," *The Washington Post*, February 26, 1992.
30. See Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, p.232.
31. See Bordieu, *Distinction*, p.229.
32. Winterson, *Art [Objects]*, p.4.
33. See Bérubé, *Public Access*, p.176.
34. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, p.232.
35. See Bérubé, *Public Access*, p.107.
36. See Bérubé, p.107.
37. Winterson, *Art [Objects]*, p.p.139.
38. See Bérubé, *Public Access*, p.112.
39. See Bérubé, p.176.
40. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, pp.152.155.
41. Levine, p.149.
42. Gómez-Peña, Guillermo, "The Free Art Agreement/El Tratado de Libre Cultura," in Becker, Carol, ed., *The Subversive Imagination*, p.221.
43. See Bérubé, *Public Access*, p.152.
44. See Novitz, *The Boundaries of Art*, p.120.
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Assessing Aesthetic Education

Measuring the Ability to "Ward Off Chaos"

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The following article was written in response to Ongoing Inquiry, a two-day conference in March 1996 designed to present the results and research methods of a five-year study of aesthetic education at the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI) and four affiliate institutes across the country. The research project, funded by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, began in 1991 after LCI's fifteenth year of work with schools. The project asked: What is the impact of LCI's aesthetic education—on teachers, students, and schools—and how can it be improved? The "Project for Evaluation and Curriculum Development" was undertaken by researchers at Harvard's Project Zero and at Columbia's Teachers College, and involved quantitative as well as qualitative research. Project Zero's researchers designed assessment models both to measure children's aesthetic learning and to evaluate arts-in-education programming. The Teachers' College team focused on developing rationales and strategies for a curricular framework specific to aesthetic education. The conference, which attracted 400 participants, featured performances and workshops along with presentations of the research findings. The following essay is published with permission from both Professor Csikszentmihalyi and the Lincoln Center Institute.

Introduction

I was one of six respondents invited by Scott Noppe-Brandon, executive director of the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI), to participate in Ongoing Inquiry, and to write an evaluation of what transpired. The task was left purposefully vague and undefined, and I approached it without prejudice and with an open mind.

During the course of the conference, I listened to all the lectures and most of the workshops and demonstrations that were offered. To an extent that I had not anticipated, I learned an impressive amount from the two days. For instance, despite over forty years of active participation both in the arts and in athletics, and over thirty years of scholarly study in the psychology of aesthetics, I learned more about the aesthetic potentialities of the human body in a two-hour dance workshop than I thought possible. I was impressed by the artistic level of the presentations, by the commitment of the artist-teachers and teachers involved, and by the depth of pedagogical preparation that went into the various programs presented.

Perhaps most important, from my point of view, was the fact that the activities of the conference added up to a true aesthetic experience. I would define such an experience as one after which one says, "I can't imagine it done a better way." In contrast to the bulk of everyday reality, where so many acts, performances, and products are the result of innumerable compromises that dilute their quality and impact, in the two days of the conference we met again and again with events that had the mark of true aesthetics—a story told with the full force that speech can reach, dance movements that play on the borders of what the body can do. Such events have a chance of grabbing students' attention and forcing them to confront a reality that is better built than the mundane reality of their lives. The events are thus truly educational, if we use the original meaning of *education* as that which "leads out."

That the experiences encountered at the conference were enjoyable and meaningful should not have been surprising. After all, as my own research has shown, when students are involved in art and music the quality of their experience improves very significantly above their average levels. By contrast, the quality of experience while engaged in "academic" subjects like math and science is accompanied by a very significant decrease in the quality of experience. Even highly talented math and science students, when doing math and science tend to feel less happy, less strong, less motivated than they do while doing other things (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993). Whether this is due to the subject matter itself or to differences in the way these subjects are taught will not concern us here. The fact is that aesthetic activities tend to improve the quality of ongoing experience as few other things can do. I shall return to this topic in a later section.

I have no doubts, therefore, that the aesthetic education program produced by LCI over the years must have a beneficial effect on the students who are exposed to it. But to be useful, I felt my response to the conference should be critical. In other words, it should identify some area of improvement for the future. So I took it as my task to find an aspect of the conference where I could contribute ideas that might lead to improvement.

Assessment

The topic I chose to write about is assessment or evaluation—one of the most charged topics at the conference. How do we measure the impact, the outcome, the effects of an aesthetic experience? What is the proper way to assess aesthetic learning? These questions are central to every aspect of the LCI program, from the selection and presentation of its programs to its justification to funding agencies. The entire enterprise depends on what measures are selected because the method of assessment will dictate the answer to the most fundamental question, namely: Is this program worth doing? Because of

its centrality, assessment lurked underfoot throughout the conference like an unexploded bomb. Several times, I heard people refer to "the 'A' word" when they were talking about it. Some presenters said that a thorough evaluation was the most important task of the entire enterprise, while others made the point that it should be avoided as long as possible.

The volatility surrounding assessment is not difficult to explain. Artists have a legitimate concern when they fear submitting their work to evaluation based on an epistemology that is fundamentally alien to their own reality. After all, educational evaluation has historically been based on the assumption that learning is synonymous with thinking; hence that educational success must be measured in terms of cognitive change. For the sake of getting along with the reigning *Weltanschaung*, most art educators have learned to live with this assumption and to pay lip service to it. My impression, however, is that many, if not most, of them suspect that by capitulating to the "cognitive revolution" they might have given up the essential ingredient that makes the arts unique. However, the nature of this ingredient is not clear. It seems, then, that the arts must live in an uneasy position of dependency until their specific contribution to education can be voiced with greater clarity and given a conceptual legitimacy on a par with the one Descartes gave to reason.

I took it as my charge to assess the assessment component of the program, in the hope of helping to clarify some of the basic values of an aesthetic education.

Warding off Chaos

A presentation by the research team from Harvard Project Zero supported the claim that LCI's aesthetic education program indeed was effective. The evidence consisted of a statistical analysis of "aesthetic learning interviews" conducted with students from schools that had participated in LCI programs. The analysis showed that participating students were able to discuss a dramatic performance at a higher cognitive level than matched control children who had not taken part in the program. Scoring for aesthetic learning was higher when students mentioned richer details of the event they had witnessed, and when they "articulated a more complex interpretation that went beyond the events of the performance and supported the interpretation with a sophisticated combination of details."

Some members of the audience balked at the idea of a quantitative analysis being applied to aesthetic learning. They objected that the application of statistics to aesthetics was inappropriate and reduced the richness of the phenomena studied to abstract quantities. This aspect of the presentation, however, did not disturb me. In my opinion, trying to give numerical expression to events or experiences does not destroy their essence, as long as one remembers that quantification is just a form of description. And statistics, although often used to mystify and confuse, can also be powerful tools of clarification.

What I did find somewhat disturbing was not the design of the study, the methods used, or the statistical analysis, but rather the very assumptions underlying the assessment project. Specifically, I was disturbed by the assumption that aesthetic learning should be measured through a count of sophisticated details given in a verbal interpretation of an aesthetic event. Although this might be one way to turn aesthetic learning into a series of measurable parts, it did not strike me as one that tapped the essence of what the arts are about. It left out dimensions that seem more central to what can be learned from aesthetic encounters, such as the quickening of experience felt in the presence of great art, the powerful emotional jolt received, the desire to continue the exposure for its own sake—and the insight into alternative modes of being that can be learned from all of the above.

To use the more vivid metaphor Maxine Greene used in her inaugural keynote address to the conference, perhaps the most important thing we learn from a work of art is to "ward off chaos without denying it." In other words, art helps us to construct meanings—not in the abstract sense of producing cognitive interpretations, but by producing personally relevant goals, responses, habits, and values. It helps us to construct sensual, emotional, and mental habits that can turn the meaningless and tragic elements of our lives into memorable, enjoyable events. Art gives us a taste of "radical happiness"—to use again Greene's words. It gives us an experience that can serve as a benchmark against which the rest of life can be ordered. Art provides a set of priorities for investing our attention, and gives us examples of what living for its own sake feels like. These outcomes of the aesthetic encounter, which involve powerful emotional and motivational processes, cannot be captured by assessing whether children tell more detailed, more cognitively complex stories. But if these outcomes are not measured, our assessment misses the unique contribution of aesthetic learning.

Assuming that all this was well known to the Project Zero researchers, it is nonetheless clear why they chose to look at cognitive learning rather than tackle motivational and emotional changes. After all, the discourse about education in our culture is almost entirely limited to learning the 3Rs and their derivatives. At best, education is understood to include higher cognitive processes that Project Zero itself has introduced to educational theory, such as critical thinking and reflective thinking. Recently, character formation has reemerged as an educational concern, but as yet with little practical results. Almost never does one hear the importance of aesthetic learning discussed, except in the most superficial terms. Given the realities of our intellectual climate, it makes perfect sense to focus first and foremost on the putative cognitive outcomes of an aesthetic education.

If we continue on this route, however, artistic experiences will keep being evaluated under false pretenses. They will go on being subject to the court of reason, which is not the proper jurisdiction for assessing what they do or do not contribute. But to change this state of affairs we need a convincing rationale for the *sui generis* learning that artistic experiences produce. We must propose some reasonable methods for measuring such learning, to complement the measurement of cognitive changes. It is to this task that now I turn, with some trepidation.

The Conventional Goals of Education

Both in terms of popular perception and educational policy, the goal of schooling (which has become more and more completely synonymous with education) is to provide the basic cognitive tools necessary to become employable in the labor market. This goal has been the prevalent one ever since public (as opposed to church-based) education started, in fifteenth century Europe when the bankers of Florence realized that they needed clerks who could read and count in order to process the complicated financial transactions of their far-flung branches (Braudel, 1982). In China, public education spread even earlier in order to train persons who could carry the orders of the central imperial authority to the far-away provinces. Recently, the CEO of Xerox Corporation announced that American industry will end up paying $25 billion a year just to retrain prospective employees to read, write, and count at acceptable levels. These pressures have always been the ones that set the agenda for public education.

Of course, education has also served other goals, depending on specific social conditions. In societies undergoing rapid social change, for instance, the transmission of classic texts and ancient history has helped provide social stability. In the United States, which has absorbed waves of immigrants from different cultures, one of the principal goals of education has been to provide a common foundation of civics training to help amalgamate the different cultures into one melting pot (Cremin, 1990). But the place of the arts in mainline educational curricula has always been marginal. Literature has been accepted because of its ties with literacy, but music and the visual arts have been granted only grudging attention, in agreement with Herbert Spencer's dictum that insofar as the arts occupy the leisure part of life, so should they occupy the leisure part of education (Geahigan, 1992). According to a recent survey, less than six percent of instructional time at the elementary level is devoted to music education, and only between ten and twenty percent of high school students take art and music courses (Arts, 1988).

To counter this neglect, philosophers and educators have repeatedly tried to justify the importance of the arts in school curricula. This is not the place to provide a history of such attempts. Suffice it to say that the "modern" era of the reevaluation of aesthetics in education can be dated in large part to the efforts of the philosopher Nelson Goodman at Harvard, who founded Project Zero as a center for the study of the arts, and to the efforts of his successors, notably Howard Gardner and David Perkins (Gardner, 1983; Goodman, 1968; Perkins & Leondar, 1977). Their approaches (which combined the cognitive psychology of Jean Piaget with the philosophical insights of John Dewey, Ernst Cassirer, and Susanne Langer) have attempted to vindicate the arts as important sources of knowledge, both in terms of content and in terms of learning higher-order information processing styles, such as interpretation and critical thinking (Reimer & Smith, 1992).

Higher Goals

As I argued earlier, however, it does not seem right to justify aesthetic experience as simply another path to cognitive, rational knowledge. Before developing an alternative, the limitations of the conventional goals of education need to be identified. To see learning as basically a tool for economic productivity and social stability is a short-sighted view. It assumes that the major task of education is to help young people reach material goals. It ignores the conclusion to which practically all systems of thought, East and West, have eventually converged: that the highest goal of human life is happiness, and happiness cannot be achieved through material means such as wealth, a good job, creature comforts, or even physical health (Myers, 1992). Instead, happiness depends on the quality of subjective experience, which in turn depends on a person's ability to control his or her consciousness. Control of consciousness involves taking neutral or negative objective conditions, and transforming them into positive subjective experiences.

Learning that leads to happiness, therefore, consists of developing skills for the control of consciousness. Learning can take several forms, such as meditation and religious rituals, and the skills that can be developed are many and diverse. Aesthetic experience consists of just this ability to transform blurred, boring, meaningless, or unbearable aspects of reality so that they become sharp, exciting, meaningful, and bearable. This is the sense, I think, of Maxine Greene's words about the arts being able to place the everyday in parenthesis, and to ward off chaos without denying it. While the process has cognitive components, it cannot be reduced to thought alone. It is a holistic experience in which the person's entire being is involved. As anyone acquainted with aesthetic experiences can testify, too much reliance on thought often detracts from the quality of what is learned. A museum curator in an earlier study said: "I would even argue that there are many art historians who don't have aesthetic experiences. They respond to objects intellectually, but they often aren't moved by the beauty of a work of art" (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990, p. 151).

At the very least, aesthetic experiences include four major and equally important dimensions. The first one is the *sensory* dimension, which includes the physical pleasure perceived by our nervous system on hearing certain sounds, feeling certain bodily movements, or seeing certain shapes and colors. These experiences seem not to need the mediation of thought, or even of emotion. They are experienced directly as rewarding in and of themselves. The second dimension is the *emotional* one. Aesthetic encounters produce feelings of awe, wonder, delight, fear, or relief that break through the gray affectless daily routines and expand the range of what it means to be alive. Again, this dimension requires no higher-order mental operations. The point is not to understand, but to feel deeply, to connect the aesthetic experience with previous experiences and emotions. The third major dimension is the *cognitive* one. The impact of a work of art is often enhanced if, in addition to sensory and emotional elements, it can also provoke thought and understanding. While critical or interpretive thinking is not alien to aesthetic learning, my point is that cognitive processes are not sufficient, or even necessary to it. Finally, the last major dimension is what we might call the *transcendent* one. This involves the very real feeling we have after an aesthetic encounter that some kind of growth has taken place, that our being and the cosmos have been realigned in a more harmonious way.

Through such experiences a person learns ways of controlling consciousness. By learning to see, hear, or move in tune with aesthetic forms, we learn to give shape to patterns of sensation, emotion, and thought. And with this ability, we can make better sense of the chaos of existence and can approach, as close as possible, the state of happiness.

Real-Life Outcomes

Is there any evidence that the quality of one's life is actually improved by aesthetic involvement? Two approaches could be taken to begin answering the question. One would consider the quality of the immediate experience stimulated by confronting an art object or performance. The second would consider the long-time effects of aesthetic involvement on the quality of life as a whole. While not many studies have been conducted using either approach, I will report on some of the studies my colleagues and I have done that bear on the question.

I have already mentioned several studies that consider the effect of art on the quality of experience. These studies show that a person will report significantly higher levels of happiness, self-esteem, and other positive responses when actively engaged in art or music, as compared with other activities (Csikszentmihalyi & Schiefele, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi, et al., 1993; Csikszentmihalyi & Schiefele, 1993). It is important to note that these beneficial effects are reported not only by a small segment of the population, but also by average cross-sections of adults and adolescents. Similar findings have been reported in other cultures, for example Italy (Massimini, Delle Fave, & Carli, 1988) and South Korea (Won, 1989). In other words, the claim seems well established that aesthetic experiences stand out from the rest of life by being more positive.

Finding evidence for the long-term effects of art on well-being is more difficult. Our longitudinal studies of artists indicate that despite very heavy financial sacrifices and uncertain careers, men and women who were trained in the arts do not regret having chosen this vocation. They feel that their lives are fuller and their experiences richer and more rewarding than those of others they compare themselves to (Csikszentmihalyi, Getzels,& Kahn, 1984). Former art students, who eighteen years earlier had the strongest aesthetic values, report significantly greater personal growth in their adult lives than students who valued aesthetics less (Csikszentmihalyi, Getzels, & Kahn, 1984, p. 224).

While these findings are certainly not conclusive, they do suggest that there is a positive relationship between valuing and practicing art on the one hand, and positive real-life outcomes on the other. More than anything else, they point to the possibility of establishing criteria for assessing aesthetic outcomes that are independent of, and complementary to, whatever benefits might be found using cognitive criteria.

New Goals for Aesthetic Education

It seems possible, then, to emancipate aesthetic education from its dependence on cognitive results, and to begin defending it on grounds that are more congruent with its essence. But to achieve this, radically new methods of assessment will have to be developed. What will need to be measured is not so much the ability to think, but the depth of sensations, feelings, and meanings that a child is able to extract from experience as a result of exposure to art. This is certainly not an easy task, especially since we have no strong precedents to rely on. Eventually, however, a start will be necessary.

The first and most important step is a conceptual re-evaluation of aesthetic education relative to the dominant emphasis on cognitive learning. Reasoning and knowing are held in high esteem because they are indispensable tools for survival. Nevertheless, they are only tools. Aesthetic experiences, on the other hand, are valued in their own right because they enhance the quality of life directly. While cognitive processes can also be enjoyed for their own sake, this only happens when reasoning is used in a playful mode, as in scholarship or problem-solving—that is, when thinking becomes an aesthetic process.

At the heart of the distinction between aesthetic and cognitive learning is a belief agreed on by most philosophers from Aristotle to the present and confirmed by

common sense: that the ultimate goal of living is happiness—that life is worth living for its own sake here and now. If we are convinced of the truth of this distinction, then we must also believe that aesthetic education has more to contribute to the ultimate goal of life than other kinds of education. Unless we are convinced, we will not be able to convince others; in which case, aesthetic education will continue to be seen as an optional adjunct to "serious" learning.

The second step, after agreeing on the importance of aesthetic learning at a theoretical level, is to find convincing ways to demonstrate its effects. While it is not possible at this point to lay out a detailed strategy for assessment, I can outline some general principles. The main benefits of aesthetic encounters could be summarized as follows:

- They make everyday life more rich, interesting, and enjoyable by sharpening sensory skills;
- They enrich experience by presenting emotionally salient stimuli in a way that allows the audience to understand and respond;
- They help make sense of the basic randomness of existence by giving shape to experience.

In principle, it should not be too difficult to measure children's abilities to sense, feel, and construct meanings. The main reason we do not know how is that the task has not been taken very seriously. Once adequate measures are found, we should be able to test the claim that after exposures to aesthetic encounters, a person is likely to develop a more rewarding relationship to his or her environment.

The best measures of whether art in fact improves the quality of life would not rely on simple tests that require a person to perform on demand. The real question is whether aesthetic experiences change a person's style of life. Do people get more interested in what goes on around them? Do they notice and savor the texture of everyday life more? Does the intensity of their emotional responses change? Can they empathize more with others' predicaments and feelings? Are they more able to give shape and form to their own experiences?

Or to take a different angle: Do people exposed to art depend less on passive entertainment, watch less television? Are they less apathetic, less likely to be bored? Do they rely less on prejudice, on stereotyped responses? Are they less likely to adopt a nihilistic view of the future?

Clearly it would be naively optimistic to expect that exposure to a single concert or art object will result in a large difference in the response to such questions. Yet the argument for art is that these are outcomes that art can uniquely effect, and that these outcomes are enormously important. If we wish to establish aesthetic learning on an autonomous footing these are the changes that we need to assess.

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Technology Reports

Champagne Service on a Beer Budget?

Suppose you are a performing arts organization in a hotly competitive market. You dream of having the latest, most powerful computerized information management technology to keep your administrative operations humming. You have visions of a system that would allow you to manipulate the information you collect in infinitely flexible ways, to present it in the formats most useful for your marketing, fundraising, and ticketing departments. In your fantasies, a team of crackerjack computer experts stands ready to guide your staff in new applications and assist with software and hardware problems. The sticking point, of course, is the expense. Even the less flexible software available is quite costly. As for the expertise, many performing arts organizations, even those with budgets in the millions, are operating without even one full-time computer expert on staff.

Nevertheless, something very close to this fanciful vision of a state-of-the-art computer operation with a full strength support system at an affordable price is currently a reality for a dozen performing arts organizations in New Jersey and New York. An innovative new way to meet the information management needs of arts organizations has been developed at Princeton's McCarter Theatre by its director of sales and information (and computer wizard) Alan C. Levine. His brainchild, ArtsWeb, is a powerful $1,000,000 hardware and software system. Using a Wide Area Network (WAN), high speed phone lines connect the Local Area Networks of a dozen ArtsWeb members scattered over distances of hundreds of miles to the center of operations in Princeton.

ArtsWeb members, who include the Crossroads Theatre Company, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, avail themselves of highly sophisticated ticketing, subscription, fundraising, and marketing software for about the same cost as a barely adequate in-house system. Artsoft/SQL, ArtsWeb's software, allows each user to configure its data in any way desired, while strictly maintaining the privacy of each organization's information. Users can integrate their ticketing, subscription, fundraising, and mail list data onto a single system. Organizations are thus able to cultivate the all-important relationships with subscribers and donors by taking advantage of up-to-the-minute information on gift histories, seating requests, affiliations, etc. For example, box office personnel taking a ticket order over the phone can view not only the available seats at a glance, as with any advanced ticketing system, but also a patron's past contributions, which allows the box office to offer preferred seating or other amenities. In addition, transactions can be processed in less than half the usual time. Several commercial ticketing and fundraising software packages can fulfill the same functions to varying degrees, however, none offers the speed, flexibility, and security of the ArtsWeb system.

A great advantage of the cooperative relationship is that tasks that otherwise would be performed by staff at each individual organization—such as system backups, routine maintenance, and custom report creation—are accomplished once for the entire network. ArtsWeb members can concentrate on business rather than on maintaining a computer system. In addition, the economy of scale has given ArtsWeb the leverage to negotiate discounts for its members on credit card commissions, long distance telephone service, and hardware support, and to open a shared Web site. Importantly, member organizations benefit from the user support system provided by the six-person ArtsWeb team in Princeton.

As the program officer of a foundation that supports capacity-building projects for arts organizations, I have reviewed hundreds of proposals for projects to upgrade in-house computer operations. I recently had the opportunity to visit McCarter Theatre and see a demonstration of ArtsWeb. I must say, I was very impressed. I believe it is a breakthrough for performing arts organizations that can cut costs and increase efficiency through sharing resources. It is the only Wide Area Network computer partnership for arts organizations in the country. I think it is a model that could be widely replicated. For more information about ArtsWeb, call Alan C. Levine at 609-638-9100, ext. 8033.

Darcy Hector
Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Inc.

Open Studio

In October 1996, the NEA and the Benton Foundation launched Open Studio. Open Studio is a $1 million funding initiative to help nonprofit arts organizations and artists go online, increase the arts and cultural presence on the Internet, expand the online arts audience, and provide public Internet access at arts and community institutions.

Open Studio has two principal components. The first is designed to provide public access to the Internet. At least one, sometimes two, arts and cultural institutions in each state and territory will receive matching awards of $2,000 to $4,000 to set up public access points. These sites will provide interested members of the public with personal assistance in learning to find cultural resources on the Internet.

Open Studio's second component aims to train cultural organizations and artists to become effective information providers on the World Wide Web. Ten institutions with existing telecommunications resources—such as libraries, universities, community telecommunications centers, and arts service organizations—will receive up to $35,000 each to train ten artists and ten regional organizations. Within a year of completing their own training, the trainees will be expected to mentor another organization or artist. If all goes as planned, the program will train 200 artists and organizations by the fall, with 200 more in training.

In October 1996, Benton selected twelve pilot sites (nine access sites and

Continued on page 33

Notes on New Programs

From time to time foundations initiate new programs. Three are described below. GIA Newsletter *editors are interested in learning about new programs at foundations of all sizes. We welcome information about them for possible inclusion in future issues.*

Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation

Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund

In December 1996, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund made the first eleven planning grants for what is expected to be a $15 million program to help selected community foundations plan, finance, and assess local initiatives to expand audiences for the arts and culture. Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation is the latest in a series of efforts the Fund has recently announced to increase opportunities for people to participate in arts and cultural activities at the community level.

The program has three components: planning grants for leading community foundations to develop strategies for broadening cultural participation; implementation grants for audience development programs and for establishing permanent restricted funds to support these activities; and technical assistance to speed learning among participants.

Before launching the program, the Fund commissioned a study of community foundations and their level of support for the arts. The report showed that, on average, community foundations award approximately sixteen percent of their grants to arts endeavors. The study also uncovered widespread interest among community foundations in helping arts organizations better serve local audiences and in linking arts groups to other community-building efforts the foundations support.

Based on the findings of this report and on extensive interviews, the Fund invited eleven community foundations to submit proposals for planning grants in the first phase of the Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation program. To ensure that each of the prospective grantees understood the Fund's expectations and to reach agreement on mutual goals, representatives from the foundations met with the Fund's program staff for a full day in August 1996. Following that meeting, the community foundations developed and submitted planning grant proposals to the Fund.

One-year, $55,000 planning grants have been awarded to enable each community foundation to shape appropriate and effective strategies for broadening cultural participation in its locality. During the planning phase, community foundations will convene advisory committees, conduct research on current levels of audience participation, design plans for future grantmaking and technical assistance, and determine fundraising plans for permanent funds to support audience building in the arts. In addition,the foundations will participate in meetings organized by the Fund to promote the exchange of information and to share effective strategies.

Planning grant recipients are expected to submit implementation proposals to the Fund in the fall of 1997. Review of the proposals will be based on the thoroughness of the planning process; on the clarity and feasibility of plans for programs, grantmaking, and fundraising to broaden audience participation; and on the foundation's commitment to exchange information with program colleagues and to participate in conferences, workshops, and data collection. In late 1997, the Fund's board will consider recommendations for five-year implementation grants ranging from $400,000 to $1.2 million.

To measure the effectiveness of the initiative and its impact on the participating community foundations, the Fund plans to commission an external evaluation. Community foundations also will be asked to contribute to a databank of baseline information about their arts-related activities and about audience participation in their communities.

The Fund intends to make a second round of planning grants in 1998, followed by implementation grants in 1999. A total of twenty community foundations are expected to participate in the initiative.

The community foundations that received planning grants in the program's first phase include the Boston Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, Community Foundation of Santa Clara County, Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, Dade Community Foundation, Community Foundation of East Tennessee, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation & Affiliated Trusts, Humboldt Area Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, New Hampshire Community Trust, and San Francisco Foundation.

Holly Sidford
Lila-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund

Artist-in-Residence

Ford Foundation

In December 1996, the Ford Foundation announced the appointment of Anna Deavere Smith as its first artist-in-residence. The appointment is part of the foundation's effort to strengthen the role of artists and cultural leaders in public dialogue on contemporary civic issues.

An acclaimed actor and playwright whose work explores the complexities of race, identity, and community in the U.S., Smith is known for a series of one-woman theater pieces that combine journalistic interviews with the art of interpreting her subjects' words through performance. Smith's best known previous works include *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities*, which explores the 1991 clash between Jews and Blacks in Brooklyn and *Twilight, Los Angeles 1992*, which examines the civil unrest following the Rodney King verdict.

Through her the seven-month residency, Smith will contribute to a new Ford Foundation initiative on the civic role of the arts. The initiative, which represents a new direction in the

foundation's arts and culture work, will support the creation of artistic works and cultural programs that stimulate public dialogue on contemporary civic concerns. These arts and cultural activities complement other foundation programs that share goals of strengthening communities and improving inter-group relations. Smith will help advance discussions within the foundation on ways to integrate artistic and cultural perspectives across its program areas. Susan V. Berresford, Ford Foundation President, commented, "We feel confident that Smith's stay at the Foundation will strengthen our ability to support outstanding artistic expression and to build understanding of complex social issues."

During the residency that began January 1997, Smith is pursuing her own projects as well. Specifically, she will devote time to her current work on the press and the presidency, which was commissioned by Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage and will premier in the fall 1997.

As the Ford Foundation's first artist-in-residence, Smith follows Sir Brian Urquhart, United Nations expert, who served as scholar-in-residence from 1986-1996. In the future, the Foundation expects to explore other opportunities to provide residencies to artists and cultural leaders.

"Sabbaticals" for Arts Administrators

Dayton-Hudson Foundation

In a changing arts environment, arts administrators are being challenged to carefully assess their methods of operation. Indeed, for many, the key to future success may lie in reconceptualizing current behavior or acquiring new skills. For many administrators such reconceptualizing is difficult, if not impossible, in the midst of daily work pressures. Time may also be needed to develop new skills and build individual capacity. At the Dayton Hudson Foundation, we began to consider underwriting (for lack of a better term) arts administrator "sabbaticals"—leaves of absence for focused inquiry and investigation. Our interest in responding was twofold: to enable the field to retain the best arts administrators, and, through "sabbaticals," to help administrators and organizations craft innovative responses to the demands of our times.

We use the term "sabbatical" with reservation. What the term captures is the notion of fully supported, finite leave. Unfortunately, it also carries associations of "vacation" or "rest and relaxation," which may be valuable but which this initiative is not intended to support. We aim, instead, to help administrators take time away from their institutions for the purposes of focused inquiry and investigation.

In our planning, we came to embrace several key assumptions:

- There is an integral link between the health of our institutions and the strength of individual administrators who guide them;
- Institutional survival in the current climate may well rely on administrators' ability to reconceptualize their behavior and to acquire new skills;
- "Burnout" is on the rise, linked in part to increased alienation of administrators from the artistic center of an organization and in part to a "work harder and redouble one's efforts" philosophy of doing more with less;
- Various disciplines are approaching crises internally, as the most capable administrators opt to leave the field altogether, either from burnout, despair, or the inability to find the support necessary to sustain themselves;
- Administrators tend to be less competitive in programs that also embrace artists as applicants;
- True innovation rarely comes from within a field, but often emerges through an encounter with an entirely different experience.

Clearly, there are potential dangers to such an initiative. Unless properly planned, a sabbatical could:

- Impose additional responsibilities on the staff who remain behind, leading to resentment and staff burnout;
- Make an organization feel "cast adrift" or "on hold;"
- Lead remaining staff to accept new roles that they would be unwilling to relinquish upon the administrator's return;
- Inadvertently favor large institutions over smaller ones;
- Result in a community-wide destabilizing.

We engaged a consultant to conduct anonymous focus groups of administrators to discuss the possibilities of a "sabbatical" initiative. After weighing the findings, we decided to move forward with a pilot round of grants.

The Jerome Foundation has now joined with the Dayton Hudson Foundation as the program moves forward. The program will work in the following way:

- Supported sabbaticals are full-time, consecutive leaves of from two to six months. We understand that no executive director will completely sever contact with his or her organization for such a period; nonetheless we believe this contact should be held to the barest possible minimum.

- Qualified candidates are administrators in the Twin Cities who have been in the field at least seven years, in their positions at least three years, whose work is significantly (although not necessarily exclusively) administrative, and whose administrative authority has sufficient weight to alter or transform organizational behavior.

- Sabbaticals center around a particular topic or area of inquiry and do not support vacations or "R&R." As part of the selection process, each candidate identifies an area of organizational/personal concern to be addressed during the leave and describes the potential value of the sabbatical, both to the organization and to the administrator personally. Recognizing that true innovation usually comes from outside (rather than from inside) a field, each sabbatical also includes a significant period spent in a non-arts context. The program is not designed to support teaching appointments, paid fellowships/internships, or professional employment in other locations.

- Up to $5,000 is available to each selected administrator for planning purposes. Each is given twelve months to put together a sabbatical plan with

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Regional Reports

Hawai'i

Many of you will be attending the Council on Foundation's 1997 conference in Honolulu, Hawai'i and may have questions about Hawai'i and what to expect. The reality of Hawai'i is often obscured behind media images that paint Hawai'i as the island paradise, a place of unparalleled beauty where visitors come to have the vacation of a lifetime. What is this place out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean? Where lies the reality hidden behind all the hype and hyperbole?

First, some basic information. *The 1993-94 State of Hawai'i Data Book*, based on information from the 1990 census, lists Hawai'i's total population at 1,108,229. Percentages for racial background are:

- White 33.4%
- Black 2.5%
- American Indian, Eskimo 0.5%
- Asian or Pacific Islander 61.8%*
- Other 1.9%

*This is further broken down to Chinese, 6.2%; Filipino, 15.2%; Japanese, 22.3%; Korean, 2.2%; Vietnamese, 0.5%; Hawaiian, 12.5%; Samoan, 1.4%; and other Asian or Pacific, 1.5%. Data collected by the State of Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) vary somewhat from the census figures. DOH figures put the Hawaiian population at 18.8%, or the third largest ethnic group in the state behind Caucasians and Japanese.

Census figures provide a clue to understanding Hawai'i's cultural milieu—no single racial group makes up a majority in the state. In addition, people of mixed ethnicity made up 35% of Hawai'i's population in 1990. By 1992, state statistician Bob Schmitt calculated that approximately 60% of children born were offspring of inter-ethnic marriages.

Hawai'i's plantation past provides another clue. Immigrants came from China, Portugal, Japan, Puerto Rico, Korea, Spain, and the Philippines, among other nations, to work on the sugar plantations. Initially segregated into ethnic enclaves, or camps, the groups eventually unified to stage strikes against the harsh management practices of the landowners. A unique blending of cultures resulted from this mix of peoples struggling to work together and understand one another. The blending continues to this day and has resulted in a distinctive "local" culture with its own vernacular "pidgin" English.

Local culture is built on the uniquely welcoming culture of the native Hawaiians. *Aloha* is the bedrock on which it is built. It is based on cooperation, mutual support, and non-aggression. "Local" is a common identity of Hawai'i's people, an identity that transcends ethnicity. Inherent in this term is an appreciation for what makes Hawai'i unique—its people and cultures, and the beauty and spiritual power of its land.

While Hawai'i's many ethnic groups have lived together in relative harmony, recalling the absence of an ethnic majority, the idea of an island paradise untouched by racial and ethnic tensions remains a myth. "Local" culture divides into "us" vs. "them"—"them" being outsiders, whether visitors from the continental United States, newly arrived immigrants, or *haoles* (whites) in the power structure. Tensions continue between ethnic groups as well, as the "local" culture has not by any means replaced identification with one's own cultural group. Tensions are further heightened by the move towards Hawaiian sovereignty. This effort has divided the Hawaiian community and is a flash point for heated discussion among other groups.

This report is necessarily a rather cursory glance at the local culture of Hawai'i. A planned site session at the upcoming conference will provide more information, particularly to anyone wanting a direct, hands-on experience of the Hawaiian culture. During the two-day, post-conference session on the Big Island, grantmakers will visit and work on a taro farm in Waipi'o Valley, enjoy a luau in the town of Waimea while talking with *kupuna* (elders) and viewing an authentic *hula* presentation, and visit Hawaiian fishponds and petroglyph fields on the grounds of the Mauna Lani Resort.

Regarding the visit to the taro farm in Waipi'o Valley, I can say from personal experience that it will inspire you and fill you with the spirit of the Hawaiian culture. Standing in the taro field with water up to your shins and mud oozing between your toes, bending down to break the taro roots, and pulling the taro from the earth, you are literally in touch with the earth from which the Hawaiian people draw much of their spiritual and personal inspiration and power. This is a visceral, physical experience of the Hawaiian culture.

We in Hawai'i look forward to sharing our unique culture with grantmakers from the continent and elsewhere. We are an isolated island community that may, in some ways, feel more like a foreign country than a part of the United States. However, we are in other ways very much a part of the United States, as we face similar problems in the breakdown of community and civility, and as we develop innovative programs to move our community forward. We welcome you with *aloha* and hope that your visit to our islands will be a thought-provoking look at a society that has for many decades lived in relative multicultural harmony.

Karen K. Masaki
Hawai'i Community Foundation

Pacific Northwest

Technology and Creativity

"Parallels in Creativity," a series of panel discussions in the technology coridor of Washington State, has been bringing together leading Seattle artistic directors with software and media evangelists from some of the over 2,000 high tech companies in the region. The goal of the panels, which have been open to arts audiences and software executives alike, are to explore the convergence of technology and creativity and to seek ways locally that each group of professionals may benefit from knowing more about the other.

The panels have been organized by Seattle's Corporate Council for the Arts/ArtsFund and the Washington Software & Digital Media Alliance. The latest panel discussion included participants from HyperBole Studios, the artistic director from the Seattle Children's Theater, and the vice president of business development at Corbis Corporation (a company that has pioneered the collection of digital content). A prior panel included the directors of the Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, and Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Much of the discussion at these panels has revolved around a central theme: how technology can be used to enhance the understanding or appreciation of art. One of the most widely discussed presentations was from Steve Davis at Corbis who described a technology his company developed to view Leonardo DaVinci's famous notebook, the *Codex Leicester*. The device, called the Codex Codescope (tm), is a technological viewing tool that translates the mirrored handwriting of Leonardo into English (or back into Italian) at the viewer's discretion. It allows the public to read for themselves Leonardo's insights and observations, and watch the development of his corresponding drawings.

"Parallels in Creativity" has given arts organizations a front row seat on some of the newest technologies, while technology companies have been treated to creative insights about how their inventions might be used to further advance the arts community. Since the panels were convened, several small collaborations have begun between participating groups; it is possible the panels will continue as these two fields increasingly find they share common ground.

Mary Pembroke
Microsoft Corporation

Missouri

Missouri Cultural Trust

Everyone knows Missouri as the "Show Me" state, a place where citizens cast a cautious eye on any newfangled ideas or proposals. That reputation may change now with the establishment of the Missouri Cultural Trust, a promising new $200-million arts funding instrument that has made Missouri the "Watch Me" state for arts agencies around the US.

A three-year effort by the Missouri Arts Council (MAC) and the Missouri Citizens for the Arts (the statewide arts advocacy organization) resulted in the creation of the Trust at the end of the 1993 legislative session. Flora Maria Garcia, executive director of MAC, explains: "At the time we were worried about the loss of NEA funding. We currently receive 8% of our $6-million annual operating budget from the NEA."

The goal of the Trust—the largest of its kind in the U.S.—is to raise $100 million over ten years from a designated tax on the income of non-resident performers and professional athletes working in Missouri. This will be matched by a goal of $100 million to be raised in private funds during the same period. The corpus of the Trust is currently at $8.3 million, all from tax revenues. Efforts for private fundraising are just beginning to be designed and launched.

If all goes well, the Trust will generate $10 million to $12 million annually for MAC by the year 2004. "We want to ensure a stable base of support that will not fluctuate from year to year based on the whim of any government body," says Garcia. A few other states—Texas, Arizona, Delaware, and Nebraska—have launched their own efforts but on more modest scales. [See *GIA Newsletter*, Autumn 1996, for information about the Arizona Arts Endowment Fund.] In the interim, all eyes are on Missouri as it strives to show how to create a predictable and inviolable flow of expanded future funds for the arts. More information about the Trust can be obtained from Executive Director Garcia or Jim Gladwin, director of communications, Missouri Arts Council, 314-340-6845.

Morrie Warshawski
St. Louis, Missouri

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Cleveland

Civic Study Commission on the Performing Arts

In 1995, recognizing that problems facing local performing arts organizations were ". . . too complex and too poorly understood for grantmaking alone to solve," the Cleveland Foundation convened a Study Commission to investigate causes of the instability of Cleveland's performing arts organizations and to compare Cleveland's situation to that of similar cities. The Commission's report provides a useful portrait of a culturally rich U.S. city and recommends broadly applicable strategies for assessing and strengthening arts organizations.

Cleveland's story offers an unusually rich case study. For a city of its size, the number and quality of its performing arts organizations are extraordinary. The economic, social, and political pressures that have eroded many of this country's major cities—loss of industrial jobs, communities dividing along racial lines, and the exodus of wealthier families and corporate headquarters from the political city—were felt so dramatically in Cleveland that in 1978 the city declared bankruptcy. That political crisis, which still haunts Cleveland, was the beginning of a better relationship between business and local government and of a broad civic effort to prove the city's worth.

Aspects of Cleveland's rebuilding affect the situation of its performing arts organizations. Playhouse Square, a cluster of performing arts facilities, has been developed within an abandoned strip of downtown movie theaters to reinvite residents to the inner city. Similarly, the Cleveland Play House theater complex focused redevelopment attention on a key midtown corridor. Both projects created jobs and infrastructure improvements, and brought new life into decaying areas of the city. The new Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame demonstrates Cleveland's efforts to strengthen its economy with cultural tourism. Two new stadiums, a new library, and a science museum all contribute to the theme that "Cleveland has turned around."

In this ripe context, why have Cleveland's widely admired performing arts organizations developed substantial deficits and exhausted their volunteer leadership? According to the Commission's project director, Richard Gridley, "The demographics are still daunting," as is demonstrated in an analysis of twenty similarly-sized cities. Only Pittsburgh showed a sharper population decline than Cleveland between 1980 and 1990. As of 1994, Cleveland has a relatively low average household income and ranked seventeenth among the cities compared for households with annual incomes over $100,000. It also ranked below the U.S. average for percentage of population with bachelor's and master's degrees. Because it has relatively few service-company headquarters, it is losing further ground as a corporate headquarters. Yet, on a per capita basis, operating expenses of Cleveland's performing arts organizations are exceeded only by San Francisco's.

A further challenge is that, while the state of Ohio has a strong arts council, Cleveland has virtually no civic or local county public arts funding and no publicly-owned performing arts facilities with either rent or maintenance subsidies for nonprofits. Only four of Cleveland's eleven largest arts organizations own their own facilities (some perform at Playhouse Square for reduced rental fees).

While Cleveland is one of the few cities surveyed that had not lost a major performing arts organization in recent years, the report cites many signs of a crisis. Of eleven major performing arts organizations studied, only the Cleveland Orchestra passed all the National Arts Stabilization's minimum recommended standards for financial health (based on net current assets, working capital reserves, endowment, liquidity planning, etc.). According to the report, "Lack of sufficient capitalization—not poor management—is the primary reason that the major performing arts institutions had accumulated more than $2 million in composite deficits at the end of the 1994-95 season." The studied organizations were containing costs, with most growing at a rate slower than inflation.

Looking forward, Cleveland's performing arts organizations face an erosion of public funding from both federal and state sources. This year the Ohio Arts Council will include the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame among the Major Institutions Support Pool, resulting in less unrestricted general operating support for long-time recipients of these funds. Playhouse Square, which rents to several of the studied arts organizations and also presents commercial Broadway-like productions, has expanded its impresario role, making its theaters less available to local arts organizations. At the same time, the new stadiums, library, and museums are inviting an increased flow of tourists to Cleveland who may also attend the performing arts.

The Commission's recommendations are directed to the arts organizations, to philanthropic sources, and to the greater city. With the caution that the benefits of eliminating duplicative administrative costs in performing arts organizations are small when compared to business mergers, the study recommends pursuit of partnerships, collaborations, and appropriate consolidations. Organizations cannot afford to overlook any general operating cost savings, and according to project director Richard Gridley, ". . . it is not a silver bullet, but there is a youthful, problem-solving benefit to be derived from these organizations sitting down with one another." Collaborative marketing is specifically recommended in light of the report's demographic findings, which suggest that Cleveland's performing arts organizations have not reached their full potential audiences. Three recommendations are particular to Playhouse Square: create year-round signage for the resident performing arts companies; encourage renovation of another theater and use that theater's commercial income to help subsidize lower rents for resident and nonprofit companies; and create a council to review resident companies' concerns.

Grantmakers are urged to support efforts at partnerships and collaborations, to require demonstration of "best practices" from organizations if they are to receive continuing support, and to recognize organizations' needs for general operating support. (Readers of the *GIA Newsletter* are familiar with Melanie Beene's "No Slow Fix, Either" and with Marian Godfrey's discussion of The Pew Charitable Trusts' adoption of "best practices" grantmaking, both of which inform these recommendations.) The report calls upon Cleveland's business community to help ensure strong and capable volunteer leadership, and on grantmakers and businesses to forge partnerships between cultural organizations and public schools.

Cleveland's recovering civic pride suggests the time is ripe for long-term cultural planning that creates affiliations among performing arts and other community institutions such as the library, the zoo, and the museums. While such work requires long-term vision and commitment, even now the Study Commission's report has generated press coverage of its originating thesis: "Cleveland's resurgent national image—a result of decades of hard work and massive investment—would be deeply damaged if the city's exceptional cultural legacy were undermined." If the arts organizations can strengthen public understanding of what they bring to Cleveland, they also may be able to justify broader public support.

Copies of the report, *Securing the Future*, based on the Cleveland Foundation's Civic Study Commission on the Performing Arts, are available from the Foundation at 1422 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1400, Cleveland, Ohio, 44115-2001, 216-861-3810.

Frances Phillips
Walter and Elise Haas Fund

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Recommended Reading

People of the Seventh Fire

People of the Seventh Fire: Returning Lifeways of Native America. Edited by Dagmar Thorpe, photography by Lawrence Gus, foreword by Vine Deloria, Jr., published by Akwe:Kon Press, Ithaca, New York, 238 pages, $14.00.

Like many of us, my bedside table holds a wobbly pyramid of arts publications, advocacy newsletters, final reports, background reading on special subjects, *Harpers*, *The New Yorker*, and the rare "pleasure reading." In spite of a fairly obsessive devotion to at least skimming though everything, I find it almost impossible to keep up with the veritable flood of printed matter that comes my way. It's, therefore, such a pleasure to find a book that fills so many different requirements.

People of the Seventh Fire: Returning Lifeways of Native America contains twenty interviews with Native activists, elders, and advocates. With its thought-provoking stories and beautiful photos, this anthology is a positive and uplifting experience. The book begins with a moving forward by Dakota author, Vine Deloria, Jr., and closes with a useful addendum of foundation examples of support for traditional Native people. Supported by several individuals, The Ettinger Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the book was sent to various foundations by Kellogg because of its value in setting forth a context for grantmaking to underfunded traditional Native American efforts.

The stories in the book will have meaning to any grantmaker searching for ways to support cultural projects in times of reduced funding. It will also be of value to grantmakers who attend meetings where consensus is difficult to obtain. Finally, it will be significant for anyone who is fighting the odds, the economy, and prevalent social thinking on behalf of the rich cultural diversity that makes this country so unique. The renaissance of community and cultural development within Native American communities is certainly a hopeful sign.

People of the Seventh Fire is divided into four books, each with several supporting interviews or stories. Book One, "The Spirit of the People Has Survived Despite All We Have Endured," is an inspirational compendium of stories taken from interviews with Native people who are fighting to maintain traditional and cultural values in the face of erratic federal policy that has caused suffering among all Native people in the past century.

The interviews in Book Two, "Who We Are As a People Is Within Us, Waiting to Be Awakened," speak to the connection of the people to their creation myths and the responsibility engendered in this connection. Poignant examples urge each of us, not just Native Americans, to recall our connection to the environment, and hold fast to the responsibilities of living on the earth and preserving its beauty for future generations.

"Practicing Our Ways of Life Is What Strengthens the Spirit of the People," Book Three, is a broad ranging compendium of remarkable projects and programs that put belief structure in action. For GIA members who attended the 1995 annual meeting in Eureka and had the opportunity to meet and listen to Julian Lang (Karuk) and Lyn Risling (Karuk, Yurok, and Hupa), reading the interviews with them, aptly titled, "We Fell in Love Bringing the Spirit of the Songs to Life," will have added meaning.

The final book is titled "Developing Community Projects which Enliven and Strengthen Who We Are as a People." The stories will inspire anyone facing apparently insurmountable obstacles.

Dagmar Thorpe (Sauk/Thakiwaki), editor, has been an activist for many years, working to revitalize indigenous communities and preserve ritual and tradition. In assembling this book, Thorpe has traveled to many Indian communities and learned from an astounding array of elders. As Vine Deloria writes in the foreword, "These interviews are not, therefore, interviews as much as they are a shared learning experience and a celebration of the joy that comes when people communicate meaning on the deepest personal level."

The book is available through Akwe: Kon Press at 300 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14853. Sales from the book contribute to future Akwe:Kon Press titles.

Marina Drummer
LEF Foundation

Technology Reports

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three mentor sites), and will select the full complement of sites at the end of March 1997. The pilot sites received their awards in December, and have been buying equipment and creating their programs since then. At least one of the selected mentor sites, BreakAway Technologies in Los Angeles, has begun its Open Studio classes. Paula Loeb, who runs BreakAway with her husband Joseph, states that one of their most difficult problems is getting the artists to actually leave the class when it is over. Pilot sites have also been using an online conference for exchanging ideas and asking questions of each other and Benton staff.

Open Studio is intended to be a "national laboratory." Periodically, it will assess the changing communications needs of arts organizations and artists as well as the evolving state of networked communications and technology. It also will identify the most effective tools and techniques for getting the arts online.

Open Studio is funded through an NEA Leadership Initiative award of $500,000. Based in Washington D.C., the Benton Foundation is dedicated to protecting the public interest in the digital world and is a strong proponent of noncommercial public space in the new communications environment. As part of its cooperative agreement with the NEA, Benton will raise matching funds. For more information visit www.openstudio.org on the Web, or call Anne Green, project coordinator, at 202-638-5770.

Anne Green
The Benton Foundation

Reports Received

Artists in the Work Force: Employment and Earnings 1970-1990

Artists in the Work Force: Employment and Earnings 1970-1990 is the title of NEA Research Paper #37. The 140-page report continues the series on matters of interest to the arts community commissioned by the Research Division of the NEA. This one is available from Seven Locks Press of Santa Ana, California (1-800-354-5348). The focus of the report is on four distinct groups of artists: authors, architects and designers, performing artists, and "artists who work with their hands." The report's authors studied census data and other labor information, and also asked artists questions about how and where they live and work, and what they earn.

Each of the report's four sections was written by a different team of researchers. Neil O. Alper and Gregory H. Wassall wrote the section on authors, broadly defined to include editors, reporters, technical writers, and professional and technical workers other than artists. Joan Jeffri and Robert Greenblatt wrote the section on artists "who work with their hands," defined further as "visual arts occupations . . . painters, sculptors, craft artists, and artist printmakers." Performing artists, including musicians, dancers, actors, and singers, were studied by Ann O. Kay and Stephyn G.W. Butcher. Finally, architecture and design occupations were researched by Harry Hillman Chartrand.

In addition to more surprising facts, the report affirms many common assumptions about artists and their working conditions in the U.S. labor force. These include the lack of agreement on how to determine who is an artist, and such findings as the fact that dancers were the performers least likely to work a full year. The report also describes difficulties facing artists based in different parts of the U.S. and cites numerous doctoral dissertations and other reference sources that may be of interest to those who wish to explore the topic further. An index and list of tables would have been a useful addition to this relatively densely written report. Nonetheless, grantmakers interested in trends in artists' labor conditions will likely find this report a valuable addition to their bookshelf. *s.l.*

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A Retrospective Review of Artists' Projects Regional Initiative

A Retrospective Review of Artists' Projects Regional Initiative (APRI) is the title of a new report prepared for the Rockefeller and Andy Warhol foundations, and issued by RMC Research Corporation, 1000 Market Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire 30801. APRI was a national funding program that operated between 1986 and 1995. During the ten years, it provided total funding of $5.6 million to individual artists and teams of artists for the purpose of creating new art works. APRI regranted funds annually to between seven and fourteen regional organizations, primarily artists' organizations or "artists' spaces." These organizations in turn granted funds to artists whose work was experimental, interdisciplinary, or intercultural in nature.

The report's authors, W. Christine Dwyer, Susan E. Klaiber, and Marie Cieri, approach the report topic from three vantage points: that of funder, regranter, and artist. The report presents each group's reflections on the values and the effects of APRI, and concludes with recommendations for future funding of individual artists.

Overall, the report concludes that APRI was a valuable program that provided many artists with "the boost they needed at a critical time to continue and/or re-energize their work." APRI was unusual in its emphasis on interdisciplinary work. The program also highlighted the large number of artists of color working in experimental fields, and demonstrated the role of innovation within traditional and folk forms.

The authors suggest that a future program might place greater emphasis on artists' exposure to audiences and on artists' connection to the larger public. They also recommend that funders explore the possible use of technology (Web sites, listservs, bulletin boards, and other means) to aid communication between and among geographically dispersed sites. Not surprisingly, the regranters, in this case a group of largely artist-run organizations, also had suggestions for limiting the amount of bureaucracy necessary for program administration. They also suggested ways that they could use such a regranting program to strengthen their organizations over the long term. *s.l.*

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Creative America A Report to the President

Creative America: A Report to the President was released on February 7, 1997 by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The report answers President Clinton's call to "articulate the fundamental and intrinsic values of the arts and the humanities . . . and describe the cultural sector and its contributions to American life." Clinton also asked the President's Committee to summarize "what we know about trends in private funding and earned income" and to address "the role of the federal government in the arts and humanities." Finally, the report includes recommendations for "strengthening support for the arts and the humanities in the United States."

This thirty-two-page report and its bibliography describe the vitality of the cultural sector and the extent of public participation in it. Among the "assets" of the sector, the report cites "resilient and innovative cultural organizations" and "a tradition of giving and volunteering." The report then describes "deficiencies" in our cultural development, citing "under compensated and under-employed artists and scholars . . . a lack of value for the role of culture in society, signaled by the federal government's reduced commitment, and a climate of intolerance for challenging works and ideas."

The President's Committee, chaired by John Brademas, then goes on to make recommendations under five broad categories. These are as follows.

- *Launching the Millennium Initiative.* The Committee calls on President leadership to establish an initiative whose purpose would be to celebrate American ideas and artistic achievement.
- *Educating our Youth for the Future.* The Committee calls for government action to strengthen arts education for children, families, and adults.
- *Investing in Cultural Capital.* The Committee recommends greater investment in creative artists and in scholars, and in the cultural organizations that provide vehicles for public programming in the arts and humanities.
- *Renewing American Philanthropy.* The Committee asks the White House to help "renew America's strong tradition of philanthropy" by "calling on individuals and on the public and private sectors to become more engaged in increased overall giving."
- *Affirming the Public Role.* Finally, the Committee calls on Congress to restore and increase funding to the NEA, NEH, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services; to ensure continued funding of federal institutions such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution; to enhance the ability of federal agencies to receive private sector gifts; and to create a dedicated revenue source to supplement (not replace) existing appropriations for the NEA, NEH, and IMLS.

Copies of the report are available from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. *s.l.*

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Building Arts Audiences and Communities on the Web

If your organization has been thinking about creating a Web site, *Building Arts Audiences and Communities on the Web: A Guide for Arts Organizations* will be an especially helpful resource. Published by Arts Wire and funded by the Arts Challenge Fund of New Jersey, this step-by-step manual walks you through the full process of designing a new site, from initial planning to actual implementation. Although the 56-page guide was written primarily for arts organizations wanting to create a new site, it also contains helpful reference sources and advice for breathing new life into any currently existing Web page.

For anyone tempted to rush immediately to the technical sections, such as the chapter devoted to the HTML language, Arts Wire advises caution: "Your Web presence will be far more successful if you carefully think through each step of the electronic publishing process." Before even beginning, it is important to develop "critical Web browsing techniques." To this end, the guide directs readers to currently existing arts organizations' sites and prompts a critical assessment of them. The rest of the guide provides sensible planning guidelines with the technical "nuts and bolts" necessary to build a site. The publication is supplemented by a companion Web site at http://www.artswire.org/spiderschool. For a copy, write Arts Wire Web Manual, New York Foundation for the Arts, 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013. The cost is $15 plus $3.00 for shipping. *e.b.*

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Cultural Tourism

The latest monograph from Americans for the Arts is titled, *Cultural Tourism: Bridging America Through Partnerships in the Arts, Tourism, and Economic Development*. Written by Louise Glickman with assistance from LaMoine MacLaughlin and Alvin Rosenbaum, this paper cites local examples of cultural tourism projects and describes ways to approach project design. The three examples described are in New Orleans, San Francisco, and Amery, Wisconsin. Each involved several cooperating agencies. Among the outcomes of the projects are these: establishing cultural tourism information online for use by hotel operators, travel agents, and other travel professionals (and tourists); creating a "tax-free" shopping program where international guests can enjoy tax savings and discounts when they visit (and shop) in a specific arts district; and jointly marketing local cultural events and sites in magazines such as *Family Circle* and *Better Homes and Gardens*.

The twelve-page report is available from Americans for the Arts, c/o Whitehurst and Clark, 100 Newfield Avenue, Edison, NJ 08837. Each copy costs $5.00. *s.l.*

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Power in Practice: Arts Education Development Project

A recently published report summarizes the results of Power in Practice, a four-year project launched by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The project's original goal was to identify and support a core of exemplary arts education programs. After ten arts organizations with a history of educational efforts were selected, they were allowed to experiment freely with new methods of expanding services or forging new collaborations between artists and educators. Because of the experimental nature of the project, several organizations changed their original goals and assessment methods over the four years, and, indeed, the project itself revised its original central goal. At the end, the project shifted emphasis to *the process* of developing successful arts education programs.

During the project, students in the ten individual programs engaged in a variety of activities, including writing plays, learning improvisational skills, and mastering cultural traditions. Teaching artists guided these pursuits and encouraged the students to reflect on their experiences and to express their thoughts openly. According to the report, the ten programs shared some common characteristics in their effect on students. The children, who ranged from preschool to high school age, experienced "developmentally appropriate growth," improved in conflict resolution and problem solving, and were more capable of working together across racial and ethnic differences.

The report notes that the project had a positive effect on the participating teaching artists as well. Funds sup-

ported professional development, ongoing gatherings, and a national conference. The meetings allowed teachers to exchange successful strategies or to ask for help and suggestions.

To learn more about the specific programs or results of Power in Practice, or to receive a copy of the report, contact The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2005 Market Street, Suite 1700, Philadelphia, PA 19103. *e.b.*

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Legislative Appropriations Annual Survey

Twice a year the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) reports on the status of funding for state arts agencies. In light of frequent expressions of concern about the availability of funding for the arts, NASAA's research on arts funding at the state level is especially valuable.

In December 1996, NASAA reported an increase in aggregate legislative appropriations for the fifty-six state and jurisdictional arts agencies for fiscal year 1997. The total aggregate revenue reported by state and jurisdictional agencies was $318.2 million. Of this, $275.4 million (86.6 percent of the total) came from state or jurisdictional legislative appropriations. This represents about a five percent increase over the $262.2 million in appropriations for 1996. NASAA's report states that 1997 state appropriations collectively equalled 101.9 cents per person, the highest level of spending since 1991. Differences from state to state are also important to note. Alabama, for example, reported an increase of almost 50 percent (from $2 million to $3 million with the increase earmarked for grants), while Alaska reported a decrease of about 20 percent (from $564,000 to $456,000). In all, thirty agencies received increases in 1997, eight had level funding, and eighteen reported decreases, although NASAA reported that "the majority of these were relatively small, with five states reporting cuts of under one percent."

Besides legislative appropriations, other sources of state arts agency revenue include state transfer dollars, federal funds (primarily from the NEA), corporate and foundation support, and an assortment of other sources—interest from endowment or trust funds, income tax check-off, and license plate revenue, among others.

For more information contact NASAA, 1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 920, Washington D.C. 20005, 202-347-6352, email: nasaa@nasaa-arts.org. *a.f.*

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Seeding a Network: Addressing Change in Central and Eastern Europe

Seeding a Network: Addressing Change in Central and Eastern Europe is the title of a report now available from the Royal National Theater, South Bank, London, SE1 9PX, UK. The report documents a project begun in 1990 that enabled theater workers from Central and Eastern Europe—managers, producers, directors, and technicians—to "job-shadow" theater colleagues in the UK. The central focus of the project was on managing change. Participants have come from Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and other places. Each spent three to four weeks in the UK following a program tailored to their individual needs.

The report offers a step-by-step guide to the program's design, selection process, logistics, and philosophy. Grantmakers interested in peer and mentor relationships among arts institutions, or in international grantmaking, will find this well-written report worthwhile reading. *s.l.*

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The Changing Face of Tradition

NEA Research Paper #38, *The Changing Face of Tradition: A Report on the Folk and Traditional Arts in the United States*, examines the broad category of folk and traditional arts. The report, edited by Elizabeth Peterson, includes eight sections, each written by a different author. Although one of the main goals of the study was to identify the depth and breadth of this arts sector, the authors admit the difficulty of gathering quantitative data on arts activities that typically occur outside "institutional settings." Nevertheless, the study concludes that, despite such potential threats as technology and mass culture, involvement and interest in folk and traditional arts is "significant, pervasive,and increasing."

In each chapter, the authors highlight the rich diversity of folk and traditional arts by profiling selected individuals, events, and organizations. Included are mariachi festivals, cowboy poetry gatherings, the Maine Indian Basketmaking Alliance, and many others. Given the lack of historical and statistical data, the in-depth profiles not only describe some of the organizational efforts underway,but also help to support anecdotally the authors' overall conclusions.

To obtain copies of the report, edited by Elizabeth Peterson, contact the NEA Office of Public Information, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington D.C. 20506. *e.b.*

Survey Participation Sought

In preparation for a new study, the Pew Charitable Trusts are interested in learning more about policy-oriented arts research currently being conducted or planned by foundations. Specifically, the Trusts are interested in research that produces information that might help guide arts policy decision-making. They will consider the collection, analysis, and use of information about participation in arts and culture; data on how the arts are paid for in different cities; and comparative data across disciplines in such areas as programming and finances. They are also interested in the development of tools and strategies that can assist the field in its collection and analysis of information. A brief survey will be disseminated soon. Follow-up interviews will be conducted by RMC Research. If you have plans or projects that you would like included in interviews, send email to cdwyer@rmcres.com, or call Chris Dwyer at 1-800-258-0802. *m.g.*

News from Grantmakers in the Arts

1997 GIA Conference

¡Reúnase con nosotros en el Día de los Muertos!

Join us for the Day of the Dead in San Antonio as Grantmakers in the Arts holds its 1997 annual conference, November 2-5. The conference will give you a chance to learn about the city that has been called the Mexican American Cultural Capitol and about the cultural implications of its importance in both the United States and Mexico.

Conference brochures and registration forms will be mailed to all members later this spring. For more information contact the local coordinator: Charles Jarrell, Arts & Cultural Affairs, City of San Antonio, P.O. Box 839966, San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966, 210-222-2787. email : cjarrell@ci.sat.tx.us (email preferred). Conference attendance is open to all GIA members and to any grantmaker eligible for membership. If you have questions about membership eligibility, please contact GIA's membership committee chair, Marian Godfrey, 215-575-4870, or its administrator, Anne Focke, 206-624-2312.

The conference hotel is outside San Antonio in the "hill country." Transportation will be provided into the city for special events. Hotels in San Antonio are typically sold out during the Day of the Dead celebration, so make your reservations early if you intend to attend. GIA has a block of rooms reserved at the Hyatt Hill Country Resort, 9800 Hyatt Resort Drive, San Antonio, Texas, 78251, 1-800-233-1234. The cutoff date for reservations is October 10, 1997.

Council on Foundations Annual Conference

Arts Related Sessions

The COF annual conference will be held May 5-7 in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Many sessions, both on site and off, will interest grantmakers broadly concerned about cultural funding. Among the many programs that will feature arts and culture, the following sessions are either hosted by GIA or may be of special interest to GIA members.

Sunday, May 4, 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Grantmakers in Film, Television and Video, the Communications Network in Philanthropy, and GIA host an evening reception, dinner, and program featuring works by Hawaiian filmmakers. *Words, Earth, and Aloha* by director and producer Eddie and Myrna Kamae shows how music is not merely entertainment, but a primary means of cultural continuity in Hawai'i. *Acts of War* by Joan Lander and Puhipau asks how Hawai'i became the fiftieth state; the film answers: "illegally."

Monday, May 5, 7:30-9:00 a.m.

Grantmakers in the Arts Breakfast Reception and Roundtables—*Unique Challenges/Creative Solutions*

Monday, May 5, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Na Mo'olelo Hawai'i: Stories of Hawai'i, Cultural and Historical Orientation to Hawai'i—storytelling and dramatic portrayals about Hawai'i.

Tuesday, May 6, 2:45-6:00 p.m.

Economic Development through the Arts investigates downtown revitalization anchored by arts institutions, particularly the historic and spectacularly refurbished Hawai'i Theater.

Tuesday, May 6, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Multiculturalism, Equity, and Identity in the United States, moderated by GIA board member Claudine Brown (Nathan Cummings Foundation), takes on the debate over cultural inclusion or Balkanization with Hawaii-born poet/scholar Garrett Hongo (University of Oregon), and noted professors Todd Gitlin (New York University) and Eleanor W. Traylor (Howard University).

Grantmakers in the Arts Newsletter

Spring 1997; Volume 8, Number 1

Editors, Anne Focke and Sarah Lutman

The newsletter is published twice a year. The submission deadline for the next issue is August 1, 1997. Send submissions to:

Anne Focke, GIA, P.O.Box 21487, Seattle, Washington 98111-3487, 206-624-2312, afocke@artswire.org

Sarah Lutman, The Bush Foundation, E-900 First Nat'l Bank Bldg., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, lutman@artswire.org

Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) is a national membership organization of primarily private sector grantmakers interested in the arts and arts-related activities. Its purpose is to strengthen arts philanthropy and its role in contributing to a supportive environment for the arts nationwide. GIA is incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and is an affinity group of the Council on Foundations.

Profiles of GIA Members

Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust

The trust was established in 1968 by Mary Flagler Cary's will. The primary purpose of the trust is "to carry forward Mrs. Cary's interests and to elaborate upon them in light of new circumstances and new needs." Cary had a great love for music and was an active participant in the musical life of New York City. She and her husband were also collectors, acquiring significant collections of music manuscripts, playing cards, and prints. In addition, Cary had a great interest in the health and beauty of trees. The trust follows these interests by considering grants in three areas: music in New York City, the conservation of natural resources along the Atlantic coast, and urban environmental programs in New York City. Cary's family was among the founders and principal owners of the original Standard Oil Company.

In music, the trust provides operating support to small and medium-sized performance institutions in New York City with an emphasis on contemporary music performance. Program guidelines note that, "In general, these groups perform adventurous repertoire and develop audiences outside the well-established music institutions." In addition, the trust offers grants for music commissioning and recording projects, as well as grants for music education that are directed primarily toward community music schools and youth orchestras. Its "Live Music for Dance" assists dance companies with musician's rehearsal and performance fees.

The Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust has a term of fifty years; its assets will be paid out by the year 2018. The trust has been a GIA member since membership was first offered in 1992.

Hawai'i Community Foundation

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 1996. First known as the Hawaiian Foundation, HCF was established in 1916 and was based on the example set by the Cleveland Foundation. The HCF 1996 Yearbook reports that the idea was introduced to Hawai'i by a "nameless trust officer from Boston, fortuitously transplanted to Honolulu at a time when needs were great and resources were scarce." The foundation received its first gift of $5,000 in 1923, and has grown significantly in the past several decades—from assets of $2 million in the early 1970s to more than $200 million today representing over 160 individual charitable trusts.

In 1995, HCF grants totalled $8.9 million, approximately 65 percent of which were from discretionary funds. "Arts, culture, and humanities" is a significant field of grantmaking activity for the foundation, representing almost 20 percent of discretionary grants and 14 percent of the total. In general, grants to cultural organizations are categorized as either "capacity building" or "special initiatives." Grants in arts, culture, and humanities in 1995 included, among others, a grant to Ahahui Olelo Hawai'i for the establishment of a Hawaiian language resource center, a grant to the Diamond Head Theatre for improvements to the theater's acoustics, first year funding for the Hawai'i International Film Festival, and three-year support to the Polynesian Voyaging Society in collaboration with the State Department of Education to help revive the sailing cultures of the Pacific Basin through the establishment of a learning center.

In addition to expanding the foundation's endowment funds and making grants, HCF takes on community projects when its staff and board believe that their presence will make a difference. Special initiatives have been taken in fields of early childhood education, child protection services, and youth development. HCF has played a role as investor and convenor. The Hawai'i Community Foundation is actively involved in welcoming the Council on Foundations to Hawai'i for its annual conference in 1997.

The Leeway Foundation

The Leeway Foundation is a family foundation established in 1993 in Philadelphia as a private, charitable 501(c)(3) organization. Its main purpose is to support dedicated women artists and to encourage their increased representation in the art world. The geographic scope of the foundation's giving is the city of Philadelphia and its neighboring counties. It makes individual grants to women artists and focuses on a different arts discipline each year. In 1996, for example, the foundation offered six grants of $12,000 each to women photographers who have "demonstrated outstanding creativity and artistic vision in their work."

In 1994, the Leeway Foundation created the "Bessie Berman Grant," in memory of the founder's grandmother to recognize and support women artists who are fifty years old or older. The program brochure describes the spirit that the grant intends to honor:

> In 1906 at the age of sixteen, Bessie left her family and her home in Russia and journeyed with her sister across the ocean in the hold of a steamship. She disembarked at the Port of Philadelphia where she found work in the garment district "sweat shops" until her marriage. Bessie raised three children, cared for her home, cooked all family meals, helped with her husband's businesses and still found time to design and sew original clothing for her daughters, her granddaughters, and herself. Bessie's creations made on a foot-pedaled Singer sewing machine ranged from simple skirts, to winter coats, to elaborate "flapper" dresses with satin, sequins, boas, and beads. The annual Bessie Berman Grant honors her adventuresome spirit, her lifetime of hard work, and her artistry.

The Leeway Foundation also distributes a limited number of smaller grants to local nonprofit agencies that share its goals.

J.P. Morgan

In 1995, J.P. Morgan & Co. Inc. gave approximately $14.5 million to organizations in six areas: arts, education, the environment, health and human services, international affairs, and urban affairs. Contributions are made by the J.P. Morgan Charitable Trust which was founded by Morgan in 1961. Morgan's grantmaking is concentrated in New York City where the firm has its headquarters. The 1995 annual report of contributions states, "As a financial firm based in New York City, we recognize that our success is closely tied to the well-being of the city. We place a particular emphasis on contributing to economic and community development activities." It adds, "We also support cultural organizations and efforts to improve the environment because they contribute significantly to the social well-being and vitality of the communities in which we live and work."

Morgan's allocation for the arts is approximately $1.5 million (about 14 percent of its total contributions). Grants are made to organizations in theater, dance, music, visual arts, and film, "including some that teach the arts to public schoolchildren and some that expand access to the arts for low-income New Yorkers." Organizations receiving contributions range in size from the Lincoln Center to the Jean Cocteau Repertory Theater, and in discipline from opera to folk arts. Morgan also supports service organizations with programs that bolster the operating efficiency and stability of arts groups.

In addition, Morgan manages several private foundations, two of which also make grants to arts organizations in New York City. The Booth Ferris Foundation provides support for capacity building endeavors and has an annual allocation for the arts of approximately $2 million. The Emma Sheafer Trust supports performing arts organizations in New York City with an annual allocation of approximately $240,000.

J.P. Morgan has been a member of GIA since membership was first offered in 1992.

Woods Charitable Fund

Woods Charitable Fund is a private philanthropic foundation created by Frank H. Woods, his wife Nelle Cochrane Woods, and their three sons. It was incorporated in Nebraska in 1941. Frank Woods provided the major endowment, which has been supplemented by a portion of the estate of Nelle C. Woods and contributions from the family-owned Sahara Enterprises. Until the early 1980s, the fund operated as a family foundation and made grants in both Lincoln, Nebraska, and Chicago, Illinois, where family-member trustees had business and personal ties. During the 1980s, the board expanded beyond family members, hired staff, and established more targeted grant programs. In 1993, the fund was restructured and formed two separate foundations: Woods Charitable Fund now operates in Lincoln, and a second foundation, Woods Fund of Chicago, operates in Chicago.

Arts and humanities are one of four "special interests" identified in the 1995 annual report of Woods Charitable Fund. Other interests include children, youth, and families; education; and community development and housing. In 1995, grants to the arts and humanities totalled $154,500, or almost 30 percent of the total grants made. Grants supported capital costs for the Lied Center for the Performing Arts, the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, and an arts education project for elementary and secondary teachers and arts specialists, among others.

Notes on New Programs

Continued from page 27

his or her staff and board. The plan is to include the amount of time taken, the particular project(s) to be pursued, and the organization's plan to fill the work gap left in the administrator's absence.

- Up to $30,000 is available for each sabbatical project. Organizations are expected to retain administrators on payroll with all benefits maintained. Allowable sabbatical costs include any extraordinary personal costs incurred by the administrator for the sabbatical project and any replacement labor costs incurred by the organization itself in filling the void created by the administrator's absence. Indeed, the organization, not the individual, is the grantee of record. Sabbaticals must be taken within twenty-four months of the acceptance of the plan.

In accordance with our focus group recommendations, we looked to an anonymous group of nominators to suggest grantees. Ultimately, nine of fifteen nominated individuals decided to submit a two-four page letter of application. A panel reviewed the submitted letters and choose two candidates for sabbaticals.

Applications showed varying degrees of thought. Some were clearly thought through and even included a preliminary course of action. Other applicants were still in the process of formulating questions for study. Panelists were drawn to applications that evinced consistent, focused inquiry—that clearly identified an institutional question and showed at least an initial awareness of resources or activities that might lead to answers.

Panelists suggested improvements in the program—an interview process allowing applicants to meet the panel, more specific questions for applicants, and keeping nominations "in the hopper" for several years. In discussion, panelists also expressed concern that few of the proposals showed a real "fire in the belly." This may have been the consequence of the guideline emphasis on institutional growth. Or, panelists wondered, was it a sign that the duress administrators felt precluded even the freedom to dream?

As this newsletter goes to press, the applicants endorsed by the panel have been notified, and both are thrilled. During the next two years, succeeding chapters will be written. How will administrators formulate a course of action? What will be the impact of their time away? Both foundations see this first round as a pilot. If it continues, the program will likely undergo revisions, as times change and as we learn more.

Ben Cameron
Target Stores

Join

Grantmakers in the Arts

Memberships are available to organizations whose primary activity is grantmaking. Both professional staff and trustees of member organizations may participate in GIA membership. Recently, the GIA board made slight modifications to the membership structure. Current categories of membership include:

- *Full organizational membership* is open to private independent foundations, family foundations, community foundations, corporate foundations, and corporate giving programs. It is also available to independent nonprofit corporations whose primary activity is grantmaking in the arts. Up to ten individuals may participate in a single full membership.

- *Affiliate organizational membership* is open to public sector arts funders including federal, state, and local arts agencies. Up to five individuals may participate in a single affiliate membership. All benefits and privileges of membership are available to affiliate members with the exception of voting rights at the annual meeting.

- *Individual membership* is available to staff members or trustees of organizations that qualify for full or affiliate membership but that have policies precluding organizational membership in GIA.

Fees for full organizational members are based on the organization's current year grantmaking budget, and begin at $100 per year. All affiliate organizations pay $100 per year.

For more information contact Marian A. Godfrey, membership committee chair, 215-575-4870, or Anne Focke, administrator, P.O. Box 21487, Seattle, Washington, 98111-3487, 206-624-2312.

Grantmakers in the Arts

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