



REPORT

Front Line Art
FORUM ON COMMUNITY ARTS

artists collaborating with communities

hosted by the
St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre
in collaboration with
Art City

November 29, 1999

artists collaborating with communities

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Front Line Art

FORUM ON COMMUNITY ARTS

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A printable copy of the Front Line Art Report in Adobe Acrobat format is available on the Web at:
<http://www.snacc.mb.ca/frontlineart/frontlineartreport.pdf>

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INTRODUCTION

Following the success of the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre's depARTures arts program for inner-city youth, Front Line Art began with a day-long roundtable discussion on collaborations between communities and artists. The roundtable took place on November 29, 1999 at the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre, organized in collaboration with Art City. Later that day the twenty roundtable participants presented their findings for discussion at a dinner for an additional sixty-five guests from the arts, social service, education and policy development communities.

The Front Line Art Forum provides a substantial elaboration on and refinement of the scope and depth of the depARTures Program and will be an immediate and crucial planning resource for both the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre and Art City. Its broader significance however, is the promotion of the value of community arts among the Forum participants - providing them with new contacts and resources to facilitate new community arts projects for their constituents - and advocating for more stable, targeted and cohesive support programs for this practice.

Background

The practice of community art production requires developing strong relationships between communities and artists to negotiate effective styles of communication; build trust; encourage risk and innovation; value diversity; and support and defend honesty. The resulting works encourage a community-wide celebration of identity, empowerment and creativity.

Almost alone among developed countries, Canadian programs specifically targeted to supporting community arts projects are still sparse and unevenly designed. Arts support agencies, educators and community service organizations are, however, beginning to recognize the need to take a more rigorous and global approach to building in support for community arts practices across a broad spectrum of constituents, priorities and mandates.

For many years, most countries with well developed arts production funding and arts infrastructure development policies and programs have been highly supportive of the practice of community arts. The identifying common ground for this practice is that artists work in collaboration with community groups to facilitate distinct and unique forms of creative expression originating from within and focusing on the communities they arise from. Artists engage with community participants through an open lending of the artist's skills to the direction of the participants or through artists providing hands on training to participants engaged in project production. Communities of youth at risk and marginalized communities have been remarkably successful in increasing a healthy self awareness; re-energizing their engagement with the world; and making new commitments to personal growth and community development as a result of participating in community arts projects.

Numerous artists in this country are also undertaking a re-evaluation of what constitutes an art of engagement or activism. Rather than creating expressions about difficult social issues that are impacting many communities, these artists now incorporate the option

of collaborating in community arts projects as a way to support the creative voices of people living with and striving to overcome those issues. At the same time, community arts practices are beneficial to a broad diversity of communities and offer the opportunity of collaboration with artists working in many different disciplines addressing a wide range of perceptions and creative directions.

Canada (with some rare but notable examples) has only just begun the development of a cultural legacy in the community arts. Canadian policy makers are analyzing the advanced rationale for and beneficial results of community arts support in other countries and, over recent years, are also able to see an increasing number of Canadian examples, their highly effective impact on individual and community development, and their meaningful contributions to Canadian arts and culture.

The Basis for Front Line Art Recommendations

Two broadly relevant and inspiring models of community arts support programs were identified during the research carried out in preparation for the Front Line Art Forum on Community Arts. These models were wholeheartedly endorsed by the Front Line Art Roundtable participants and were incorporated into their dialogues during the process of establishing specific, locally-based community arts development recommendations during the forum. They form the first line of foundational Front Line Art recommendations for the growth and development of support for the practice of community arts nationally and in the province of Manitoba.

These models are the Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund and the Ontario Arts Council Community Arts Grants program. They have both undergone long-term development and are well-supported by extensive community consultation in what are comparable cultural environments to Manitoba's with similar needs and aspirations.

The Community Cultural Development Fund was established as the Community Arts Board of the Australia Council in 1977 and changed to a formal Fund of the Council in 1995. The Fund also manages the Roz Bower Award, established in 1980, honouring lifelong excellence in, and contributions to the practice of community arts. In 1997 the Australia Council hosted DARE, the National Community Cultural Development Conference attended by over 300 delegates from across Australia.

Also in 1997, the Ontario Arts Council hosted the Vital Links Conference - Enriching Communities through Art and Art through Communities; a culmination of a two-year review of community arts conducted by OAC and an advisory panel of community members. Key note speakers spoke of their experiences in British Columbia, Ontario, the U.S., England and Australia as points of "convergence and exploration for artists, arts and cultural workers, and community members". The Ontario Arts Council reports that it has been a "leader in supporting community arts since the early 1970's... [having] developed programs to support community arts organizations, residencies and projects between artists and communities, as well as a variety of community-based festivals."

FRONT LINE ART ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS:

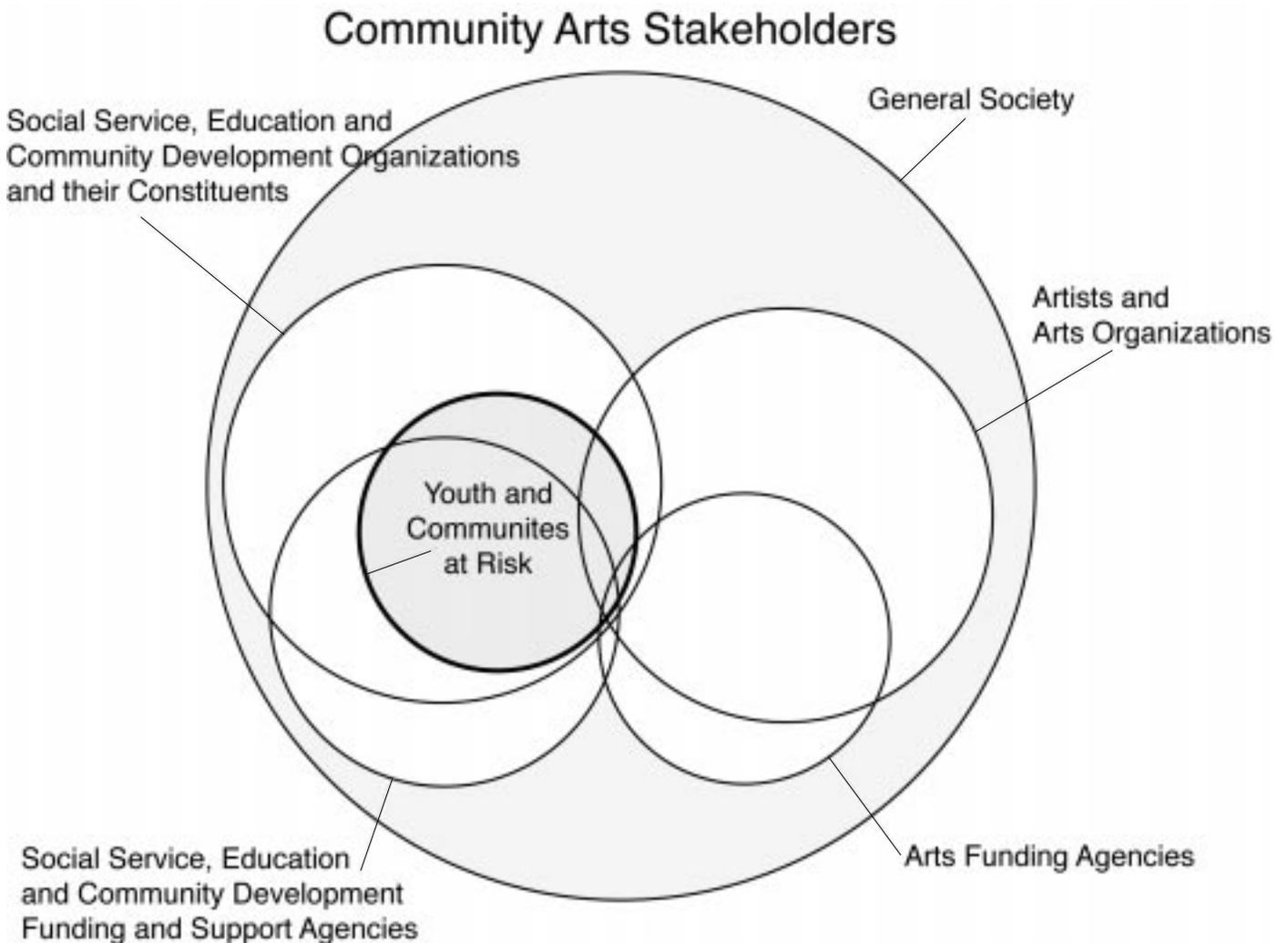
- New funds need to be made available from the provincial government specifically for community arts initiatives.
- Funding bodies need to be more responsive in reducing competitiveness and bureaucracy, factors which plague the arts in general but community arts in particular.
- A wide range of agencies in the arts, community development, education and the corporate community need to promote community arts and art in general as an integral component to healthy society.
- Community arts coordinators and funders need to promote an increased sensitivity towards cultural diversity and to actively support culturally appropriate community arts development.
- All areas of community arts development need to incorporate greater support for non-urban community projects and increased ties between urban and rural communities.
- Employment and training support agencies need to become more involved with utilizing community arts programmes as effective resources in their work.
- A higher recognition needs to be made across the board of the unique opportunity which currently exists in our province, related to our wealth of artists who are active in community arts.
- The arts community in general and community arts coordinators in particular (including funders) need to incorporate a stronger recognition for the unique new arts practices emerging from specific communities especially communities of youth (e.g. graffiti art).
- Funders, community development and education agencies and arts organizations need to support existing community arts successes by helping to build sustainability.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY ARTS

- Community Arts needs to be recognized and promoted as a distinct yet inter connecting medium, especially by funding agencies but also by arts and community development organizations as well.
- Small business and local Chambers of commerce need to be targetted and better recognized as some of the best supporters of community arts projects.
- More resources need to be allocated toward making community arts projects and coordinating organizations more visible in communities, for instance the success Art City has had with murals and their store front window. The best publicity is demonstrating by example - showing people what community arts is all about. Longevity is the best PR. Artists and communities need to highlight models which are tangible.
- Better communications between funders and supporters needs to be incorporated by community arts organizers and coordinators at all stages of project development and production, not just at grant time.
- Lobbyists need to provide a wide range of evidence for ammunition for policy developers so that they, as people working from within funding organizations, can advocate for community arts support in their own agencies.
- Community arts coordinators need to make better use of and share media contacts and media lists.
- Community arts coordinators should consider stronger use of storytelling to convey real-life success stories of their projects.
- Community arts coordinators should ensure as many opportunities as possible for the public to meet the artists they work with as an excellent way to promote Community Arts and as a profound point of connection between artists and the public, especially when well-known artists such as Wanda Koop and R. Murray Schaffer are involved.
- While it is important to focus on regional opportunities for community building, all stakeholders need to recognize and act on important national and even international opportunities that exist to link different communities and cultures.

BENEFITS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The Front Line Art Forum was coordinated with the understanding that resulting recommendations had to address the successful and mutually beneficial involvement of four distinct stakeholder communities in the development and support of community arts if positive strategies for community arts development were to be worked out. The Forum participants also placed particular (but not exclusive) emphasis on the value of community arts for constructive community development among youth and communities at risk as essential stakeholders.



Benefits of Community Arts Programs

The following list of benefits was compiled by the participants of the day long Front Line Art Forum on Community Arts. Please note that the listed benefits are not ranked in order of importance. Also, depending on each and every community arts program, individual benefits will ensue which are not listed.

- The process of making art participatory encourages an involved, action-based society.
- Facilitates healthy social interaction.
- Increases pride, responsibility, and energy towards building healthy communities.
- Promotes tolerance and respect via desegregation which recognizes individuality and diversity.
- May be used as a vehicle that achieves a range of societal goals.
- Promotes positive intergenerational/intercultural exchanges.
- Aids in breaking down barriers between artists and communities thus promoting mutual respect.
- Increases social capital.
- Provides a range of economic benefits, i.e.: Purchase and use of materials etc.
- Increases openness to outside communities.
- Builds bridges between different agencies.
- Increases support for art itself.
- Increases ability for complex decision making and conflict transformation.
- Positive engagement in community development and change.

Benefits to Communities and Youth at Risk

The City of Winnipeg has recognized the importance of the arts for community development in some very critical areas. This is detailed in the report “Into the 21st Century: Arts and Culture in Winnipeg, Report of The City of Winnipeg Cultural Policy Review Panel - April, 1997,” in the section entitled “Effective Programs for Youth and Populations at Risk.”

In many communities across North America, the arts have been an integral part of programs that have changed the lives of the people involved. Very effective programs for youth and emerging urban populations have been developed. The demographic nature of Winnipeg is changing. There are some wonderful opportunities to help people find a place in Winnipeg through cultural programs. For example, this year the Winnipeg Children's Festival operated the Circus and Magic Partnership, a special three phase program in which professional performers trained 100 core area children in various circus and magic performance skills. There are also many examples from other cities of ways in which the arts can be an effective partner for social service agencies to provide life changing opportunities for people of all ages. These partnerships and opportunities should be encouraged.

Other examples of interesting programs of this type could be adapted to suit the needs in Winnipeg. In Boston, the Urban Arts program helps low-income youth revitalize their community through an apprenticeship program while learning skills in photography, writing, video taping, and urban design. In the Free Street program in Chicago, Illinois, students are paid to learn theatre arts, how to interview for a job, and general job readiness skills. The Harlem Textile Works in New York pays students to design, print, and sell textiles which are inspired by the African Diaspora. (“Building America's Communities: A Compendium of Arts and Community Development Programs”)

In terms of the practice of artists collaborating with communities, there is a large and growing number of studies, reports and policy direction papers that describe many of the benefits that can accrue to diverse communities participating in community arts projects. Research findings from long-term qualitative and quantitative studies originating in the international arts education community provide authoritative evidence for the benefits of involvement in the arts for a broad range of educational skills development. These studies also lead to and support studies examining employability skills improvement resulting from training and experience in the arts. These studies all have within them evidence that provides a solid foundation confirming in a broader manner the many anecdotal accounts of the benefits of artist and community collaborations for a wide range of community development goals.

Exemplary among many reports advocating for increased arts education based on research evidence is the report entitled “Champions of Change: Impact of the Arts on Learning.” This document was edited by Edward B. Fiske for The Arts Education Partnership (a U.S. based nonprofit coalition formed in 1995 by a variety of organizations including the NEA and the U.S. Dept. of Education) and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (to encourage private sector support and to increase public appreciation of the value of the arts and humanities). “Champions of Change” presents the findings of seven teams of researchers who examined a variety of arts education programs using diverse methodologies.

As a result of their varied inquiries, the Champions of Change researchers found that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts. Moreover, one of the critical research findings is that the learning in and through the arts can help “level the playing field” for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances... While learning in other disciplines may often focus on development of a single skill or talent, the arts regularly engage multiple skills and abilities. Engagement in the arts - whether the visual arts, dance, music, theatre or other disciplines - nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies... These Champions of Change studies demonstrate how involvement with the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for learning, enabling young people to reach for and attain higher levels of achievement. The research provides both examples and evidence of why the arts should be more widely recognized for its current and potential contributions to the improvement of American education.

In tackling the question “What are the benefits cultural expression and participation bring to people?”, the research and consultations undertaken by the Canadian Conference of the Arts also reveal benefits for communities and youth at risk. Their report *Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper* states that:

- The value of arts education is now firmly established in academic research.

Some of the most important information comes from a benchmark study by Dr. James Catterall of longitudinal data collected by the U.S. Department of Education on 25,000 American students whose education and performance were tracked over several years from 1988 on. Dr. Catterall's analysis of the data shows that involvement in the arts in a student's early years is strongly and unequivocally linked to

- 1) higher academic performance in subsequent school years,
- 2) increased scores on standardized tests,
- 3) greater community participation by the students and their greater belief in its importance,
- 4) lower school dropout rates, and
- 5) increased self-esteem.

Furthermore, these benefits occur irrespective of the student's socio-economic status. Among economically disadvantaged students, those with a high degree of early arts involvement had a dropout rate 45% lower than those with little arts involvement.¹⁶

- Research has also demonstrated that studying and participating in the arts at an early age increases the capacity for learning itself.

The arts enhance skills such as problem solving, creativity, self-discipline, critical thinking, recognition and respect for differences, understanding of the self and others, and communicative abilities. Children who regularly participate in arts classes in school develop the ability to communicate their ideas and feelings in constructive ways. Artistic experiences also consolidate skills in organizing and teamwork.¹⁷

- The skills involved in arts processes (perceptual, creative, communicative, critical and collaborative) can be useful in strengthening communities.

One scholar identifies five key characteristics of a successful community:

1. abundant social capital (cultural opportunities and facilities, safety, health care, sociability);
2. strong connections with the outside world;

3. a willingness to welcome and integrate newcomers;
4. the ability to innovate;
5. and the capacity to collaborate.¹⁸

Most of these characteristics can be developed through cultural participation.

- As a vehicle for increasing civic participation, the arts and culture can help overcome passivity and a sense of alienation and anomie. By encouraging citizens to express themselves, the arts can help revitalize communities and provide a sense of identity, cohesion, pride, responsibility and power.

Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper, Canadian Conference of the Arts
To request a copy contact: Sharon Griffiths, (613) 238-3561

Benefits to Communities in General

The Ontario Arts Council document entitled “Making the Case for Arts Education” is a guide designed to “help people advocate locally - school by school, community by community - for arts education.” It does this by identifying key messages about the value of arts education and providing a wide selection of research findings and other evidence that supports these arguments. It also suggests ways to use this material in advocacy efforts at the local level. A unique aspect of this guide is the following section relating business leaders’ knowledge regarding the effect arts education and experience has on leadership and innovation in the workplace.

“Higher level skills - developed in part through the arts - are essential to success in the workplace.

Employers are looking for people who are creative and who are able to think critically, solve problems, communicate well, conceptualize, make decisions and learn and reason. The sought after worker is a continuous and highly adaptable learner, and an imaginative thinker who possesses a wide range of higher level thinking skills. Arts education can help students develop and reinforce these essential higher level skills.

Research shows that workers need higher level skills:

- *In its Employability Skills Profile, the Conference Board of Canada identified the most desirable employment skills in the Canadian workforce. They included the ability to communicate, think, learn for life, work well with others, adapt and be creative.¹²*
- *According to a three-year survey of Canadian university students, graduates and managers in a range of industries, effective organizations need employees who are creative, have visioning ability, and are able to lead. Although these skills are likely to be in high demand in the future, managers reported that they are in short supply in the workforce now.¹³*
- *A detailed analysis of the automotive parts and information technology industries in Ontario indicated that technicians and technologists working in these fields have strong technical skills, but need advanced training in planning and organizational skills, decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity to be successful in their work.¹⁴*

• In research conducted by the US. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in 1990 and 1991, employers, students, skills experts and businesses identified the critical competencies, skills and qualities for job performance: creative thinking, decision-making, problemsolving, conceptual ability, reasoning and the ability to learn. The SCANS report also stressed that "SCANS know-how can be learned in the context of the arts." The research demonstrated that study of visual arts, theatre arts, music and other artistic disciplines provide situations where students can learn and practice SCANS skills.¹⁵

Leaders in the private sector recognize the role of the arts in educating people for the work-place:

- Graeme MacDonald, former Northern Telecom executive, and president of the Banff Centre, states: "The biggest gap in business' array of tools to improve productivity is creativity. And I think the way to learn creativity is from artists."¹⁶
- Warren Goldring, Chairman and CEO of AGF Management, gives the following advice to high school students: "Don't overlook education in the arts. There has been a tendency for students today to study the hard sciences, business or computers. An arts training will provide the ability to think logically and that's the commodity that is in the shortest supply in business. Business and technology change. What you know now may be a long way removed from what you'll actually be doing. Studying the arts will develop skills that can help you in any career."¹⁷
- Ian Scott, Chief Hiring Officer at William Mercer, notes, "An education in the arts provides people with a competitive advantage when it comes to getting a job."¹⁸
- Richard Gurin, president and CEO of Binney & Smith, Inc., says, "... the basic problem gripping the ... workplace is not interest rates or inflation [but] the crisis of creativity. Ideas ... are what built American business. And it is the arts that build ideas ... Arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the twenty-first century ... [T]he skills the arts teach - creative thinking, problem-solving and risk-taking, and teamwork and communications - are precisely the tools the workforce of tomorrow will need."¹⁹
- Paul W. Chellgren, president and CEO of Ashland Inc., a Kentucky firm, notes that: "... [T]oday there are two sets of basics. The first - reading, writing and math - is simply the prerequisite for a second, more complex, equally vital collection of higher-level skills required to function well in today's world. These basics include the ability to allocate resources; to work successfully with others; to find, analyze and communicate information; to operate increasingly complex systems of seemingly unrelated parts; and, finally, to use technology. The arts provide an unparalleled opportunity to teach these higher-level basics. ... The learning is in the doing, and the arts allow students to do. No other educational medium offers the same kind of opportunity."²⁰
- The business school at the University of Western Ontario has worked with the Second City theatre company for a number of years to give business students the opportunity to participate in improvisational workshops. The goal is to help business students develop the ability to quickly think, adapt and make high-quality choices. Research shows that companies fail because they believe the future is predictable and can be planned, yet there are few tools to teach business people to make good spontaneous decisions. Western recognizes improv training as just such a tool. It encourages business students to be more intuitive.²¹

Arts education helps students become more competent in a technological world:

- Jobs that merge new technology and artistic skills, such as designing websites, developing software programs and creating computer animation, are growing. People with these skills are in high demand. For example, competition for Sheridan College's computer animation graduates is intense. Each year, between 24 and 40

animation studios send representatives to Sheridan's open house to assess candidates. "If you are capable of doing computer graphics for film and you're a graduate of Sheridan College," says Paul Donovan of Halifax-based Salter Street Films, "you will be offered a \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year job - one year before you graduate."²²

• Software developer, Intuit, looks for people with teamwork and communication skills, an understanding of quality concepts and a background in the arts. In addition, says Will Tait, Intuit's creative director, "An Intuit team includes an artist. [T]he ability to use colour, shape, music, rhythm and movement is essential to the finished product, primarily because of the sense artists develop for idea sequencing- a crucial thinking skill."²³

The arts are a growing career area in their own right:

• According to the 1991 Census, over 348,000 Canadians work in arts or cultural occupations such as musicians, writers, and graphic designers.²⁵

• Canada's cultural labour force is growing steadily and increased 25% between 1981 and 1991. It currently represents 2.4% of the total labour force.²⁶

Making the Case for Arts Education, Ontario Arts Council

This document can be ordered from the Ontario Arts Council at (416) 961-7796 or on the Web at: <http://www.arts.on.ca>

Benefits to the Arts Community

Studies and surveys have shown that positive and constructive relationships and engagements between the arts community and the general public have plateaued in numbers or seen declines in recent years. Unfortunately, insufficient relevant connection and understanding has too often resulted in relationships between the arts, the media and general society that have been hampered with dismissal, suspicion, open contention, and a sense of injustice on all sides.

In their *Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper*, the Canadian Conference of the Arts Forum on Arts and Community indicates that

The subject of "the arts and community" is complex and often controversial. There are few accepted ground rules about how to go about improving relationships between the arts and the public or reconciling social and artistic objectives. Most arts advocacy efforts have not succeeded in bridging the gap between "profession arts interests" and the "general public" and tend to be dismissed as "special interest" efforts. Surveys have shown that Canadians have a very high degree of engagement with the arts in their personal lives - ranging from creating and performing as avocational activities to taking arts-related courses - but this does not necessarily translate into attending arts events. Though there is increasing interaction among artists identifying themselves variously as "community-based", "education-based" or "professional" (and some artists work in all three spheres at different times), far more mutual understanding is needed. Indeed, though interest in community arts practices is growing, they remain mysterious to many artists. Some arts professionals in fact recoil from discussion of "community" believing that it signifies selling-out their fundamental artistic goals.

This Front Line Art report concerns itself primarily with recommending improvements in programs of support of the practice of community arts in Canada generally and in Manitoba specifically. However, the Forum participants believe that this diverse and evol-

ing practice has the potential to contribute to strategies for arts communities in all disciplines to enrich relationships between themselves and broader and more diverse audiences. Productive and collaborative relationships between communities and artists should not be perceived to compromise levels of innovative artistic merit. Instead, projects receiving support must provide opportunities to explore important areas of contemporary Canadian culture using leading edge arts concepts and practices. The experience of the Forum group has shown that the diversity of formal, thematic and process-oriented community arts activities can provide guidance for artists and arts organizations to engage with communities in many new, alternative and genuinely innovative ways that make meaningful contributions to Canadian arts and culture.

The CCA Forum on Arts and Community Working Group also presents the following analysis of benefits accruing from arts participation.

“What are the benefits the arts and culture bring to communities...

If there was one point virtually everyone we talked with about this project stressed, it is that it is incumbent on the cultural community to define the "public interest" involved in the arts and culture, that is, to articulate the concrete benefits that cultural expression and participation bring to people and communities. Unless we in the cultural community can do this convincingly, most people believe, we will continue to be seen as a special interest group concerned only with our own well-being. The working group recognized that there is a lack of shared understanding and language between the cultural community and the public about how the arts and culture serve society. They were strongly convinced that repositioning arts advocacy in terms of societal benefits was demanded. In their view, we have overstressed the economic impact of the arts and culture, which never got to the heart of the matter and is now a tired argument. The public interest in the arts and culture, they believe, is the core of the issue.¹⁴ A recent municipal study, the St. John's (Newfoundland) Arts Community Strategy, identifies as its very first goal fostering "an appreciation of the real contribution the arts make to society."¹⁵

...

As one of our working group mentioned, reemphasizing the role of culture for people and communities may also encourage a rebalancing of corporate purposes. Corporations are losing their philanthropic purpose, devoting more of their arts and community support to sponsorships and marketing. That may be an appropriate response if the arts and culture are primarily conceived as economic engines, but if their essential public purposes are to develop people and communities, philanthropy is the more appropriate orientation for the business community.”

Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper, Canadian Conference of the Arts

To request a copy contact: Sharon Griffiths, (613) 238-3561

TOWARD DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY ARTS

Issues Identified by Front Line Art Roundtable Participants

Community Art is an entity unto itself distinct which transcends and interconnects art, community activity and social services.

Although we need definitions for community art, we must avoid limiting definitions that restrict the artistic range, depth, individuality and experimentation.

That being the case, artists must be willing to put the needs of the community over their need for self-expression.

Which leads to the dilemma of assessing what is good for the community.

Some suggest that a community advisory board be developed while others worry about having to answer to an external body and would rather involve community members at the hands on level as volunteers and participants in the community art projects.

There was discussion about developing some standardized conventions of practice and language in order to communicate and collaborate more easily. Similarly, many artists were in favour of establishing standard base rates of pay which recognize the professional level of services rendered by community artists.

Community arts projects should be long-term, goal-oriented and resource supported.

While it is demonstrated that community arts can benefit the social health of a community, we must avoid limiting community art programs to problem areas exclusively. So-called healthy communities can be enriched by community arts as well. There is also the risk of community artists becoming mistaken as social workers.

Community arts encourage the reclamation of individual expression and community culture in these times of mass-produced lowest common denominator culture. Participants are reminded that works of art from their own community are valid and valuable.

Tangible benefits of community arts must be emphasized, such as opportunities for using projects to facilitate training, skill transfer, problem solving and creative thinking. Even so, it is almost more important to teach funders, politicians and the general public about the *intangible* benefits of community arts. The enrichment of the community begins with the development of the characters of individuals. These are the true benefits of community arts and must be emphasized continually.

The corporate community must play a larger role in the development of community art projects. The business community stands to gain a great deal from these projects as the participants will likely make up their labour pool and customer base. Businesses do not tend to focus on long-term art projects and are too focused on the immediate pay-off and publicity garnered. Businesses must be sold on the intangible benefits of a long-term commitment to community arts. Business leaders should be brought on board the development of these projects.

Community art projects cannot be franchised. The project should ideally grow out of the needs of a community, however that is defined, and must be developed and implemented within the culture and language of that community. The community must be given the tools to express itself. Special effort must be placed on identifying and reaching out to disenfranchised communities.

Finally, all facets of society from business, to educators to community services should be encouraged to investigate whether their own objectives and mandates could be assisted or enhanced by using community arts projects. They should be provided with examples, from other countries if necessary, of how this may have been accomplished previously.

Ontario Arts Council *Community Arts Workbook ...another Vital Link*

Community Arts programs aim to develop community arts activities across the province [of Ontario] by helping artists, communities and organizations develop local arts resources. Community arts involves artists and community members in a collaborative creative process resulting in collective experience and public expression. It provides a way for communities to express themselves; enables artists, through financial or other supports, to engage in creative activity; and is collaborative — the creative process is equally important as the artistic outcome.

• *Evolution of Community Arts*

Creative expression has always been a powerful element of the social, economic and political landscape of most societies. “Art”, in one form or another, is an element of daily life in the majority of the world’s cultures and civilizations. It has been argued that Western society has gradually removed the artist from that integral role in society, formalizing the arts and isolating the individual creator as “artist”, rather than thinking of him or her as part of the integral make-up of society. Community arts makes it possible to remove that isolation; community arts projects put the artist back in the role of co-creator and facilitator of public artistic expression.

In the past 20 years, community arts has evolved differently in the English speaking world. In the United Kingdom, for example, significant financial resources allowed community arts projects to develop on a grand scale until the Thatcher years, which saw severely curtailed cultural

spending. In Australia, the concept of community arts has been woven into the federal and municipal fabric, with paid community arts facilitators at the local government level creating and infrastructure for community arts activity. In Canada, the community arts movement has been emerging at different rates throughout the various provinces.

In each country, including Canada, common elements have contributed to the development and growth of community arts, including the:

- recognition that arts activity, when integrated into the everyday lives of people, is an effective means of addressing social and cultural concerns;
- need to make the arts accessible, supported and appreciated by larger segments of society through more public and local exposure;
- increased use of public and community-based venues for artistic expression;
- need for funding institutions to recognize artists whose work is culturally/socially engaged;
- influence of non-Western artistic activities and art forms.

The last point above is especially significant when we think of the notion of equity and community arts. For many First Nations artists, artists of colour and immigrant artists, community arts is the manner in which they have worked and developed as artistic creators throughout their lives. Their struggle with arts institutions and agencies for access and recognition of their arts practices has largely paved the way for community arts.

- *Building a Framework for Community Arts Activities*

Just as there are principles which guide us in how we live, work and relate to each other, there are principles which help define community arts activities. Naturally, the use of these principles in community arts activities differs from project to project. Keeping these principles in mind when you are setting out to do a project, or are engaged in one, can provide a framework that will strengthen your project and its creative process.

- *Four Principles of Community Arts*

1. *Mutual Respect - the consideration that all participants give to and receive from each other while working on a project - is a fundamental principle which runs through every stage of community arts work. The very nature of community arts - the working relationship between artist and community collaborating on an artistic project - demands that this principle be upheld at all stages of a project. Methods which allow for mutual exchange of skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, inspiration and satisfaction among participants need to be recognized and carried out for a community arts project to be successful. ...*

2. *Process and Consensus Process - how the creative work is initiated, planned, designed, produced, documented and critiqued - is as important as the product or outcome in a community arts project. Consensus, or reaching agreement among participants through effective management of the decision making process at each stage of the project, is paramount to the collaborative nature of community arts.*

3. *Inclusivity By its very definition, community arts involve the active participation of community members in the creative process. It is paramount, therefore, for those organizing a community arts project to include all those community members wanting to play a role in the project. The manner in which this occurs differs from project to project.*

4. *Generosity of Spirit The fourth principle of community arts is generosity of spirit - a willingness to trust and contribute to the collective artistic process and vision of a project. This spirit may manifest itself in any number of ways such as patience and adaptability, for example. Generosity of spirit engages the artist and community in a synergistic relationship where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Few obstacles can impede the short- and long-term benefits and results of community-based art work infused with this kind of spirit.*

Ontario Arts Council Community Arts Grants Community arts involves artists and community members in a collaborative creative process resulting in collective experience and public expression. It provides a way for communities to express themselves; enables artists, through financial or other supports, to engage in creative activity; and is collaborative — the creative process is equally important as the artistic outcome.”

This workbook can be ordered from the Ontario Arts Council at (416) 961-7796 or on the Web at: <http://www.arts.on.ca>

A MATURE IDEAL FOR COMMUNITY ARTS SUPPORT: AUSTRALIA COUNCIL COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund began in 1977 as the Australia Council Community Arts Board two years after the establishment of the Australia Council itself in 1975 and was changed to a formal Fund of the Council in 1995. The intent, structure and level of recognition provided by the Fund is perceived by Front Line Art Roundtable participants as representing the ideal broadening of arts policy scope required to rectify Canada's much more slowly developing level of support for the practice of community arts.

While the Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund represents a significant difference in arts policy focal breadth from that in Canada, both Australian and Canadian arts policies share a primary overall commitment to supporting artistic merit and innovation within a professional arts context. The Australia Council's web site description of their Community Cultural Development Fund states:

"The key aim of community cultural development is to enable communities to advance their artistic and social aspirations by working closely with professional artists. Through these collaborations communities are assisted to maintain or reclaim their culture, to address issues of concern to them, and to create contemporary artistic works which reflect the richness and diversity of Australian communities and their cultural life.

The Community Cultural Development Fund expects that communities will be actively engaged in the creation, direction and management of projects. By searching out new partners and new sites for cultural expression, communities and artists stimulate innovation in artistic outcomes and in community expression.

Their website goes on to indicate that the Fund aims to:

- *achieve an increase in locally determined arts and cultural development;*
- *encourage outstanding achievement in arts and cultural activity within the community context;*
- *encourage a diversity of cultural expression at the local, national and international level;*
- *and ensure that the artistic and social value of community cultural development is widely accepted.*

The Fund provides support through the following grant programs:

- *New Work*
- *Presentation and Promotion*
- *Development*
- *Community, Environment, Art & Design (CEAD)*
- *Triennial Grants*
- *Fellowships*
- *Partnerships*
- *Commissions*

Significant recognition for community arts leaders is also provided by the Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund through the Roz Bower Award whose purpose is *“to recognise distinguished effort in fostering and furthering the philosophies and principles espoused by Rosalie (Roz) Bower, founding director of the Australia Council’s Community Arts Board, the precursor to the Community Cultural Development Fund.*

The Roz Bower Award selection criteria takes into account:

- *artistic leadership;*
- *substantial, lifelong commitment and dedication to community cultural development which has resulted in an improved quality of life in a particular community or communities;*
- *and a pioneering role in community cultural development practice.*

The Web site address for the Australia Arts Council Community Arts Fund:
<http://www.ozco.gov.au/grants/ccd/index.htm>

Appendix 1. A History of Canadian Community Arts Policy Development from *Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper*, Canadian Conference of the Arts

The example of the Australia Council Community Cultural Development Fund represents extensive recognition and support for the practice of community arts that has grown and evolved over more than twenty years in a culture that parallels Canada's in many ways. The following research by the Canadian Conference of the Arts presented in their Forum on Arts and Community Discussion Paper gives some perspective on why similar community arts support has been late in developing in Canada, why that may have appeared necessary to Canadian arts policy developers at an early stage of governmental arts support development, what benefits did accrue from the Canadian direction, and gives evidence that the necessity for community arts support was already clearly identified in Canadian arts policy research and recommendations in the 1940s.

Even as recently as the 1940s, when the Massey-Levesque commission toured Canada, undertaking their massive inquiry into the cultural health of the country,³ they found an enormous "hunger" among Canadians for every type of art and culture, and in most artistic fields an extraordinary flourishing of amateur activity. In its report, the commission frequently referred to the "voluntary organizations", usually made up of unpaid volunteers, which animated and sustained cultural life in urban and rural areas. There were, it reports, "an astonishing number of amateur dramatic societies" ("many hundreds") in the country, and many local music and choral societies led by interested amateurs performed and brought in touring musical events. The commission detected an especially "keen interest" among Canadians in the visual arts, particularly painting, and it estimated at 300,000 the number of "skilled amateurs" working in the crafts.

The problem in Canadian cultural life, according to the Massey report, was not a lack of enthusiasm among the Canadian public - on the contrary, one of its major refrains was that "voluntary organizations have advanced the arts to the limit of their resources." The problem was on the professional side - it was virtually impossible for any professional artist to make even a modest living in Canada, and the country was woefully under supplied with permanent, professional-level cultural institutions, whether museums, galleries, libraries, archives or theatres and orchestras. It was to address the cause and improve the lot of the professional arts, heritage, and humanities that the commission made its recommendations, including proposing that the federal government create a "Canada Council."

The Massey-Levesque commission had been established in response to pressures from the cultural community, particularly the Federation of Canadian Artists, which submitted a brief in 1944 to the Turgeon Committee on (Post-War) Reconstruction and Re-establishment. The Federation, which was composed of many artists' associations, made two major proposals. The first was for a strengthened federal role in cultural affairs - a recommendation which ultimately became Massey's proposal for the Canada Council. The second major recommendation of the Federation, however, was a call for decentralized community cultural centres across the country, each equipped with a theatre, library, gallery and film facilities to provide artists and community groups with the tools and venues for exhibitions and performances. The centres would be devoted

to adult art education, welcome amateurs as well as professionals, act as venues for travelling performances and exhibitions, and help build informed local and national audiences.⁴

Despite the enthusiasm of the Turgeon Committee for this idea, it did not make its way into the Massey-Levesque report or our subsequent cultural history. As a number of people we consulted for this project pointed out, the failure to adopt the “counter-model” to the more centralized structure of a Canada Council had a profound effect on how our culture thereafter developed.

In the years following the royal commission report, it was principally the federal government which financed the growth and development of the arts and culture through the Canada Council, the National Museums, and other instruments. By the 1960s, most of the provinces were active in this field, eventually becoming very substantial contributors in their own right. Municipal cultural funding, which has been relatively late to develop in most parts of Canada, has shown impetus only in the last decade or so, though significantly it has increased almost 13% since 1991, while support from both federal and provincial sources has declined.⁵

The fact that development was led by the federal and subsequently provincial governments, combined with the royal commission’s inattention to the decentralized model espoused by the Federation, has had significant influence. The Canada Council and the provinces have understandably emphasized “high-end” professional activity - the arts and culture at their (provincial, national and even intentional) best. Community-based cultural activity, whether undertaken by amateurs, semi-professionals or professionals, has occupied a far less prominent position in our cultural life. As one of our working group remarked, “The senior levels of government have essentially determined significance in the arts and culture.”

Given the impoverished condition of professional cultural activity and the lack of professional cultural institutions described in the MasseyLevesque report, it was probably inevitable that, over the last four to five decades of government intervention on behalf of the arts and culture, the primary efforts of the professional arts and culture community, reinforced by government programs, have been establishing ongoing cultural institutions, increasing the professionalism of the sector, and encouraging individual cultural excellence and artistic experimentation.

No one can doubt that in all three respects Canadians have been remarkably successful. But today we can recognize what we have lost through our relative neglect of the public and closer connections between artistic activity and the lives of communities.

Arts and Community: A Discussion Paper Canadian Conference of the Arts

To request a copy of this report contact: Sharon Griffiths (613) 238-3561

Appendix 2. The Winston-Salem Arts Convocation

Call For Response: On the Path to a National Vision for the Arts
in American Communities toward the year 2025

October 30, 1999

- A Vision for the Arts in Our Communities
- Values and Purposes of the Local Arts Entity of the Future

Background

In his invitation to Winston-Salem Arts Convocation delegates, Bob Lynch, President and CEO of Americans for the Arts, observed, “1999 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the local arts agency movement and...is an ideal time to reflect, redefine an nearly 100 delegates from 30 states, representatives of more than 40 cities and towns, met to discuss, draft and approve a preliminary national visioning statement for the future of the arts and culture in communities towards the year 2025.

It is intended that this statement will provoke similar conversations in communities throughout the United States and stimulate further dialogue beginning now and continuing through the June, 2000 annual conference of Americans for the Arts. The process that produced this statement will conclude with a new edition of Community Visions (originally published 1990). Building on the earlier publication, this new tool kit will be a contemporary compilation of advice and tools to implement local visions for the arts within American communities. ...

A Work in Progress

This visioning statement is intended to provoke further exploration through local and national conversations, in a process which is not prescriptive but is rather fluid and adaptive in engaging our communities. While considerable thought went into this vision statement, it is not intended to be the final comment on the arts in our communities. While the vision reported below looks toward the next quarter century, this document may well have a short shelf life as it is succeeded by new statements informed by further deliberation and response.

Our vision describes a set of aspirations for all types of local arts entities of the future located in all kinds of American communities. It may inspire a wide number of local variations grounded in the context of specific communities.

The Charge

Delegates resolved to strengthen our collective capacity to respond to the vision. We must challenge ourselves to move beyond rhetoric into action. Given our glimpse of the future, our assumptions, attitudes, programs, and funding must evolve in response to the vision. We are charged to engage with all of our constituents – artists, cultural workers, and other citizens – to respond to this dialogue and the intention of our vision.

Resolved

The delegates developed, considered and approved by consensus the following elements of this statement: “A Vision for the Arts in Our Communities” and “Values and Purposes of the Local Arts Entity of the Future¹.” Also considered, but not formally approved are suggested Strategies, Practices and Competencies of the Local Arts Entity of the Future.

The Winston-Salem Arts Convocation Call for Response

We, the delegates at the Winston-Salem Arts Convocation, Envision Communities in which:

1. There is a lifelong continuum of arts creation, arts experiences, participation, and education;
2. Arts advocacy is led by a broad spectrum of civic leaders
3. More and more people are valuing the arts by participating at both amateur and professional levels;
4. Cultural equity and equality exist;
5. The arts bring diverse people together; and help bridge differences;
6. The arts are broadly defined and the diversity of the arts is valued and celebrated as an expression of our humanity;
7. Creativity is viewed as an asset and creative processes are a fundamental means for planning and developing communities; government and civic agencies especially at the local level incorporate the arts in developing policy and achieving their goal;
8. Artists are recognized as both makers of work and contributors of their creativity and skill to community endeavors;
9. The arts are fully integrated into the schools and educators impart the understanding, appreciation and practice of the arts;
10. The arts are recognized as a civic investment;
11. Artists, cultural workers and others are paid a just compensation;
12. Community relevance, as well as technique, are important in defining excellence
13. The pursuit and achievement of excellence is appreciated in all cultural expression.
14. Artists and arts organizations have greater access to capital, allowing for innovation and risk-taking;
15. The opportunity to participate in the arts is found where people live, work, worship, and play;

16. Technology expands access and complements firsthand artistic experience;
17. There are expanded resources marshaled for the arts and better ways to allocate and manage them;
18. Working relationships with commercial entities and the media increases access and support for the arts.

We envision Local Arts Entities of the Future guided but not limited by the following Values and Purposes:

1. We value creativity as a foundation and inherent right of personal and community life;
2. We value artistic excellence arising from a diversity of experiences that are stimulating, culturally meaningful and relevant;
3. We value the dignity and diversity of all individuals and cultures;
4. We value active artistic participation, learning and self reflection throughout life; therefore we:
 - A. Broaden the definition of our work to recognize the relationship between arts and culture; work to respect the full spectrum of cultural experiences
 - B. Support innovation, preservation, experimentation, inspiration and risk taking
 - C. Advocate for the role and interests of artists
 - D. Help define and communicate a sense of community and place
5. Partnering to sustain, enhance, and engage communities is a basic purpose of the LAEF; therefore we:
 - A. Create connections, linkages, and collaborations across a broad spectrum of the community, including a diversity of ages, education, economic status and race
 - B. Serve as broker between commercial and non-profit organizations and other community institutions.
 - C. Develop connections and communications among generations
 - D. Insert the arts into civic dialogue and public life through preservation, discussion and questioning of community values – understanding that there is no single, embracing set of community values
 - E. Recognize the role of the arts to facilitate participation and encourage the assumption of mutual responsibilities by all members of the community
 - F. Stimulate community development through the arts

- G. Act as a catalyst for creative community problem solving and change
 - H. Connect artists and community
 - I. Assure sufficient, innovative, accessible and dispersed spaces for artistic creation, participation and experience
 - J. Aggressively work to identify, engage, train, and retain new arts leaders from a diversity of backgrounds
 - K. Develop future community and civic leadership through involvement in the arts
 - L. Provide stewardship for the changing cultural mix of professional and amateur artists, arts organizations, funders, and audiences
 - M. Integrate the arts in education and lifelong learning
 - N. Infuse the arts into the physical environment
1. Local Arts Entity of the Future: Evolving organizations, possibly taking forms distinct from today's Local Arts Agencies. We are not assuming these entities will necessarily be organized or operate like local arts agencies of the 20th century.

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Appendix 3. Networks, Identity, and the Future of Community Arts

By Mark J. Stern, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania, October 1999

Over the past three decades, many of our assumptions about the organization of society have been thrown into the dustbin of history. Globalization and economic restructuring have undermined existing power structures and changed our perception of time and space. The retreat of the public sector has forced many to fend for themselves. Finally, individuals have changed their relationship to the social order. Increasingly, people are unwilling to accept the identities they inherit and are preoccupied with questions about who they are and how they relate to others.

The University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project has spent the past five years examining how these changes in our society affect the role of arts and culture in contemporary society. Based on in-depth data gathering on the institutional structure of arts and culture in Philadelphia and a number of other metropolitan areas, patterns of participation, and the connection of the cultural sector to other forms of civic engagement, we are documenting the unique role that arts and culture can play in the emerging social order. The new social environment is filled with both opportunities and challenges. Community arts programs are uniquely positioned to take advantage of these changes, but to do so they must disentrail themselves from many of the "standard operating procedures" that have characterized their actions in the past.

Restructured Social Order: Networks and Identity

The major fatality of the past three decades has been bureaucracy. On the one hand, hierarchically structured organizations driven by internal imperatives have been poorly suited to the increased emphasis on innovation and creativity. On the other hand, the culture of bureaucracy, which demands standardization, predictability, and deference is at odds with the increasing individualistic and democratic trends in the wider culture.

For organizations, the lesson to be learned from recent history is clear: trim down and connect to your environment. Organizations—whether for-profit or nonprofit—must embed themselves in social networks that link them to the resources they need to produce and distribute. The sociologist Manuel Castells notes that "enterprises" that are focused on their core purposes have displaced bureaucracies that worry about maintaining the established way of doing things.

At the same time, individuals are less willing to define themselves through stable group identities. Fewer of us have lifetime "careers," so defining ourselves by how we earn a living has become less certain. At the same time, the increased instability of personal life—the declining stability of family life, changes in the timing and predictability of the life-cycle—leads more of us to ask questions about who we are throughout our lives. As a result, we search out social connections—self-help groups, support groups, and subcultures—that can

help us answer these questions. The search for identity requires us to look for community as well.

These changes are both good news and bad news for the arts. In contrast to social services and public education, community arts programs never underwent extensive bureaucratization during the early part of the 20th century. As a result, they don't have to shed fifty years of bloating and lethargy. Community arts programs are more linked to their communities

Identity, Diversity, and the Increasing Importance of Culture

The search for identity makes arts and culture more central to our society. Arts and culture are one strategy people can use to define meaning. Furthermore, its emphasis on creativity provides the freedom from convention that people seek. Whether we search for our cultural roots in the history of an ethnic or racial group or use cutting-edge art as a way of defining who we are, cultural engagement is more central to individual's search more meaning.

In Philadelphia, this search for identity and community has focused on diversity. We've discovered that neighborhoods that are economically and ethnically diverse are the center of arts and culture. They are home to more cultural organizations, have higher rates of participation, and maintain more connections to non-arts institutions. What is more, in a city desperate for renewal and development, it is precisely those diverse neighborhoods with high levels of arts and cultural engagement that were able to maintain their population and reduce their poverty rate.

Challenge: From Strong Organization to Strategic Networks

The changing social environment challenges arts organizations to pay more attention to social networks. Strong cultural organizations are not enough to assure a strong local arts scene. We must foster contacts and collaborations between cultural organizations, between nonprofits, for-profits, and "informal" arts groups, and between arts organizations and other community groups. The current interest in cultural districts is a hopeful development, but one that must broaden its understanding of the neighborhood cultural districts that are critical to a healthy regional cultural scene.

Local arts agencies are strategically located to further this process. By providing opportunities for arts organizations to strengthen their bonds with one another and by serving as a conduit between cultural institutions and the wider community, local agencies can help assure that networks that sustain creativity and connection characterize the cultural world.

Challenge: The Blind Spots in Cultural Organizations' Relationship to Their Communities

One risk to cultural organizations is that in focusing on their narrow strategic needs

for funding, audiences, and visibility, they will miss the broader goals of community building. Alexis deTocqueville in his *Democracy in America* drew attention to what he called “self interest rightly understood” to refer to the broader interests of the community that are often subordinated to more immediate needs. There is evidence that arts organizations have developed a number of “blind spots”—neighborhood institutions that are important to their communities and residents, but less important to arts organizations’ institutional goals. For example, in Philadelphia, although houses of worship and advocacy organizations are among the most frequently cited forms of community participation, relatively few cultural organizations have sought out relationships with them.

Here again, local arts agencies have a critical role to play to assure that arts organizations both work effectively to foster arts production and participation and carry out their role in fostering civic engagement and community building. Only then, can the cultural sector assure that it has worked for its self-interest rightly understood.

This article is published online at: <http://www.artsusa.org/kenan/stern.html>

Mark J. Stern is Professor of Social Welfare and History at the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1994, he has been principal investigator for the Social Impact of the Arts Project, which has been conducting research on the connections between cultural activity and community-building in Philadelphia and other cities (<http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP>).

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work Social Impact of the Arts Project

Mission Statement

Arts advocates have long argued that the arts and cultural sector makes a unique contribution to the life of our communities. Yet, for the most part, the evidence of this impact has never matched the rhetoric. Research has focused on the role of the arts in the education of young people or on the economic impact of the arts in urban redevelopment. The lack of evidence on the impact of the arts and humanities on family life, community structure, and regional social development has clearly hampered those who support public funding for the arts and community arts programs.

The Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work was initiated in 1994 to address this gap. It seeks to use the tools of social research to examine the intersection between social structure, public policy, and arts and cultural participation. Over the past three years, we have tested a variety of methods to measure and explain the cultural participation of the people of Philadelphia and its influence throughout the region. (<http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP>).