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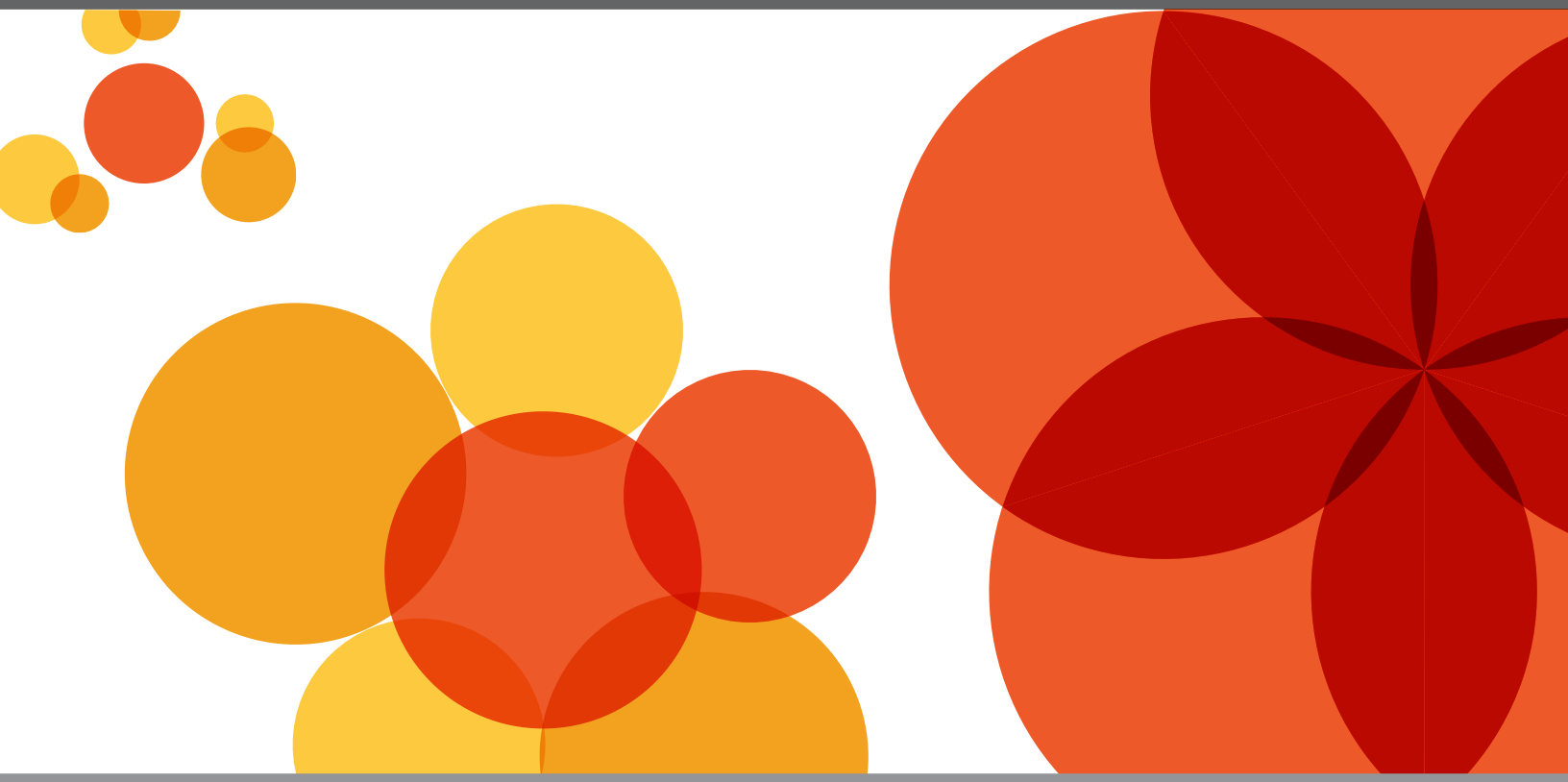

FOCUS

Research Findings

Getting In On the Act

How arts groups are creating opportunities for active participation

Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard,
in partnership with Shelly Gilbride, Ph.D.

OCTOBER 2011

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Foreword

People are engaging in the arts in increasingly active and expressive ways. There is a growing awareness in the arts field of what have come to be known as participatory arts practices. Arts funders and arts organizations are examining this seismic shift toward a participatory arts culture and figuring out how to adapt in new and creative ways that will have long-term benefits to arts organizations and the people they serve. We commissioned this report to deepen our own understanding of these changes and to help spotlight exciting examples of participatory arts practices. And in reviewing the findings, we believe more than ever that the arts organizations that will thrive in our current environment will be the ones who create new and meaningful opportunities for people to engage.

This report and case studies of illustrative projects help provide a better understanding of how people are engaging in the arts, and of how arts organizations are enabling this involvement. Researchers at WolfBrown investigated active arts participation across the arts sector in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, learning from more than 100 organizations currently engaging in participatory arts. The report helps address many of the concerns that arts organizations may have in embracing participatory arts practices and illuminates the various trends in the field that are responsible for this shift. This report also presents the "Audience Involvement Spectrum," a helpful new model for understanding various levels of arts engagement.

We hope that other funders and those interested in the interplay between arts and community find this report inspiring and informative. As we evolve Irvine's Arts grantmaking strategy to support participatory arts practices, we hope that this report provides ideas and inspiration for organizations who are interested in exploring how they can best engage their audiences and communities.

Our thanks go to Alan S. Brown, Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard, Shelly Gilbride and other members of the WolfBrown research team, as well as the many nonprofit practitioners who shared their time and insights to make this study possible.

Sincerely,

Josephine Ramirez
Arts Program Director
The James Irvine Foundation
October 2011

Summary

ARTS PARTICIPATION is being redefined as people increasingly choose to engage with art in new, more active and expressive ways. This movement carries profound implications, and fresh opportunities, for the nonprofit arts sector.

We are in the midst of a seismic shift in cultural production, moving from a "sit-back-and-be-told culture" to a "making-and-doing-culture."[1] Active or participatory arts practices are emerging from the fringes of the Western cultural tradition to capture the collective imagination. Many forces have conspired to lead us to this point. The sustained economic downturn that began in 2008, rising ticket prices, the pervasiveness of social media, the proliferation of digital content and rising expectations for self-guided, on-demand, customized experiences have all contributed to a cultural environment primed for active arts practice. This shift calls for a new equilibrium in the arts ecology and a new generation of arts leaders ready to accept, integrate and celebrate all forms of cultural practice. This is, perhaps, the defining challenge of our time for artists, arts organizations and their supporters — to embrace a more holistic view of the cultural ecology and identify new possibilities for Americans to engage with the arts.

How can arts institutions adapt to this new environment?

Is participatory practice contradictory to, or complementary to, a business model that relies on professional production and consumption?

How can arts organizations enter this new territory without compromising their values or artistic ideals?

This report aims to illuminate a growing body of practice around participatory engagement (with various illustrative case studies profiled at the end) and dispel some of the anxiety surrounding this sphere of activity.

The discussion begins by placing participatory practice in the context of the larger cultural ecology, with consideration of the role of the Internet in fostering interactivity. A synopsis of the individual and community benefits associated with active participation is provided, as well as an analysis of the symbiotic relationship between participatory arts practice and attendance. Without greater attention to community-based creative expression, the report suggests, arts groups devoted solely to a consumption model of program delivery will slowly lose ground in a competitive marketplace.

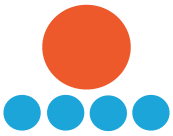
With growing frequency, artists and arts organizations are integrating active arts practices into their work, often through collaborations and partnerships. The Audience Involvement Spectrum (below) is a simple framework developed to describe the different ways participatory arts programs work, and the various entry points for participation. This five-stage model illustrates a progression of involvement from "spectating" — in which the audience member plays only a minor role in the artistic outcome — to the point at which there is no conventional "audience" at all because every person involved is creating, doing or making.

In the last section of the paper, 10 case studies shine a light on different "families of active arts practice" employed by arts groups to engage audiences, visitors and communities. In researching active arts practice, an extraordinary diversity of programs and activities were found in terms of scale, artistic genre, budget and creative outcomes, ranging from public dance events to participatory theater "productions" taking place entirely within Facebook®. Hyperlinks throughout the text offer opportunities to explore the current state of practice.

Culture is not "being shaped" by someone or something else.[2] We *all* are shaping our culture. We *all* are creating what is meaningful, vibrant and real — the amateurs and the experts, the institutional and the individual, the privileged and the disenfranchised, the mainstream and the alternative. "We" is collective and social, yet often very personal. It is participatory, active and interactive. Of course, this has always been true. But a great shift is underway as participatory arts practice moves closer to the core of public value. This should not be seen as a marketing problem, but as an opportunity to engage the collaborative, co-creative, open source mindset that is present in every community, however small or large, urban or rural.[3] Navigating these waters will require us to reimagine what creative vibrancy looks like in the 21st century, and to reconsider what roles we want to play in the creative life of our communities.

THE AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT SPECTRUM

RECEPTIVE | PARTICIPATORY



SPECTATING
Spectating is fundamentally an act of receiving a finished artistic product. It is therefore outside the realm of participatory arts practice.

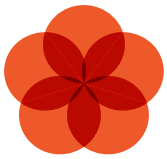
ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT
Educational or "enrichment" programs may activate the creative mind, but for the most part do not involve creative expression on the part of the audience member.

CROWD SOURCING
Audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing towards an artistic product.

- *Youth mosaics*
- *Photography contests*
- *An opera libretto comprised of Tweets*
- *Virtual choruses*

CO-CREATION
Audience members contribute something to an artistic experience curated by a professional artist.

- *Participatory theater*
- *Pro/Am concerts*
- *Storytelling events*
- *Participatory public art*



AUDIENCE-AS-ARTIST
Audience members substantially take control of the artistic experience; focus shifts from the product to the process of creation.

- *Public dances*
- *Community drawing contests*

PARTICIPANT'S LEVEL OF CREATIVE CONTROL

CURATORIAL
INTERPRETIVE
INVENTIVE

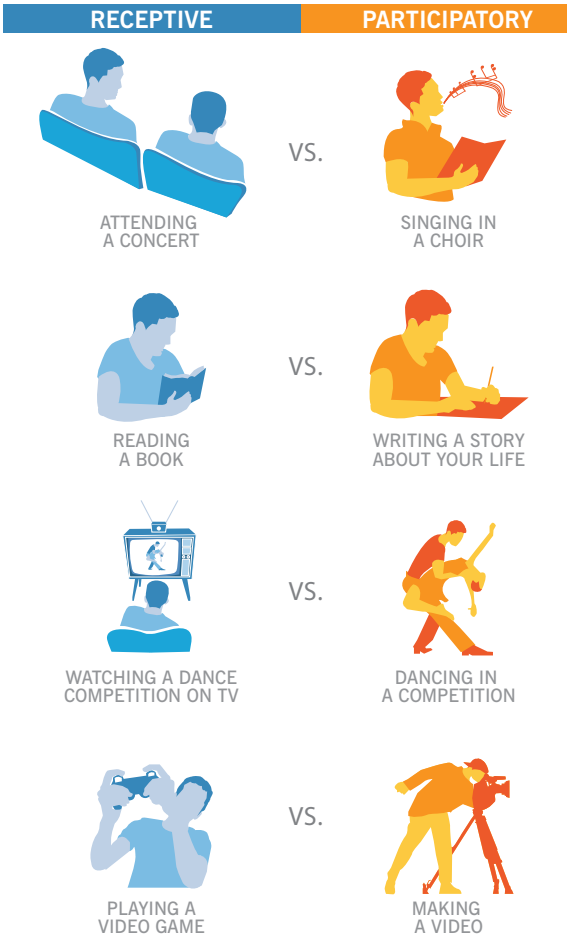
TERMINOLOGY

The terminology surrounding arts participation is in a state of flux. There is no generally accepted set of terms to describe arts participation, but an evolving lexicon of words and phrases that describe how people encounter and express their creative selves and share in the creativity of others. Key words and phrases used in this paper are defined as follows:

Participatory Arts Practice and Active Arts Programs: The focus of this paper, these terms are used to describe various forms of arts participation in which people play an expressive role. More specifically, these terms refer to arts programs and activities in which the participant is involved in artistic production by making, doing or creating something, or contributing ideas to a work of art, regardless of skill level. The degree of creative control varies from minimal (e.g., learning a dance step) to maximal (e.g., choreographing an original dance step). The expressive nature of the activity is what makes it participatory, whether or not original work is created. All of the case studies featured in the last section of this report are examples of active arts programs.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY?

"Participatory arts practice" as defined in this report requires creative expression — which includes some arts experiences but not others.



Arts Engagement: Engagement is often used within the field to describe enrichment or educational activities intended to enhance or deepen audience experiences (e.g., post-performance discussions). In this report, the term is used differently, to describe the entire spectrum of ways that people can be involved in the arts. In this context, "arts participation" and "arts engagement" are used interchangeably.

Arts Learning or Arts Education: The boundary between participatory arts practice and arts learning (i.e., acquisition of artistic skills) is blurry. In a sense, all arts learning (e.g., taking a sculpture class) is participatory arts practice, but the reverse is not true. The focus of this paper is participatory arts practice, exclusive of arts learning.[4]

Audience: Traditionally, the term "audience" is associated with observational or receptive participation[5] (i.e., spectating or consuming an arts program, either live or recorded). In the realm of participatory practice, however, the line between artist and audience is less distinct. At times, audience members become active participants, and sometimes toggle between these two roles at the same event, such as a street dance at which participants both dance and watch others dance. Sometimes, there is no audience at all beyond those who actively participate. This report acknowledges that the idea of "audience" is being redefined and, in the future, may take on a more expressive connotation.

Introduction: The New Landscape of Arts Participation

Throughout history, participatory arts practice has flourished, from the raucous Dionysian festivals of ancient Greece to the parlor piano recitals of the Belle Époque. With the advent of recording technologies and commercial entertainment, spectatorship and consumption became a priority in American culture. While writing, drawing, singing and craft-making have all remained central to our identity as a people, art-making as a social pastime waned significantly during the 20th century.[6] Now, once again, the tables are turning. Sharing the bounty of our personal and collective creativity — with the aid of technology — is a defining characteristic of this "making-and-doing-culture."

Technology has fundamentally changed the way people interact, learn and think about culture.[7] Contemporary notions of creativity, shaped by Web 2.0, center on shared construction of cultural identity and an ethos of participatory expression. Interactivity, as a means of building shared meaning and uniting communities, has deep historical roots, from the call and response in gospel preaching to the improvisatory turns in traditional folk dance. What is different now is the unprecedented ability of the average person to access, make and share art and ideas on a global scale.[8] The open, free and instantaneous exchange of digital content affords people the resources to control their own creative experiences and make their own meaning. Interactive experiences of all sorts are now an expected norm.[9]

This shift is about more than just technology. People are thinking about the experience of culture differently than in the past, placing value on a more immersive and interactive experience than is possible through mere observation. From the resurgence of knitting circles to the growing legions of rusty musicians and aspiring storytellers, Americans are activating their own creativity in new and unusual ways. This phenomenon is not limited to culture, but part of a larger "participation economy" in which social connection eclipses consumption. Increasingly, Americans want to meet the people who make our products, share in the work of the makers and make things ourselves.[10]

As artists collaborate, sample, remix and repurpose, they obscure the line between creator and observer and toy with fundamental presumptions of originality and authenticity that traditionally define artistic excellence.[11] In recent years, researchers have brought to light the vitality of cultural activity occurring outside of the nonprofit sector in more informal or community-based settings. In cities and towns across the United States, participatory arts practice is gaining recognition as an important aspect of quality of life and a means of building civic identity and communal meaning.[12]

Interactivity and hyperstimulation are now defining characteristics of contemporary living. "Extreme sports," interactive gaming and even the escalating production costs on Broadway belie a fundamental shift in American thinking. Inevitably, it seems, the thresholds for physical pleasure, especially visual and aural stimulation, rise ever higher. Notwithstanding the efforts of some orchestras and theaters to enfranchise youth through programs themed on video games[13], conventionally presented arts programs are less and less likely to hold the attention of younger consumers. Yet, the arts remains a pervasive aspect of American life, with 74 percent participating in some way — be it through attendance, arts creation or media-based participation.[14] Perhaps the time has come to focus attention on how and where Americans are participating in the arts, rather than how and where they are not.

As active forms of participation gain legitimacy and become culturally ingrained, values that were so much a part of 20th century conversations about American cultural vitality — for example, economic impact, professionalism and virtuosity — have receded, and a different conversation is taking hold. The value of the arts in this participatory culture is its ability to connect people through shared experiences and to contribute to vibrant, livable communities.[15] Participatory arts practices, whether technology-based or physical, are integrating art into the fabric of peoples' everyday lives, their neighborhoods and their value systems.

How Participatory Arts Fits in the Cultural Ecology

If you run a theater company, consider what "drama" means to the average person in your community. What connections might be made between literature, spoken word, storytelling and live drama? If you serve on the board of an art museum, think about how art creates meaning for people outside of museums. How might home-based art activities fulfill your mission? If you're the artistic director of a dance company, reflect on the prominence of social dancing as a creative outlet and what connections your company might make to other parts of the dance world. While some may see these "ecological" questions as a distraction, they can be regarded as an opportunity to sharpen focus on art and creativity — the core of all we do.

If participatory arts practice lies outside of your organization's mission and value system, why is that? Is it intentional, presumed or unintentional? Whatever your answers to these questions, the thought process is healthy. Exciting new partnerships and programs can emerge from a dialogue between professional and community artists, audiences, board members and staff about an organization's place in the arts ecosystem.[16] At minimum, clarity on *why* you choose to be active in one area but not another might be gained.

There are several ways to conceive the arts ecosystem. In their 2005 report, *Creative Community Index,* John Kreidler and Philip Trounstine offer a simple and intuitive framework for thinking about the cultural ecology of a community. Their model asserts *cultural literacy* as the foundation of a healthy cultural ecology, supporting higher levels of engagement such as *participatory cultural practice* and consumption of *professional cultural goods and services*. An adaptation of their model appears at left.[17] Where do you operate in this system? Who else in your community operates in adjacent spaces?

Using a cultural frame that encompasses informal arts practices as well as consumption, a growing body of international research paints a more nuanced and multi-layered picture of arts participation, including and validating parts of the ecosystem that were previously invisible.[18]

Further insight into the complexity of the ecosystem can be gained by looking at the different types of settings and venues where arts experiences occur:

- Purpose-built arts venues such as museums, theaters, concert halls, jazz clubs, cinemas and community art centers; these may be operated by nonprofit arts organizations or for-profit businesses
- Community spaces such as schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, libraries and other neighborhood venues
- Outdoor public spaces such as parks, sidewalks and streets
- Virtual spaces, including websites, blogs, posts and games
- The home[19]

While an in-depth discussion of "setting" is outside the purview of this paper, it is worth noting that participatory arts practice can take place in a wide range of settings, both physical and virtual. The symbolic importance that different people ascribe to different settings, and the availability of different settings in different communities, are key drivers of participation. Networks of people move in and around these different settings. For example, young music lovers will go see a jazz artist in one venue but not another.[20] In what settings do you reach your constituents? How might your audience change in different settings? Finding the right setting for an active arts program can greatly increase its chances of success.[21]

The Internet, as a relatively new setting for arts participation, has expanded the definition of community beyond geographic boundaries and added an important dimension to the arts ecology. Online communities can be global and fluid, often coalescing around a specific idea or project, and then disappearing as fast as they formed. Web-based arts communities are bridging the physical barriers to arts access as well as reshaping the definitions of artistic creation.[22] The social structures and network theories underlying Web 2.0 have added fuel to the fire of participatory arts practice, as typified by performance flashmobs, and giving rise to a new family of digital arts projects, such as the Australia Council for the Arts' What Makes Me website, which aims to build Australia's largest collaborative digital story. Just as participatory arts practices "provide effective bridges across boundaries of race, class, age and ethnicity" within physical communities,[23] the value of the open source Web environment is its social "flatness" and structural disregard for traditional demographic indicators like race, age and gender — notwithstanding issues of access to technology.

Gaining an "ecological view" of arts participation is, perhaps, the greatest challenge and most urgent need facing the arts sector. Every community has a different ecology with distinctive providers, publics and resources. Arts institutions must assess their current place in the ecology and adapt to meet the changing needs of their communities. Participatory arts practice is alive and well in every community, though it is often under the radar of foundation funders and wealthy donors. As public interest in participatory arts practice gains critical mass, policymakers attuned to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse voter base will pay more attention. Arts groups who overlook this broad and robust layer of the ecology will miss an important opportunity.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY ARTS

An international debate rages about the value of the arts. Can the economic value of investments in culture be measured? Do public investments in culture require any justification at all, if the true benefits of the arts are intrinsic? Much of this debate stems from declining public subsidies for the arts in the United Kingdom and Europe, and the consequent efforts by government agencies and private funders to seek a better framework for guiding future investments. John Holden, an influential writer in the U.K., has argued for several years that culture needs a more democratic mandate.[24]

Missing in this debate is a dispassionate, critical assessment of the relative benefits and value of participatory arts practice versus receptive participation (i.e., spectating). For example, how are the benefits of attending a choral concert different from the benefits of singing in a choir? Are certain cognitive, emotional and social benefits more attainable through participatory practice than observational participation? Conversely, what benefits are unique to receptive participation? How are the benefits of these two modes of participation symbiotic? In 2004, RAND produced Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts, a comprehensive review of research literature on the benefits of the arts.[25] Few distinctions were offered in reference to participatory arts practice, although the authors noted that creating an original work of art can activate a sense of pride and satisfy a deep desire to leave a legacy.

Much of the insight on active participation resides in the evaluation literature of the arts education field. A good deal is known about how children benefit from arts learning programs, including greater self-efficacy, agency (stemming from a sense of accomplishment), socialization skills and learning how to collaborate.[26] Do adults involved in active arts programs experience the same benefits as children?

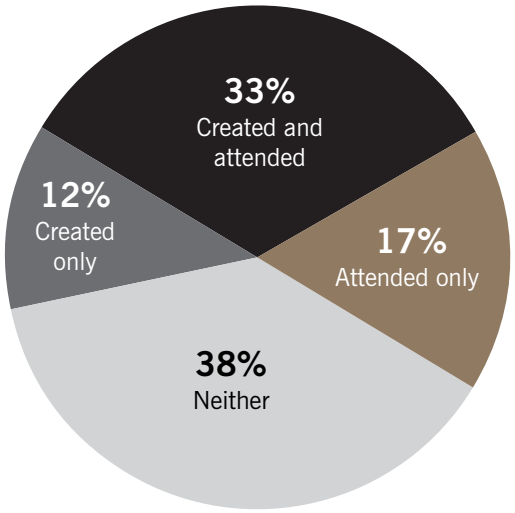
Research on creativity has blossomed in recent years, especially in the domains of psychology and management science. Findings have described the nature of creativity itself and the effects of creativity on individuals and organizations. Critical thinking skills, an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, creativity in problem solving and a passion to embrace new ideas are widely recognized as 21st century job skills.[27] What does participatory arts practice contribute to the American workforce, and what more can it contribute? In his 2011 book Making Is Connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0, David Gauntlett reminds us that creativity "helps us to build resilience… and the creative capacity to deal with significant challenges."

A small but growing number of studies address the benefits to neighborhoods and communities of a creatively engaged citizenry, particularly the work of Mark Stern and Susan Siefert at the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project. WolfBrown research on cultural engagement in Philadelphia illustrates the close relationship between cultural engagement (including participatory forms) and civic engagement.[28] In a 2008 study, "Magnetizing Neighborhoods through Amateur Arts Performances," D. Garth Taylor analyzes the correlation between amateur, informal arts practices and neighborhood stability and improvement in Chicago. According to Taylor, "There is a significant correlation between the amount of amateur, informal arts activity and neighborhood stability and/or improvement. This correlation is evidence of magnetization — an increase in the desirability, commitment, social integration and quality of life in a community area." The idea that neighborhoods can be "magnetized" by participatory arts practice is powerful, and it appeals to civic leaders.[29]

Looking across the research, it seems reasonable to claim that active forms of arts participation generate many personal, community and societal benefits. Yet, there are many unanswered questions.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. ADULTS
BASED ON PARTICIPATION IN ARTS ATTENDANCE AND ARTS CREATION, 2008



Source: 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts.

A growing body of data illustrates the interconnectedness of participatory arts practice and attendance at live events. General population studies of arts participation consistently find that active participants are more likely to be audience members in the conventional sense. For example, a 2010 study of Philadelphia area adults found that those who "make crafts of any kind" attend art museums at twice the frequency of those who do not.[30] An analysis of the most recent Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 2008 suggests that 45 percent of Americans do creative arts activities (as defined by the 2008 SPPA), while 50 percent of Americans engage by attending arts events. As illustrated at left, the overlap is substantial — 33 percent of all adults do both.[31] Although causality cannot be proven in one direction or another, a clear symbiosis is evident between participatory arts practice and attendance.

Audience studies conducted over the past several years provide further evidence that large percentages of ticket buyers have some personal involvement in the art form, past or present. A 2010 national survey of more than 7,000 dance ticket buyers (ballet and contemporary dance) found that a majority are *currently* dancing themselves, either socially or more formally.[32] In the classical music field, orchestras have long known of the correlation between participatory arts practice and attendance.[33] Other research suggests that audience members with a background in the art form are not just more likely to attend, but are more likely to prepare in advance, to report higher levels of anticipation, and, in some cases, to report that the experience had a strong impact.[34]

The relationship between participatory arts practice and attendance takes on added importance with regard to younger adults, who are much more likely than older adults to be involved in participatory activities, according to several of the studies cited here.[35] In fact, The James Irvine Foundation 2008 study of cultural engagement in the central regions of California concluded that active arts programs are likely to be an entry point for younger and more diverse populations.[36]

Examination of more than 70 examples of active arts programs revealed a range of motivations at work. Some arts groups see active arts programs as a means of gaining a more favorable profile in the community, or as a long-term investment in audience development. Others use active arts programming to cultivate donors. The association between participatory arts practice and increased attendance is positive, but it is a *byproduct* of a fulfilling expressive experience, not a direct result. While any number of secondary benefits may accrue to the institution, participatory arts programs are intrinsically worthwhile, and essential to a healthy arts ecosystem.

Embracing the New Ecology

No one suggests that theater companies should stop producing *Hamlet* or that symphony orchestras should stop playing Mozart. Traditional arts experiences will continue to hold meaning and value for many people, and observational participation will always be an essential part of arts ecology. Those experiences, however, are a part of a much larger cultural whole. Just as the U.S. population is diversifying, so, too, are the types of arts and cultural experiences that Americans enjoy. Most likely, we are still at the beginning of this seismic shift. It is not a fad or a trend, but a fundamental realignment of demand that will, inevitably, reshape supply. In response, funders and policymakers will increasingly wake up to inequities in the system of cultural provision and move resources to historically undercapitalized parts of the ecology, including participatory arts.

Artists, curators and administrators must quickly embrace the diversity of preferences, settings and formats that will engage the next generation, and the one after that.

A great reconciliation between art and audiences is underway, characterized by a period of fitful innovation, bankruptcies and a generational shift in leadership. With the decline in arts education, fewer young adults are arriving on the professional arts scene with the knowledge and experience that their parents had.[37] The arts education system is not replenishing the pool of arts-educated adults who visit art museums and buy theater tickets. Assuming a 20-year lag between cause and effect, it is likely that we are just beginning to see the results of disinvestment in arts education. In this challenging environment, flexibility and creativity in programming will become paramount to the survival of arts organizations. Artists, curators and administrators must quickly embrace the diversity of preferences, settings and formats that will engage the next generation, and the one after that.

It is important to recognize that the young people entering today's cultural scene are not aesthetically bankrupt. More often, their creative interests simply lie elsewhere — beyond attendance — in the realms of spoken word, sharing playlists, competitive dance, digital design and remixing and refashioning a wide range of artistic content.

Audience development is not just a marketing problem. Primarily, it is a programming issue.

As cultural tastes diversify and fragment, expectations for what constitutes an enjoyable evening out are changing. For example, it seems that more and more concertgoers are content with a 75-minute program with no intermission. Yet, marathon all-day and late-night programs attract large crowds.[38] In short, it is becoming more difficult to satisfy everyone with one experience. Audience development, therefore, is not just a marketing problem. Primarily, it is a programming issue. Attracting the next generation of audiences and visitors will require a transformation in programming, not just better marketing. Even then, when new audiences appear on the scene, they will be different. Fewer will want to sit still in uncomfortable seats, and more will demand a larger role in shaping their own experience.

The implications of this shift are rattling the very foundations of the infrastructure and value systems at work in the sector. A new equilibrium is emerging, in which civic cultural leadership not only builds and sustains "pillar" organizations, but aims to integrate art, culture and creativity into every aspect of community life. In order to preserve their cultural significance and symbolic importance to community, our largest cultural programs and facilities must assume new roles, much like the re-orientation occurring through the Active Arts® program of the Music Center/Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County.[39]

Every arts group must find its own way through this new terrain. As active arts programming moves toward the center of the body of practice, some arts groups will make minor adjustments to time-tested programming formulas, while others will rewrite their mission statements and launch entirely new initiatives. Time has shown that the art forms themselves are robust enough to accommodate new approaches to presentation and audience involvement. But art evolves in the hands of artists, curators and the institutions that fund their work. Will they see participatory practice as the dumbing down of the legacy of professional artistic production, or will they see it as a necessary complement?

Arts groups who wish to expand their impact and garner additional community support will need to reconsider their role in the larger ecology of cultural literacy, participatory arts practice and professional production. Signs of a vibrant culture of active participation are all around us. The study behind this report turned up scores of examples of innovative programming, which will be discussed in the next section.

Participatory Arts in Practice

Arts groups around the world are responding to the changing landscape of arts participation with innovative programs that actively engage the public in a myriad of ways. This study uncovered a wide range of programs and activities, some recurring, some ephemeral, sponsored by a rich variety of arts organizations, large and small, across all artistic disciplines.[40] Extraordinarily diverse in nature, scale and scope, these practices defy clear categorization. Yet, their underlying purposes and structures provide clues to an emerging conceptual model for participatory arts practice.

Participatory arts practice involves two broad categories of programs and projects, based on the intended audience:

Audience-Based Programs. This category of activity includes arts programs and projects that seek audiences beyond those who participate in the art-making. Examples include "Pro-Am" classical music concerts that blend professional and amateur performers (e.g., Rusty Musicians), community-based theater events, public exhibitions featuring crowd-sourced art, storytelling programs in which community members both contribute and spectate, video-making contests that involve public voting, and some co-created performance events such as HERE Art Center's Lush Valley that give audience members the option to contribute.

Participant-Based Programs. This category encompasses arts programs and projects whose primary purpose is to provide a fulfilling creative experience for those who participate. Examples include social dances such as Bal Moderne, participatory art-making events such as the SketchCrawl™ drawing marathons, and some co-created performance events in which there is no intended audience apart from the participants.

While the distinction between these two categories of activity may be clear enough, a philosophical gulf runs between them. Audience-based programs maintain focus on consumption of an artistic *product,* even with a participatory component, while participant-based programs focus on the *process* of artistic creation, independent of the product. As a result, the former category represents more comfortable territory for presenters of professional arts programs, while the latter category tends to occur outside the purview of nonprofit arts presenters (although it need not). Both are essential parts of the ecosystem.

WHO PAYS FOR PARTICIPATORY ARTS PROGRAMS?

Case study research attempted to gather financial information about the costs and revenues associated with each program. While some programs generate significant earned and unearned revenues, not all are "monetized" (i.e., some depend almost entirely on volunteers).

Four general approaches to financing active arts programs were found: 1) using unrestricted funds (not specifically designated for programming) to avoid confusing donors about what is, or is not, core programming; 2) integrating active arts elements into core programming, so the two become indistinguishable from a fundraising standpoint; 3) charging admissions or participant fees; and 4) leveraging an arts activity to generate support from community partners (e.g., sponsorships, supplies and materials) and volunteers (pro bono time). More research and experimentation are needed to better understand the economics of producing different types of active arts programs. According to one organization, an entirely new vocabulary is needed to motivate donors to support active arts programs.

Another helpful way to distinguish active arts programs is by their intended goals or outcomes, which are placed into four categories that follow. The order in which they are listed should not be construed as indicating anything about their relative value. Arts groups with existing active arts programs might consider where their programs fall in this taxonomy.

Participation in Service of a Community Need or Societal Goal. This study uncovered many participatory arts programs designed around specific goals such as social justice, social activism or giving voice to disenfranchised communities. An example is the Art is Ageless program, a series of participatory art projects involving youth and seniors in Philadelphia, organized by NewCourtland Network, a social service agency, and The Center for Emerging Visual Artists. Many of these programs are organized by community organizations outside of the arts sector, although there are exceptions, such as Helix Arts and Spare Tyre (both in the United Kingdom). In technical terms, these programs serve "instrumental" purposes (i.e., art as an instrument of some other outcome).

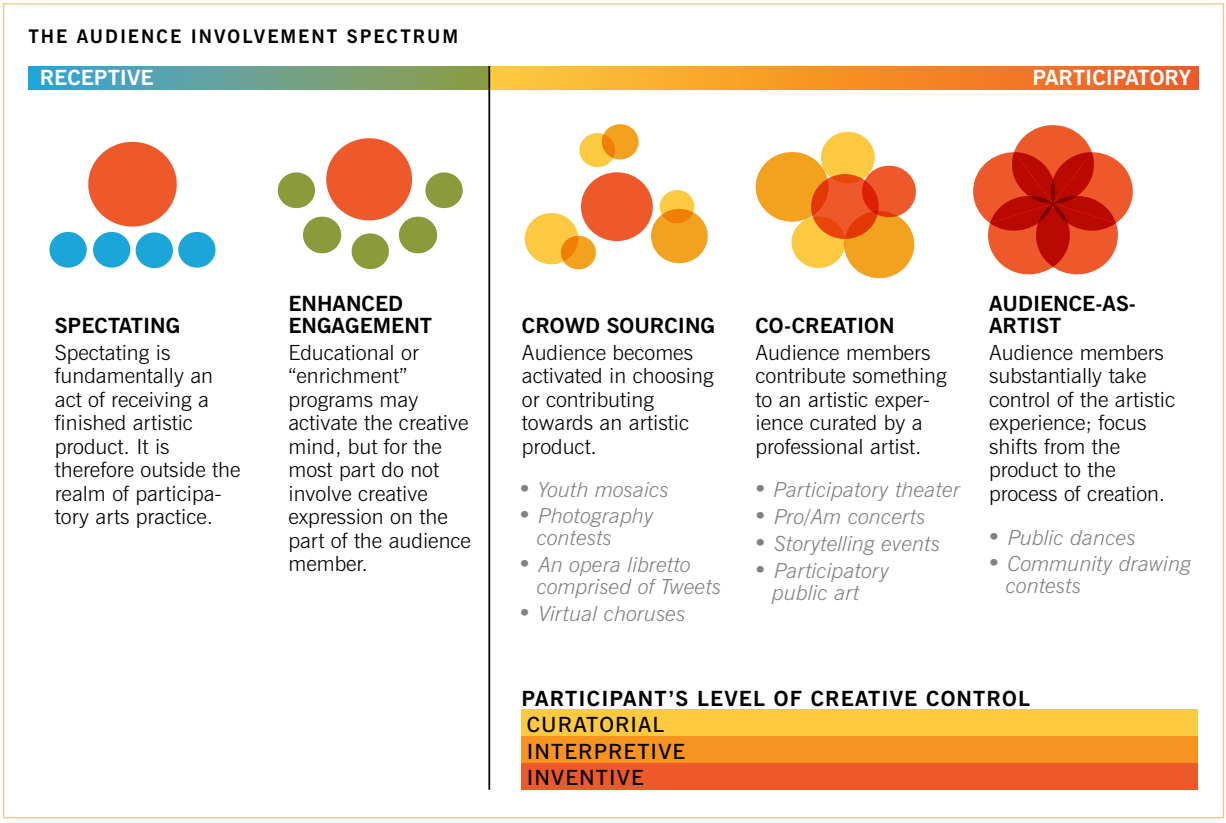
Participation in Support of, or as a Complement to, Artistic Vision. These activities are mission-driven but not connected to core programming. Usually, the process of participating is more important than the artistic outcome. This category of activity can be a good entry point for arts groups. Examples include orchestras that sponsor amateur performances, such as the San Francisco Symphony's Community of Music Makers program, and theater companies that encourage patrons to gather together in small groups to read scripts, with each person assuming a role. These activities can build loyalty and buy-in to the organization's mission, and foster a sense of community.

Participation in Service of an Artistic Process or Product. This includes situations in which audience members are allowed to "co-create" aspects of the artistic experience, or actually create the art. An example is the National Theatre Wales' production of The Passion, a contemporary retelling of the story of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ with the people of Port Talbot, Wales, as its cast and crew (more than 1,000 volunteers, in total). In these programs the participatory activity, however cursory or deep, is in service of a professionally curated artistic outcome.

Participation as the Fundamental Goal. Here, the participatory aspect of the activity is paramount, and the artistic outcome is impossible to curate. In fact, the whole point of these programs is that the artistic outcome is uncertain and largely in the hands of the participants. In other words, the artistic outcome is a byproduct of participation. In this category, audience members and artists become one. An example is Figment, a free, annual celebration of participatory art and culture featuring the work of local dancers, musicians, actors and visual artists in four cities: Boston, New York, Detroit and Jackson, Mississippi.

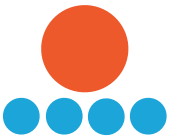
THE AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT SPECTRUM

At the core of participatory arts practice is the nature and extent of the audience member's involvement in the artistic experience. The Audience Involvement Spectrum, illustrated below, provides a simple depiction of five overlapping stages of involvement



Each of the elements in the spectrum is described further in the pages that follow.

Receptive Stages



SPECTATING
Spectating is fundamentally an act of receiving a finished artistic product. It is therefore outside the realm of participatory arts practice.

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT
Educational or "enrichment" programs may activate the creative mind, but for the most part do not involve creative expression on the part of the audience member.

The involvement spectrum begins with spectating. While audience members may be actively involved in the artistic exchange emotionally and intellectually, and while audience members "give" something back to the artists (e.g., applause or laughter) and thereby play a role in shaping the artistic experience of both the artist and the audience itself, spectating is fundamentally an act of receiving a finished artistic product. It is therefore outside the realm of participatory arts practice.

Arts groups are devoting a great deal of energy these days to assisting visitors and audiences in having deeper, more meaningful arts experiences (i.e., "enhanced engagement"). A wide variety of methods have been developed (and are still in development), including pre-event contextualization, interpretive assistance, post-event discussions, impact surveys and other forms of meaning-making. These programs can heighten anticipation and magnify impact, and to some extent have already become standard practice. While these types of educational or "enrichment" programs may activate the creative mind, for the most part they do not involve creative expression on the part of the audience member (i.e., "making or doing"). This is a key distinction.

The first two stages in the Audience Involvement Spectrum do not involve participatory arts practice as defined in this paper, and are included in the spectrum for contextual purposes only. The starting point for participatory arts practice begins when the audience member becomes an "expressive participant" in the making of the artistic experience.[41]

Participatory Stage 1: Crowd-Sourcing Artistic Content

CROWD SOURCING
Audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing towards an artistic product.

- *Youth mosaics*
- *Photography contests*
- *An opera libretto comprised of Tweets*
- *Virtual choruses*

Here we enter the realm of participatory arts practice. In the crowd-sourcing stage of the involvement spectrum, the audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing toward the creation of an artistic product, typically curated or produced by professional artists. The audience is not yet "on stage" but has contributed to the artistic work. This burgeoning area of artistic production has a rich history.[42] Art exhibitions comprising of works by community artists, youth mosaics, photography contests, sculptures involving public input, an opera libretto composed of tweets, virtual choruses and theatrical works based on community stories — these are all examples of the crowd-sourcing stage of audience involvement. In this sphere of work, artists are challenged to find ways of incorporating input from audiences or community members (some of whom may be accomplished artists) into their work, which represents a fundamentally different approach to artistic creation. Many of the current-day examples of crowd-sourcing artistic content are made possible by the ease of sharing digital files. While a small circle of artists, curators and directors has always been interested in this modality of creation, it has not yet entered the mainstream, although this appears to be changing.[43]

Participatory Stage 2: Co-Creation

CO-CREATION
Audience members contribute something to an artistic experience curated by a professional artist.

- *Participatory theater*
- *Pro/Am concerts*
- *Storytelling events*
- *Participatory public art*

In this stage of the spectrum, audience members become directly involved in the artistic experience, such as when community musicians play concerts with professional orchestras, or when audience members at a dance performance are asked to stand up and move as part of the choreography. Inherently, some level of artistic control is ceded to the participant or audience member. Hannah Rudman, a consultant in the United Kingdom, asserts that co-creation is not as much about giving up control as it is about a new form of "organizational porosity" — a mindset that allows for a free exchange of creative energy between an arts organization and its public.[44]

Co-creation is a dynamic and emerging area of arts practice. The performing arts offers more examples in participatory stage than does the visual arts, where artistic content tends to be more fixed. An exception is the realm of participatory public art, a fun and highly engaging area of artistic work in which visitors touch, climb into, change and otherwise interact with the work, creating a unique experience each time. One example is an outdoor lighting installation in which visitors are asked to wear all-white clothing in order to become a moving, living palette for the light.

Theater, music, dance and storytelling programs that involve audience members in an artistic capacity also qualify as co-creation. A large part of this work involves professional artists working with community groups on an artistic project, such as when the Cincinnati Opera sends its singers into local churches to rehearse and perform in gospel music concerts. Sometimes the work is part of an organization's core programming, although co-creation more typically falls under the umbrella of "community engagement." As this work continues to move from the fringe to the core of artistic programming, the generational shift in audience that is already underway will accelerate.

Sometimes the line between spectating and co-creation is a fine one. When artists interact extensively with audience members during a live performance, the result can amount to co-creation. For example, the popular vocalist Bobby McFerrin regularly engages his audiences in co-creation through call and response techniques and other forms of involvement. Other times, the line is very clear, as with Attack Theatre's Some Assembly Required, described as "a collision of the planned and the spontaneous." One of the most colorful examples of co-creation in recent memory was Drumstruck, an "interactive drum-theatre experience" that played in New York for a short time in 2006. Upon entering the Theatre, each audience member found a 2-foot-tall drum on his or her seat. During the show, the 11-member percussion ensemble and the audience collaborated on some raucous music-making.

Participatory Stage 3: Audience-as-Artist

AUDIENCE-AS-ARTIST
Audience members substantially take control of the artistic experience; focus shifts from the product to the process of creation.

- *Public dances*
- *Community drawing contests*

The fifth and most participatory stage of the Audience Involvement Spectrum occurs when audience members substantially take control of the artistic experience. A professional artist may design the experience, but the outcome depends on the participants. This is not necessarily an unbridled creative free-for-all, but often a highly organized, collaborative effort. There may be an audience for the work, such as when a crowd gathers to watch mural artists or street painters at work. Or, audience members may alternate between spectating and creating, such as at Feast of Words, a monthly "experiment in participatory literature" in San Francisco. The resultant work of art may or may not be created for public consumption or critical approval, but the process of creating it is what matters most. In participatory dance events like Bal Moderne and Big Dance, the creative outcome is entirely dependent on the participation of the public.

Level of Participants' Creative Control

Within the three participatory stages of the Audience Involvement Spectrum (Crowd-Sourcing, Co-Creation and Audience-as-Artist), audiences may engage with the art at various levels of interactivity or creative control: curatorial engagement (selecting, editing, organizing, voting), interpretive engagement (performing, remaking an existing work of art), or inventive engagement (creating something entirely new).[45] This adds another layer of complexity to the spectrum (page 15), and may be helpful in providing language to describe a complicated area of arts practice.

Audience members who are given the opportunity at the end of a concert to vote for an encore are, technically speaking, exercising a superficial form of curatorial engagement. They are expressing themselves by making a choice, which requires no artistic skill but allows everyone to participate. This should be distinguished from other types of engagement activities that involve more creative control, such as making a new work of art (i.e., inventive engagement).

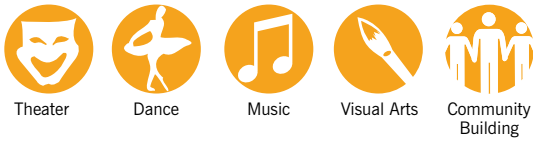
Consider the dynamics between the three stages of participatory involvement and the three levels of creative control. For example, can you think of a program that involves crowd-sourcing artistic content at the interpretive level?[46] For those willing to reflect on the many intersections between them, the creative possibilities are endless.

Overview of Case Studies

With the assistance of many colleagues, this study examined approximately 70 examples of participatory arts programs and events. The case studies were selected to reflect a diversity of defining features encountered in this research.

Detailed case studies follow in the next section of this document. They are introduced with brief descriptions below.

Case study content involves art forms or purposes represented with these icons to help readers identify examples relevant to their work.



1. Community-Sourced Arts Events

Build institutional relevance and shift the organization's role from gatekeeper to catalyst of creativity.

The Art Gallery of Ontario's *In Your Face* was an open-submission art exhibit featuring 17,000 portraits collected from the public. The 5 Minute Theatre Festival featured 200 five-minute theater works culled from an open submission process and streamed live over the course of 24 hours.

2. Community-Activated Theater Programs

Weave theater into the fabric of people's daily lives and use theater as a community-building tool.

Taking the "theater for community development" genre developed by companies like Cornerstone Theater Company and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed to a new level, these projects involve community members in the creation of a theatrical production, and in its performance. By inviting community members to create, perform and witness, these programs offer shared, meaningful experiences. Headwaters, produced by the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association in rural Georgia engages 24 to 40 community members in its bi-annual production while The Passion, produced by the National Theatre Wales activated the participation of 2,000 in Port Talbot, Wales.

3. Participatory Arts Events

Include festivals and events that celebrate the creative spirit through the act of making art. These events encourage artistic participation from anyone and everyone willing to participate.

Every few months, the organizers of SketchCrawl™ post an upcoming weekend date on sketchcrawl.com for a day-long sketching marathon. Local sketchers take up the call, advertising a meeting place and sketching the route in their local communities. Then, on the same date in communities across the world, sketchers of all levels gather with charcoals, pencils and watercolors to sketch their surroundings and then share the fruits of their creativity online at sketchcrawl.com and urbansketchers.org.

4. Storytelling Events

Include both individual events and series that encourage people from all walks of life to articulate the stories of their lives, and to artistically and publically share those stories.

At Stoop Storytelling events, seven Baltimore-area participants get seven minutes each to share a true story with an appreciative audience. Each program centers on a theme. Having grown in popularity since its founding, the program now regularly sells out the 541-seat Pearlstone Theater at CENTERSTAGE.

5. Virtual Activation

Comprises interactive web-based programs that encourage and facilitate creative expression.

New Paradise Laboratories, an experimental performance company in Philadelphia, creates original online participatory theater programs and the technologies that facilitate them. The company has re-imagined the institutional website as an online platform for user-generated artistic content.

6. Public Dance Events

Activate the moving spirit and social camaraderie through dance.

The Big Dance (2012) in London and the Bal Moderne in Brussels are making dance a part of peoples' lives by using professional choreographers, dancers and dance teachers to produce large-scale public dance projects in which anyone can learn and dance together. The choreographies are simultaneously fun and interesting, unintimidating but challenging, personally fulfilling and collectively inspiring. These programs bring communities together in collective acts of kinetic energy.

7. Co-Creation

Involves artists and companies that build participation and interactivity into their creative processes.

These performance events activate a profound level of interaction between audience and artist, involving the audience in the creative process. The outcome of these performances is dependent on what the participants contribute. Sleep No More by PunchDrunk lets audiences choose their path as they encounter different characters and performance vignettes. In Attack Theatre's Some Assembly Required, participants work with professional dancers to create a dance based on the artistic qualities of a visual art object.

8. Community Music-Making

Includes symphony orchestras, opera and chamber music groups that engage in professional-amateur activities.

All We Do is Play by the Pacific Symphony responds to demand for more participatory arts experiences by inviting community members to play, sing and create their own music events, both face-to-face and digital.

9. Engaging Civic Values

Events build community vitality and public support for the arts.

The Davis Art Center's Junk2Genius program celebrates the community's commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle. This annual competition features 15 teams of community members competing in a timed sculpt-off using recycled materials.

10. Participatory Arts Networks

Represent organizations finding ways to facilitate art-making in their communities through events or by providing platforms from which people can engage.

A growing number of local and regional arts agencies such as ArtsWave in Cincinnati are expanding their support for the arts beyond grantmaking and technical assistance. Through participatory arts programs and events, these agencies activate community networks to catalyze, mobilize and facilitate creativity and art-making.

ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES

Illustrative Case Studies on Participatory Arts Practice

Each of the case studies in this section reflects an aspect of current practice in active arts programming. In some cases, multiple examples of a particular practice are grouped together in order to illustrate different approaches to a similar practice. Suggestions for case studies were sourced through an open nomination process, which generated a pool of more than 100 individual practices. Through preliminary analysis, these practices were aggregated into families with similar characteristics — 10 of which were selected for further research.

The case studies include short descriptions of each program, a representative photo or image, hyperlinks to online resources, as well as a discussion of the implications.

Looking across the case studies, a number of design questions arise for those who plan to conceptualize and implement an active arts program:

- What form(s) of artistic expression do you propose to engage (e.g., dance, music, sculpture, spoken word)?
- What scale or breadth of impact do you aim to make?
- How might technology be used to extend impact?
- What are you hoping to accomplish in terms of participant outcomes, audience outcomes and community outcomes?
- To what extent will the activity yield an artistic outcome that is visible to the community?
- What community partners might be brought into the project?
- What degree of technical proficiency is required of audience members or participants?
- Does the activity allow for solitary participation (e.g., at home), social involvement, or both?
- To what extent will professional artists and curators be involved? What qualifications will they have?
- How many entry points into the project/activity can be created? Is the activity accessible to people who cannot physically attend?

We are indebted to the many individuals who gave generously of their time and enthusiasm to make these case studies possible.

Photo Credit: © 2008 Art Gallery of Ontario

COMMUNITY-SOURCED ARTS EVENTS: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE

Community-sourced arts events feature the works of "everyday artists," shifting the organization's role from gatekeeper to catalyst of creativity. Programs of this type broaden community "ownership" by opening their proverbial doors to community artists and inviting their creative voices to be a part of the organization. In doing so, the projects take on a life of their own, exceeding expectations.

IN YOUR FACE: THE PEOPLE'S PORTRAIT PROJECT, ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO[i]

"Are we actually connecting with the people we think we're serving?"[ii] asked Gillian McIntyre, Coordinator of Adult Programs at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In January 2006, following the lead of McIntyre and her co-organizer David Wistow, the Gallery put out a call for portraits with very few restrictions: the size had to be 4" x 6", the artists had to sign a copyright release, the submission had to be received within the submission time window and the images had to be original. The response was overwhelming: 17,000 submissions were received from all over the world and displayed in the *In Your Face* exhibition. Many of the artists and their families and friends came to see their portrait hung and revered inside the Gallery, bringing a greater than usual diversity of visitors to the gallery. The *In Your Face* exhibition occurred at the same time as the Art Gallery of Ontario's rebuilding; an attempt to change the Gallery's "way of being philosophically, as well as physically."[iii] The exhibition helped to pull the Gallery away from its *modus operandi* where curatorial expertise is paramount toward a model where the visitor

[i] McIntyre, Gillian, "*In Your Face*: The People's Portrait Project," in *Visitor Voices in Museum Exhibitions*, ed. McLean and Pollock (2007): 128-133; McIntyre, Gillian, "*In Your Face*: The People's Portrait Project," in *Exhibitionist* (2009): 46-50.
[ii] Personal interview with Gillian McIntyre, August 4, 2011.
[iii] Personal correspondence with Gillian McIntyre, September 27, 2011.

Photo Credit: Colin Hattersly, 5 Minute Theatre, National Theater of Scotland, 2011

experience is paramount. The exhibit transformed the Gallery into a "community space" by featuring the community's works and community members' voices. This shift in focus did encounter some pushback from curators, but ultimately the exhibition helped the Gallery itself become a catalyst for creativity. The budget for this highly publicized exhibition: "sweat and duct tape."

5 MINUTE THEATRE, NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

On June 21, 2011, the National Theatre of Scotland streamed more than 200 five-minute pieces of live theater within a 24-hour span. When putting out a call for pieces, staff was not confident that they would receive enough submissions. They ultimately received almost twice the number they could use, necessitating a screening process, which they had not originally intended. The pieces came from a mix of professional and amateur artists, community groups and individuals. Marianne Maxwell, Audience Development Manager, National Theatre of Scotland, explained that watching the streaming was like listening to an iPod on shuffle — you never knew what would come next — and that the 24-hour streaming event had the energy and sense of a communal experience of live theater.

Through this pilot project, the National Theatre was aiming to harness creativity, not dictate what creativity is. Maxwell reports they are only just beginning to realize the potential of this dynamic.[i]

IMPLICATIONS

The open calls for submissions to these events encouraged work from professional and recreational artists, and from those who don't consider themselves artists at all. Efforts were made to show nearly all, if not all, submissions. How might your organization use an open submission process to build relationships with the community? How can the community's creativity be reflected back to it, in a way that benefits your organization? While arts organizations may have to relinquish some level of quality control in these types of events, it is nevertheless possible to exercise a degree of curatorial initiative. The success of these programs illustrates the potential for achieving a high level of artistic quality through open submission events.[ii]

[i] Personal interview with Marianne Maxwell, Audience Development Manager, National Theatre of Scotland, August 4, 2011.
[ii] Simon, Nina, "Contributing to Museums," Chapter 6 in *The Participatory Museum*, 2010.

Photo Credit Headwaters: *A Goodly Portion of Our Songs and Stories*, Silver Image Studio, 2011

COMMUNITY-ACTIVATED THEATRE PROGRAMS: "ACTS OF COLLECTIVE WILL"[i]

Taking the "theatre for community development" genre developed by companies like Cornerstone Theater Company and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed to a new level, these projects involve community members in the creation of a theatrical production, and in its performance. By inviting community members to create, perform and witness, these programs weave art into the fabric of community life and create shared, meaningful experiences for community members.

HEADWATERS, SAUTEE NACOOCHEE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, GEORGIA

Headwaters is a community story-play and performance taking place annually in a small community in rural northeast Georgia.[ii] The project is driven by Lisa Mount, a professional artist, under the umbrella of the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing creativity and committed to preserving and protecting the natural and historical resources in the Appalachian foothills. With its first production in 2007, the process of creating *Headwaters* is a two-year cycle generated by a creative collaboration between professional theater artists and community performers. While many programs may use community members to augment the work of professional performers and writers, *Headwaters* taps into local resources and empowers community members to collaborate together to create the work. Beginning with a story collection process, anyone can be involved. There are no auditions. Rather, the producer and director conduct "Talent Inventories," learning about the talents and skills people have and how they can be utilized.

i http://www.snca.org/performingarts/headwaters.html.
ii Personal interview with Lisa Mount, Director of Headwaters, July 25, 2011.

Photo Credit: Ian Kingsnorth/National Theatre Wales

THE PASSION, NATIONAL THEATRE WALES

National Theatre Wales is a theater "without walls"— it focuses on creating location-based works. The Theatre uses a diverse range of sites, thereby accessing communities that do not typically attend, let alone participate in theater. *The Passion*, performed in April 2011, was a three-day contemporary, ecumenical revival of the traditional Passion play created for and performed in Port Talbot, Wales, the childhood home of actor Michael Sheen, who co-created and championed the project. Key to the success of the production was the development of deep relationships with community organizations and individuals who acted as gatekeepers, providing access and helping network throughout the town. The scripting process began 18 months before the show by reaching out to social service agencies and community care-giving organizations. The Theatre partnered with Wildworks, a theater company known for their community work and massive site-specific spectaculars, who put out a broad call to the community for "skills" (not "actors"), successfully attracting and engaging a diversity of people integral to the performance. More than 2,000 people were directly involved in the production.[i] People knew that by showing up they would not be just spectators, but would become involved in the production. More than 12,000 people are reported to have attended the final scenes of the production.

IMPLICATIONS

In both of these cases, professional theater artists and production staff generated the creative impetus for the project and served as the catalysts and community motivators. Not all theater artists are interested in this sort of work. What sorts of training and skills do theater artists need to inspire and awaken the creative voice of the community? What "scale" of community involvement can be managed? *Headwaters* involved a cast of 24 to 40 in different years, while *The Passion* directly involved approximately 2,000 people. Anyone who was willing to commit the time to participate was welcome and given an opportunity to get involved. How might your organization invite and manage community members' creative input? These projects were not designed to be ongoing, sustained events, but rather were conceived as one-off or time-limited projects. Must all projects of this type be one-offs, or is there a way to sustain community involvement over a longer period of time?

[i] Personal interview with Lucy Davies, Executive Producer, National Theatre Wales, August 17, 2011.

PARTICIPATORY ARTS EVENTS: CELEBRATING THE ARTIST IN EVERYONE

Drawing by Pete Scully at SketchCrawl in Davis, California, August 2011

Festivals and street fairs that celebrate aspects of specific communities have always been a vibrant part of cultural life, temporarily transforming streets into hotbeds of creative exchange. While festivals are inherently participatory in a sense, many contemporary festivals like Burning Man and Figment are dedicated to participatory arts practice. While not labeled a festival, the SketchCrawl™ movement refashions the essential elements of a festival into a web-facilitated recurring art event.

IMPLICATIONS

The impact of these events is two-fold: the shared experience of participating in the physical crawl, and the impact of web-based documentation of the various crawls, connecting the communities together. How might your organization participate in existing local festivals or fairs? Are there informal art events like SketchCrawl that you can tap into, or start anew? How can active arts programs like this be designed in such a way as to be scalable in terms of impact (i.e., to allow an indefinite number of people to participate)?

SKETCHCRAWL

Every few months, the organizers of SketchCrawl™ post an upcoming weekend date on Sketchcrawl.com for a day-long sketching marathon. Local sketchers take up the call, advertising a meeting place and sketching a route in their local communities. Then, on the same date in communities across the world, sketchers of all levels gather with charcoals, pencils and watercolors to share in the experience of sketching their surroundings and then sharing the fruits of their creativity online through the blogs of Sketchcrawl.com and UrbanSketchers.org.

What started as a personal project in San Francisco by Enrico Casarosa has become a worldwide phenomenon. Casarosa started blogging about his drawing marathons in which he would gather a group of friends to sketch their surroundings in San Francisco and then use web-based resources to share their sketches and experiences. Open to anyone with paper and a pencil, these gatherings are virtually no-cost, with few barriers to participation. Now facilitated by local sketchers who organize community crawls, SketchCrawls happen on the same day every few months across the world. These crawls are minimally organized by volunteers and decidedly not monetized. Rather, they are enacted for the sheer joy of sketching together. A strong web-based community actively posts and contributes to sites like UrbanSketchers.org and Sketchcrawl.com.

STORYTELLING EVENTS: BUILDING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Stoop Storyteller Ian Blumenfeld. Photo by Dan Kempner

Some of the most engaging art events are happening in unlikely places, in novel formats and with surprising participants. Vernacular expressions of art are growing in popularity in many genres. While oral traditions have always existed, the art of storytelling seems to be an especially effective mode of personal and communal expression right now.

IMPLICATIONS

These programs clearly hit a creative nerve, and can generate box office revenue. Why are vernacular expressions of art often considered off limits to professional theater companies? Similarly, why is social dancing outside of the mission of most professional dance companies and presenters? How might your organization tap into the personal experiences of community members in a meaningful way?

THE STOOP STORYTELLING SERIES, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

At each Stoop Storytelling event, seven community participants get seven minutes each to share a true story with an appreciative audience. Having grown in popularity since its founding, the program now regularly sells out the 541-seat Pearlstone Theater at CENTERSTAGE on Monday nights. Centered on a chosen theme, the stories range from epic tales to intimate moments. The storytellers come from all walks of life.

Laura Wexler, one of the founders of the Stoop Storytelling series, isn't sure if she would call her storytelling events "art."[i] But, why not? Art, in the best sense, is a creative illumination of the truths of life that stimulates the senses, emotions and intellect. While the stories may not be polished and the tellers may stumble over their words, the impact of Stoop Storytelling is to celebrate the people and communities of Baltimore, one story at a time.

When originally conceived, the founders of Stoop Storytelling sought out local celebrities to tell stories, but found that audiences and storytellers were most empowered by the stories of ordinary people. There is as little intervention as possible, and the producers consider themselves the midwives of the stories rather than editors. Authenticity and honesty, rather than perfection, lead to successful storytelling, according to Wexler. While only seven people tell their story on any given night, audiences feel like it could be any one of them up on stage. The success of the series has led the producers to partner with a larger performance venue, CENTERSTAGE, and to create a local radio broadcast.

The popularity of these programs in communities across the country is a testament to the desire to tell and hear people's personal stories. The Porchlight Storytelling series takes place monthly in various locations in San Francisco, while FirstPersonArts in Philadelphia hosts an annual Festival of Memoir and Documentary Art. Probably the most recognized storytelling organization, StoryCorps, partners with National Public Radio to record and preserve the stories of everyday people, aiming to touch the lives of every American. These programs are low-cost and low-tech with huge potential impact. The stories of life have the power to connect people of diverse backgrounds, and the sharing of those stories is an empowering experience for both the teller and the listener.

[i] Personal interview with Laura Wexler, July 26, 2011. The other founder is Jessica Henkin.

Photo by JJ Tiziou

VIRTUAL ACTIVATION: PIONEERING THE NEW FRONTIER OF ACTIVE ARTS

Many artists specialize in "network-enabled practice", artistic practice enacted through technological mediums, like those featured in the Networked Performance Blog. These artists and others like New Paradise Laboratories are encouraging and facilitating creative expression through interactive technologies and web-activated artistic programs.

NEW PARADISE LABORATORIES, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

New Paradise Laboratories, an experimental performance company in Philadelphia, is exploring the use of the web to create original online participatory theater programs that can interact with their real-time theater events and stand on their own as web-based art work.

In 2006, when working on a theatre piece involving teenagers, New Paradise Laboratories Artistic Director Whit MacLaughlin noticed that the young actors, who he describes as "Digital Natives," interacted with the world differently than the adult actors. "They thought about bodies in space differently. They could go to their rooms to be activated, reaching out into the world from their bed."[i] This profound generational difference MacLaughlin attributes to two years of using Facebook. This realization inspired New Paradise Laboratories' 2009 production of *Fatebook*, a series of performance parties in which the cyber world and the real world met.[ii]

In *Fatebook*, audiences first encountered the work by "friending" the *Fatebook* characters online. As fictional and real users communicated through *Fatebook's*

[i] Personal interview with NPL Artistic Director Whit MacLaughlin, July 25, 2011.
[ii] For an excellent case study of this program, see the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage website.

CONTINUED: CASE STUDY VIRTUAL ACTIVATION: PIONEERING THE NEW FRONTIER OF ACTIVE ARTS

Photo by JJ Tiziou

social media platforms, they built an ever-expanding theatricalized online community that blurred the line between fiction and reality. Then, during the real-time performance, *Fatebook* users came together, wandering through a labyrinth of screens and performance pockets throughout the theater space. Audience members curated their own theatrical experience, choosing when and where to watch the content and which of the 13 main characters to follow and engage with. Since the launch in July 2009, more than 16,000 people have participated in *Fatebook* online while 1,200 people have participated in the live performance parties.

MacLaughlin's experience using the Internet as a theatrical medium empowered him and his team to further explore the artistic possibilities of the web beyond information dissemination and marketing. NPL is pioneering new theatrical ways of social networking, using the tools of the web as a means of artistic expression. Building upon *Fatebook*, New Paradise Laboratories has now devised FRAME, a re-imagined institutional website that is an online platform for user-generated artistic content. Launched in July 2011 and accessed through New Paradise Laboratories' existing URL, newparadiselaboratories.org, FRAME uses a rotating corps of virtual curator-performers to create "malleable content" that can be shared, mixed, remixed and mutated by anybody. In this way, the organization is creating web-based fictional narratives that can interweave with their realspace performance work.

The point of entry into the online identity of New Paradise Laboratories is an artistic encounter rather than a marketing or informational encounter. New Paradise Laboratories is building a way for artists and the public to interact over time in a curated public/private space, feeding a steady stream of creativity and inspiration.

IMPLICATIONS

While New Paradise Laboratories' work is highly experimental, other, more conventional examples of artists using the web to create artistic content include composer Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir. What are the artistic possibilities of the web beyond marketing and information sharing? How might your organization use the interactivity of the web as an artistic tool that supports your mission, provides an outlet for creativity and broadens your impact?

Bal Moderne at the Watch This Space Festival in London, August 2011. © Watch This Space

PUBLIC DANCE EVENTS: ACTIVATING THE MOVING SPIRIT AND SOCIAL CAMARADERIE

Bal Moderne and the Big Dance are making dance a part of peoples' lives by using professional choreographers, dancers and dance teachers to produce large-scale public dance projects in which anyone can learn and dance together. The choreographies are simultaneously fun and interesting, unintimidating but challenging, personally fulfilling and collectively inspiring. These programs teach people how to execute dance steps, and, more profoundly, they bring communities together in collective acts of kinetic energy.

BAL MODERNE, BRUSSELS

Dance artists and organizations are tapping into a heightened interest in dance through interesting new public dance events. While the United States has many public dance programs like the Ordway Summer Dance Series in St. Paul and the Dance Downtown series at the Music Center; Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, European dance events are taking up the charge to inspire a moving public on a grand scale.

The Bal Moderne commissions contemporary dance choreographers to create short and simple choreographies to teach to crowds of 100 or 30,000. Inspired by the personal fulfillment of mastering dance steps in an unintimidating environment, and by the joyful unity of dancing together that "contributes to the struggle against apathy and isolation," Bal Moderne organizers take the call for concentrated fun very seriously.[i]

[i] Bal Moderne website.

THE BIG DANCE 2012, LONDON

The city of London recently announced "Big Dance 2012," a follow-up to the successful 2010 event. This large-scale, nine-day dance initiative will draw on the talents of numerous dance artists and organizations to instigate public dancing throughout London and the entire United Kingdom. With centralized web-based marketing support, dance projects big and small will be independently produced by a host of organizations and artists. The event is supported through government grants and private foundations.

The central organizing bodies of Bal Moderne and Big Dance act as facilitation platforms from which public dance projects can blossom. They are intentionally designed to allow for an organic scale of impact. In 2000, each of the 19 neighborhoods in Brussels organized a *Bal*. In London, organizers can post their projects on the website and upload video and dance stories. The popularity of both of these programs stems from a history of participatory arts practice in Europe and an appreciation for collective creative expression.

IMPLICATIONS

The atmosphere of the *Bal* and the Big Dance is fun, spontaneous and inclusive of all and yet still maintains a sense of artistry and rigor. Does your community have any public dance events? What dance traditions speak to your community, and how might those traditions align with your artistic work? How might a new dance tradition be started in your community?

Some Assembly Required at the August Wilson Center for African American History
Photo Credit: Martha Rial

CO-CREATION: CURATING UNPREDICTABLE OUTCOMES THROUGH PARTICIPATION

These performance events activate a profound level of interaction between audience and artist, involving the audience in the creative process. The outcome of these performances is dependent on what the participants contribute.

SLEEP NO MORE, PUNCHDRUNK, LONDON AND NEW YORK

More performing artists are exploring ways to give their audience agency and creative control in the performance experience by designing elements of choice and participant expression into the structure of their work. British theatre company PunchDrunk's hugely successful production of *Sleep No More*, a "site-specific Hitchcock-Shakespeare mash-up" now playing to critical acclaim in New York City[i], activates audiences to choose their path as they encounter different characters and performance vignettes while walking through the performance site (e.g., an old hotel, a vacant school).

The Windmill Theatre Company and The Border Project in Adelaide, Australia have developed a handheld Wii-like controller that audience members can use to manipulate the stage action in their production of *Escape from Peligro Island*. Taking the idea of co-creation even further, in 2006 Headlong Dance Theater created *CELL, a performance tour* in which performers guided a single audience/participant through performance encounters in city streets. More recently, New York city-based theater director Gyda Arber created *Red Cloud Rising*, a theatricalized scavenger hunt/adventure game through downtown Manhattan.

[i] Read a New York Times review of the New York production for more information. The production won a 2010-11 Drama Desk award for Unique Theatrical Experience.

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED, ATTACK THEATRE, PITTSBURGH

While the gamification of theater is a relatively new performance phenomenon, artists like Attack Theatre in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, have been developing innovative techniques to activate high levels of participation from their audiences for a number of years. Focusing on the quality of participation rather than the quantity, these artists create intimate pieces that rely on participants to complete the work.

In 1995, Attack Theatre developed Some Assembly Required for an exhibit at the Carnegie Museum of Art and created the structure for a customizable, site-specific dance experience that can be presented in any museum or gallery space with the participation of up to 50 people. In this process/performance, the participants assemble a dance piece in 90 minutes, focusing on two to three works of art in the gallery. Attack Theatre artists take the participants through a line of aesthetic questioning about the physical, qualitative detail in the visual art object of interest. Together, the participants and artists decide where and how those qualities can be transposed into a short choreography.

Having hard-wired participatory arts practice into their artistic and organizational philosophy, the leadership of Attack Theatre is always asking, "Does the audience have a voice, and do they feel a part of the work?"[i] The company has built participatory strategies into its marketing and development work, as well as, including a successful micro-giving campaign called "I ____ Attack Theatre: Fill in our blank." The company is currently developing a "Matrix of Effectiveness" to evaluate its work artistically and organizationally. "Extemporaneous Response" is one of the three dimensions of this assessment model, measuring the extent to which the work demands involvement in the moment.

Photo by JJ Tiziou, *CELL*, Headlong Dance Theater

IMPLICATIONS

In co-creative experiences like these, the artists cede creative control as an inherent part of their own artistic process. They make the creative process not only transparent, but malleable. The unpredictable nature of these events requires flexibility (i.e., allowing for a range of artistic outcomes) as well as intense preparation. How might your organization empower audiences to make choices, shape their own experience, and contribute to the collective experience? What aspects of your creative process can be opened up to the public?

[i] Personal interview with Attack Theatre Associate Director Rebecca Himberger, August 5, 2011.

Photo Credit: Posted to Facebook

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING: BRINGING TOGETHER PROFESSIONALS AND AMATEURS

Orchestras and chamber music groups are responding to demand for more participatory arts experiences by inviting community members to play, sing and create their own music events, both live and digital.

ALL WE DO IS PLAY, PACIFIC SYMPHONY, ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

In a highly competitive and demographically diverse marketplace, the Pacific Symphony, based in Orange County, California, sought a community engagement strategy to broaden public awareness of the orchestra and contribute toward audience development goals. A three-pronged strategy was launched in 2010 under the name *All We Do Is Play*. The suite of three programs includes: *OC Can You Play*, a public performance event, *OC Can You Play with Us*, a Pro-Am concert in which community members play alongside the Pacific Symphony, and *OC Can You Sing*, an amateur singing contest conducted online via uploaded video, in which the finalists perform onstage with the orchestra at a pops concert.

In celebration of the orchestra's "Year of the Piano" in 2010-2011, the *OC Can You Play* event was the brainchild of Kelly Dylla, the orchestra's director of audience engagement, and inspired by artist Luke Jerram's *Play Me, I'm Yours* project in New York City and London. Twenty brightly-painted pianos were placed in public spaces around the community for anyone to play. The orchestra invited community

members to create and publicize their own music events, and upload videos of themselves playing the pianos. The goal was to explore the intersection between music performance and public art, and illustrate the essential role that music plays in everyday life.

With a small budget and enthusiastic organizational support, Dylla pursued strategic partnerships in order to make the project happen. Pianos were donated by Yamaha and Kawai and then painted by local artists. Various community parks, beaches, shopping centers, malls, theatres and senior centers agreed to keep the pianos secure and encourage public playing. More than 80 piano events were created by community members ranging from an homage to John Cage's 4'33" to an original music video by a local band. More than 1,500 people viewed the *OC Can You Play* video contest on the orchestra's website, and the event nearly doubled the organization's normal level of Facebook activity. Media coverage was extremely favorable. Afterwards, the orchestra auctioned off 18 of the 20 pianos on the website BiddingForGood.com. With only a week to publicize the auctions, almost all of the program costs were recouped.

IMPLICATIONS

As orchestras work to forge deeper connections with their communities, participatory programs are on the rise. The Baltimore Symphony's widely publicized Rusty Musicians program, begun in 2010, will continue into 2011. More than 600 amateur musicians jumped at the chance to play onstage with the orchestra. Similarly, the San Francisco Symphony's new Community of Music Makers program, organized as part of its centennial celebration, will include an amateur orchestra, an amateur chorus and a chamber music program. A workshop for singers in June 2011 sold out almost instantly and generated registration fees to help offset costs. While these and other programs aim to activate latent interest in playing music, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Citizen Musician program goes a step further in facilitating connections between musicians (at all levels of proficiency) and community causes such as neighborhood revitalization. Another approach to strengthening ties to the broader community of artists is the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's recent announcement of a formal alliance with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies.

Driving these programs is a subtle but fundamental shift in self-perception from a producer of professional quality arts programs to a facilitator of creative exchange and aesthetic growth, and a growing awareness of the civic leadership role that arts organizations can and must play in their communities. How might you use participatory programs to forge stronger bonds with your community?

Photo Credit: Shannon Schureman

ENGAGING CIVIC VALUES: BUILDING COMMUNITY VITALITY AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Celebrating the community's commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle, this annual competition features 15 teams of community members competing in a timed sculpt-off using recycled materials.

JUNK2GENIUS, DAVIS ART CENTER, DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

Spectators gather to watch as irrigation tubing, old light bulbs and air filters become bicycles, mermaids and other happy little trash creatures. In this annual community event, teams of 10 to 15 artisan gladiators receive a box of recycled materials and race against the clock to create a work of art. Each team can fish in a junk pile for materials, but they have to work fast, because when the bell sounds, a judging panel of well-known local artists names the winner of the "Trophy du Trash," and spectators vote on a People's Choice Award.

The sculptures are then on public display in the Davis Art Center Tsao Gallery as the "Junk2Genius" exhibit for two weeks. Sculpting teams range from local businesses, dinner clubs, schools and soccer teams, as well as individuals, most of whom do not consider themselves artists but come together regardless to create amazingly inventive, complex structures from the most unlikely of materials.

Junk2Genius began as a board-driven fundraising event for the Davis Art Center in an effort to reinvigorate the 50-year-old arts institution, but has

become a flagship event for the development of more intergenerational, community-based programming for the organization. Collaborating with another area arts nonprofit, ReCREATE, to source the material and staff the event, the Art Center recruits local businesses and area schools to sponsor sculpting teams. The event is open to the public and takes place on the lawn outside of the Art Center adjacent to a local park and attracts close to 300 spectators who picnic while they watch the sculpting and vote for their favorite sculpture. In an effort to broaden impact, a do-it-yourself Junk2Genius station will be added in 2011, where anyone can create personal masterpieces out of junk.

While the Art Center has a rich history of fostering creativity in ceramics and visual art, many in the community perceived it as a place for kids to take art classes. Junk2Genius has increased the Center's relevancy in the community by making new connections to core values such as environmental stewardship and civic responsibility, while remaining squarely on-mission. The program generates a surplus through business sponsorships, concessions sales and individual participation fees.

IMPLICATIONS

Junk2Genius is successful because it taps into important civic values. Similarly, SOMArts in San Francisco hosts Feast of Words, a monthly potluck for creative writers that celebrates the multi-cultural neighborhood through food and written word. Taking a different artistic route, Marin Symphony commissioned composer Rob Kapilow to create the *Golden Gate Opus*, soliciting community stories and feedback to create a work celebrating the anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge. What unique aspects of your community might your organization celebrate through participatory programming? Like the Davis Art Center, how might you leverage partnerships in your community to reach new audiences and deepen community ties?

Photo Credit: Scott Beseler

PARTICIPATORY ARTS NETWORKS: ACHIEVING ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

A growing number of local and regional arts agencies are expanding their support for the arts beyond grantmaking and technical assistance. By activating community networks, these agencies are finding new ways to catalyze, mobilize and facilitate creativity and art-making in their communities through participatory arts programs and events.

ARTSWAVE, CINCINNATI, OHIO

In Cincinnati, ArtsWave (formerly known as The Fine Arts Fund) has undergone a major transformation over the last three years, broadening its mission beyond United Way style fundraising to mobilizing creativity in the entire region. *The Arts Ripple Effect*, a study commissioned by ArtsWave, revealed that the value of the arts lies in bringing people together and contributing to the vibrancy of communities. Putting those findings into practice, ArtsWave created the *Annual TaDa*, a participatory public art event designed to broaden public support of the arts through the act of creating and integrating art into the fabric of the community.

For 2010, Margy Waller, ArtsWave vice president of strategic communications and research, and her team created Paint the Street. Through a series of community meetings, partners were identified and two teams of visual artists collaboratively mapped out a street mural covering six blocks of 12th Street in downtown Cincinnati. In a 12-hour period on September 26, 2010, more than 1,500 people grabbed paintbrushes and jointly created a brightly colored, playful street mural. High-quality video documentation of the event helped to communicate the impact to a larger constituency.

ArtsWave also fosters active participation through its interactive website. iSpyArt is a public competition to identify and photograph art in the community. ArtsWave calls it "a digital game celebrating the art-all-around-us." Each month, ArtsWave "commissions" a new show, typically around a theme such as "Moving Art" or "Surprise Art." Community members can upload photos from their computer or use a special iSpyArt iPhone app. The user-generated content then becomes a curated online community art gallery.

IMPLICATIONS

These types of crowd-sourced art-making programs and events are often collaborations between municipal or regional arts agencies, arts organizations, funders, businesses and other community organizations. Other examples include:

- The Neighbourhood Arts Network in Toronto, Canada, a membership organization of more than 350 artists and organizations that supports "community-engaged art-making."
- The Cambridge Arts Council in Massachusetts, which is currently partnering with local organizations to create Breathe Cambridge, a multi-year public art-making experience for youth.
- ArtTakePart.org, a project of Voluntary Arts Ireland and Culture Northern Ireland, that is an online search facility guiding people to the many active arts activities they can enjoy across Northern Ireland.
- People United, a program of the Canterbury Innovation Centre at the University of Kent (United Kingdom) is a "creative laboratory" that explores how the arts can inspire kindness and social change. The program commissions artists to create imaginative new work.

These organizations are building connections between the arts and other community priorities, and increasing the visibility and relevance of the arts by sharing resources. Most of these programs involve a strong virtual presence. While individual arts organizations may serve as catalysts for participatory arts programs, they need not carry the sole burden of financing, producing or promoting these programs.

References and Endnotes

1 Gauntlett, David, Making is Connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0, 2011, Polity Press.

2 Samuel Jones, the British scholar, writes about issues of class, creativity and the history of creative expression in Expressive Lives, 2009, published by Demos.

3 Henry Jenkins' 2006 White Paper Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century defines the key elements, opportunities and challenges of participatory culture.

4 Other researchers use the term "reflexive engagement" to describe arts pedagogy.

5 Other writers use the term "receptive participation" to describe spectating.

6 Bill Ivey writes extensively about the shifting sands of arts participation in America in his book, Arts, Inc., and argues for a greater focus on "the expressive life."

7 New media scholars describe this phenomenon in different ways. Lawrence Lessig describes the shift from "Read-Only" culture to "Read-Write" culture. Joe Karaganis articulates the difference as a shift from "one-to-many" to "many-to-many" transmission. In Macrowikinomics: Rebooting Business and the World, Don Tapscott describes a new pedagogical approach to teaching, transitioning from a broadcast style to a collaborative peer-to-peer style of teaching and learning.

8 While technology has increased cultural access in many ways, studies like "Encouraging Digital Access to Culture" from the United Kingdom's Department of Culture, Media and Sport remind us that there are populations excluded from digital access. Neilson forecasts that one in two Americans will have a smartphone by Christmas 2011.

9 The interactivity and personalization of arts experiences was a focus of Creative New Zealand's 21st Century Arts Conference in July 2011. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, a leading consultancy in the United Kingdom, writes persuasively about interactivity and personalization in This Time It's Personal.

10 Alexa Arena, a Vice President with Forest City in San Francisco, has written on the "participation economy."

11 The breakdown between professional and amateur artists is explored in several chapters of Engaging Art: The Next Great Transformation of America's Cultural Life, co-edited by Steven J. Tepper and Bill Ivey (2007). See Chapter 7, "Artistic Expression in an Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create" by Henry Jenkins and Vanessa Bertozzi. A helpful summary of the collected essays can be found at ArtsJournal.com.

12 In their seminal 2002 study, Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places, Alaka Wali, Rebecca Severson and Mario Longoni state, "Informal arts are an important reservoir of social capital, significant for life-long learning, building civic engagement and strengthening communities." Other studies by Garth Taylor, Pia Moriarty and Carl Grodach highlight the vitality of informal arts practices. More recently, Partners for Livable Communities published Culture Connects All: Rethinking Audiences in Times of Demographic Change, an analysis of the effects of changing demographics on patterns of cultural participation, with a focus on immigrant populations and older adults.

13 See http://www.videogameslive.com/index.php?s=home.

14 The 74 percent figure is drawn from Beyond attendance: A multi-modal understanding of arts participation, National Endowment for the Arts Research Report #54, by Jennifer Novak-Leonard and Alan S. Brown (2011, page 77).

15 For a helpful analysis of the shifting frame of value around the arts, see The Arts Ripple Effect: A Research-Based Strategy to Build Shared Responsibility for the Arts, produced by the Topos Partnership for the Fine Arts Fund (now ArtsWave) in Cincinnati.

16 In describing the strategic value of participation, Nina Simon, author of The Participatory Museum, writes, "Participatory projects can change an institution's image in the eyes of local communities, increase involvement in fundraising, and make new partnership opportunities possible." (2010, page 197).

[17] This diagram is adapted from Creative Community Index: Measuring Progress Toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley, by John Kreidler and Philip J. Trounstine (San Jose, CA: Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley, 2005). The authors define cultural literacy as "fluency in traditions, aesthetics, manners, customs, language and the arts, and the ability to apply critical thinking and creativity to these elements." They define participatory cultural practice as "engagement of individuals and groups in cultural activities in a nonprofessional setting." The authors' original model took the shape of a pyramid, suggesting a linear relationship between the three levels of the ecology.

[18] Significant improvements are planned for the National Endowment for the Arts' 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. Arts Council England and the Australia Council for the Arts have also adopted an expanded framework in their respective national studies.

[19] Several studies point to the dominance of the home as a setting for arts experiences, especially for families with young children. See The Arts Activities of Dallas Independent School District Students, commissioned by Big Thought (2008).

[20] SFJAZZ, presenter of a wide range of music artists in the Bay Area, has studied its audiences at different venues for the past four years, including focus groups with young adults age 18 to 24.

[21] An excellent example of a purpose-built space for "collaborative creative interaction" is 4833 rph, a 1600 sq. foot portion of the Hyde Park Art Center, near Chicago. This multipurpose area hosts curated community programs but also serves as an art library and resource center, exhibition space, meeting room and general community space.

[22] Several recent studies delve into digital arts participation. In Beyond Live: Digital Innovation in the Performing Arts, authors Hasan Bakhshi, Juan Mateos-Garcia and David Throsby discuss how digital technologies have produced seismic changes in consumer expectations and behavior, and how social media platforms are becoming more important as venues for the discovery and discussion of creative content. Jonathan Drori assesses digital content opportunities in the cultural sector in Encouraging Digital Access to Culture. In 2011, the Australia Council for the Arts released a pair of studies that take stock of online engagement: Arts Audiences Online and Arts Organisations Online, and developed Connecting://arts audience online, a website resource for the Australian arts groups.

[23] Researchers approach community vitality with a variety of methodologies in various communities. Taylor and Wali have focused on Chicago neighborhoods, while Moriarty, Alvarez, Borrup, Kreidler and Troustine have focused on Silicon Valley. Stern and Seifert synthesize much of the regionally-focused research and advocate for a "cultural cluster perspective" in From Creative Economy to Creative Society. In 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts published Creative Placemaking by Anne Markusen and Anne Gadwa, a white paper for the Mayors' Institute on City Design that discusses the integration of art and civic life. Pia Moriarty discusses issues of demographic change, immigration and participatory arts practice in "Participatory Arts: The Stranger Brings the Gift," commissioned by The San Francisco Foundation and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund through support from The Wallace Foundation, 2008.

[24] Of Holden's many papers on culture, Democratic Culture: Opening Up the Arts to Everyone, written in 2008 for Demos, is most germane to this discussion. He refers to three spheres of culture: publicly funded culture, commercial culture, and homemade culture "which extends from the historic objects and activities of folk art, through to the post-modern punk garage band and the YouTube upload."

[25] The Wallace Foundation commissioned Gifts of the Muse, which can be downloaded for free in electronic format.

[26] The Arts Education Partnership maintains an online library of publications, some of which discuss the benefits of arts learning.

[27] Jerald, Craig D., Defining a 21st Century Education, The Center for Public Education, 2009.

[28] The 2008 Cultural Engagement Index report, commissioned by Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, explores the relationship between aggregate measures of cultural engagement and specific forms of civic engagement, including voting, attending religious services, having a library card, etc.

[29] Based on the idea that arts and civic engagement go hand in hand, the city of San Jose has developed: "Cultural Connection: City of San Jose's Cultural Plan for 2011-2020."

[30] Philadelphia Cultural Engagement Index, a longitudinal study of patterns of cultural engagement commissioned by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance; research conducted by WolfBrown.

[31] NEA Research Report #54, Beyond attendance: A multi-modal understanding of arts participation, by Jennifer Novak-Leonard and Alan S. Brown, 2011, page 59.

[32] How Dance Audiences Engage: Summary Report from a National Survey of Dance Audiences, 2011, commissioned by Dance/USA with funding support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation; research conducted by WolfBrown. Forty-two dance presenters and companies participated in the study. Across the aggregated base of ticket buyers, one in five are "Active or Serious Dancers" (people who "regularly" take dance lessons, perform in front of live audiences or choreograph), and two in five are "Social Dancers" (people who dance socially, either regularly or occasionally).

[33] In a 2002 Knight Foundation study of ticket buyers across 15 orchestras, three-quarters of respondents, on average, reported having some experience playing a musical instrument or singing at any point in the past. See Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study, 2002, commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, conducted by Audience Insight LLC.

[34] Intrinsic Impact: How Audiences and Visitors are Transformed by Cultural Experiences in Liverpool, 2011, commissioned by the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium, research conducted by Baker Richards and WolfBrown.

[35] In the Dance/USA study, for example, the average age of respondents who were classified as "Active or Serious Dancers" was 43, compared to an average age of 50 for respondents who were classified as "Social Dancers." This compares to an average age of 56 for all other respondents (i.e., not dancers).

[36] This was a major finding of The James Irvine Foundation 2008 study, Cultural Engagement in California's Inland Regions, which investigated patterns of cultural engagement in the San Joaquin Valley and the Inland Empire.

[37] Nick Rabkin discusses the relationship between arts education and adult participation in National Endowment for the Arts Research Report #52, Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation.

[38] One of New York's hottest tickets in 2010 was "Gatz," a staged reading of The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald, an Elevator Repair Service production presented by the Public Theatre, with a run time of six hours and 30 minutes.

[39] The Music Center/Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County's Active Arts® program is widely regarded as a breakthrough in participatory arts programming.

[40] We are indebted to numerous colleagues in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia for sourcing examples of active arts programs, and especially to bloggers Ian David Moss and Thomas Cott for their assistance. We regret the omission of many, many excellent programs that will surface after this paper is released.

[41] Sometimes the line is blurry, however. Consider the theatregoer who reads a script aloud with friends before attending a performance. Most certainly, this is an "expressive act" and would count as participatory arts practice. But, it may also serve as a form of "enhanced engagement" if the reading of the script serves to boost the audience member's enjoyment of an upcoming performance. Contrast this to reading a synopsis of an upcoming play or opera, or viewing an online video of an artist talking about an upcoming exhibition. These are receptive, not expressive acts, and therefore would not count as participatory arts practice.

[42] Established performing artists like Liz Lerman, Bill T. Jones, Moises Kaufman and Anna Deveare Smith have been sourcing performance material from the public for decades.

[43] A number of university performing arts presenters, with funding support through the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program (funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation) are working with artists on a range of co-creation projects. Some of these projects involve student and faculty input into newly commissioned work.

[44] Hannah Rudman speaks about organizational porosity, co-creation and technology in this recorded video message to Project Audience in 2009.

[45] The Five Modes of Arts Participation framework originated in The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation, commissioned by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, 2004.

[46] Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir is an example of crowd-sourcing artistic content in the interpretive mode (i.e., thousands of singers recorded themselves performing a vocal part, which became part of a larger artistic work).

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