



**Connecticut Commission on  
Culture and Tourism**

# **The Values Study**

*Rediscovering the Meaning  
and Value of Arts Participation*

Made possible by The Wallace Foundation's State Arts  
Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) Program

July 2004



Alan S. Brown & Associates LLC

**Connecticut Commission on  
Culture and Tourism**

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Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism  
755 Main Street, One Financial Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103  
Telephone: (860) 566-4770



## **The Values Study**

Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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### **Abstract**

The Values Study was an organic, participatory learning experience for teams of board and staff members representing 20 Connecticut arts organizations. During the autumn of 2003, each team conducted five individual depth interviews with randomly-recruited program participants, and synthesized what they learned through a step by step process that culminated in a statewide meeting on November 17, 2003. The process was designed to juxtapose existing programs with consumer values, and sparked a statewide discussion about mission, relevance and public value. Participants acquired interviewing skills and learned the benefits and challenges of qualitative research. Many ideas for innovative programs and projects spun out of this dialogue, several of which were funded through a follow-up grant program from July 2004 to December 2005. The study's most important outcome is not this report, but a new level of understanding of the complexity of arts participation in Connecticut, and new frameworks for thinking about how consumers engage in and benefit from arts activities.

#### A Note About Replication

This report was written primarily for the benefit of those who might replicate the study, in whole or in part, in their communities or within their organizations as a board/staff development exercise. With this in mind, the third section contains the Participant's Handbook, a comprehensive guide to the study process and research methods employed, including all protocols and discussion guides. All rights are reserved by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and Alan S. Brown & Associates LLC. For information about using these materials or conducting a similar study in your area, contact Alan Brown at 203-259-7219.

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*The Arts Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism is the state's arts agency. It was formerly known as the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.*

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### **Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism**

## **Welcome Message**

*Dear Friends,*

*Welcome to the Values Study. This report represents the collective work of twenty Connecticut arts organizations and the Commission on Culture and Tourism. Our goal was to learn more about why people participate in the arts.*

*The Study provides a new vocabulary with which to describe the multi-dimensional aspects of creativity and the complex set of values surrounding artistic engagement. It points out the ways in which the arts inspire our citizens, attract our visitors and enliven our communities.*

*The Study uncovered connections between consumer values and program innovation that will enhance the Commission's grant-making strategies and improve its relationships with grantees and the public.*

*The Values Study was made possible by the Wallace Foundation's State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) initiative. Instead of simply looking at how state arts agencies might help arts organizations increase participation, START has focused on the public value of a state arts agency and its central role in building cultural participation.*

*We are enormously grateful to Wallace – in particular, Michael Moore, Director of Arts Programs, and his team – for their leadership in investigating the relationship between public value and arts participation. We are proud that our Values Study is contributing to this dialogue.*

*Thanks also to the twenty teams of arts organizations that made the 100 interviews possible, for their diligence and enthusiasm in working as co-partners in this venture. Special thanks to consultants Bitsie Clark and Alan Brown for their wisdom, vision, guidance, and facilitation.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jennifer Aniskovich  
Executive Director*

*An-Ming Truxes  
Director, Arts Division*



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## **Participating Organizations**

The Values Study was a participatory learning experience commissioned by the State of Connecticut's Commission on Culture and Tourism as part of the Commission's grant through the Wallace Foundation's START program. The following 20 cultural organizations were partners in the study.

### **Visual Arts**

Artspace, Inc. (New Haven) - *Kate Paranteau, Helen Kauder, Elinor Buxton*

Arts Council of Greater New Haven - *Betty Monz, Paula Armbruster, Manuel Rivera*

Creative Arts Workshop (New Haven) - *Susan Smith, Rusti Icenogle, Tom Griggs*

Mattatuck Museum (Waterbury) - *Kjell Wangensteen, Marie Galbraith, Christine Jewell*

Silvermine Guild Arts Center (New Canaan) - *Pamela Gallagher, Cindy Clair, Penny Putnam*

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (Hartford) - *Emilie de Brigard, Cindy Weiss, Claire Matthews, Pat Faulds*

### **Music**

Chamber Music PLUS (Hartford) - *Johannes Neuer, Don Carso, Harry Clark*

Connecticut Choral Society - *Lucinda Hunt-Stowell, Alice Seymour*

Neighborhood Music School (New Haven) - *Michelle Maitland, Larry Zukof, Carol Ross, Linda Burt*

Stamford Symphony Orchestra (Stamford) - *Barbara Soroca, Nick Rudd, Elaine Carroll*

Westport Arts Center (Westport) - *Nancy Diamond, Eileen Wiseman, Herb Meyers*

### **Dance**

Center for the Arts – Wesleyan University (Middletown) - *Barbara Ally, Pamela Tatge, Kristen Olson*

Music and Arts Center for Humanity (Bridgeport) - *Denise Mallard, Alan Fox, Shawna Johnson, Elsa Sapien*

Nutmeg Conservatory (Torrington) - *Sara Zordan, Sharon Dante, Kent Humphrey*

Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium (Hartford) - *Rhonda Patman, Christine Dixon-Smith, Silas Shannon*

### **Theater**

Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts (Hartford) - *Carolyn Hebert, Tod Kallenbach, Ronna Reynolds*

CAPA/Shubert Theater (New Haven) - *Ian Solomon, Kathleen Sloan, Anthony Lupinacci, Bridget Carmichael*

Curtain Call (Stamford) - *Peter Barbieri, Lou Ursone, Brent McKinley*

Long Wharf Theatre (New Haven) - *Randy Voit, Michael Stotts, Robin Sauerteig*

Stamford Theatre Works (Stamford) - *Miriam Shaw, Steve Karp, Larry Frenock*



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**Connecticut Commission on  
Culture and Tourism**

**The Values Study  
Part 1: Overview**

*A New Approach to Learning  
About Arts Participation*

Made possible by The Wallace Foundation's State Arts  
Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) Program

July 2004

Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism  
755 Main Street, One Financial Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103  
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### **Overview**

The Values Study was conceived as part of a larger process of strengthening arts participation in the State of Connecticut, made possible by a grant through the Wallace Foundation's START program (State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation).<sup>1</sup>

The Values Study was a participatory learning process that sparked a new conversation about the value of art and the landscape of arts participation in Connecticut. Teams of arts administrators and board members from 20 Connecticut arts groups conducted individual depth interviews with a small number of their own program participants and nonusers in an effort to glimpse the world of arts participation through the eyes of their constituents. The study was designed and facilitated by Alan Brown. An-Ming Truxes and Frances Clark of the Arts Division provided essential support throughout.

The Values Study was unusual in that responsibility for data gathering fell to the client, not the consultant. Instead of hiring a consultant to conduct the research and make a report, the consultant designed a process in which the client (e.g., Connecticut arts administrators) gathered data and synthesized. The consultant's role was one of facilitation and provocation. A complete description of the study process appears in the third section of this report, along with copies of the various protocols and discussion outlines, and a rationale statement that places the study context with other research.

The Values Study generated a large volume of data, including over 600 responses to a lengthy online arts participation survey, written "arts participation profiles" of 100 Connecticut citizens (40 of which appear in Part 2 of this report), synthesis documents for each of the 20 organizations, values discussions for each of the four artistic disciplines investigated (e.g., music, dance, theater and the visual arts), and a final presentation that boils everything down into a few key thoughts.

The essential value of the study, however, derives from the process itself: the interviewing skills acquired; strengthened relationships between board and staff members; a sense of common purpose across organizations and disciplines, a heightened sense of collegiality and, most of all, a fresh perspective on why people participate in arts activities and how the infrastructure of nonprofit arts organizations connects with – or in some cases doesn't – the value systems surrounding different arts activities.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2001, Connecticut was one of thirteen state arts agencies that received multi-year grants from Wallace to participate in START and develop new and more effective strategies that will broaden, deepen, and diversify local cultural participation. Specifically, the goal of the START program is to create standards, practices and capacities that enhance public participation in the arts.





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The participatory nature of the study allowed for a high level of dialogue and learning. It is one thing for arts managers and board members to read research reports and attend presentations on arts participation, and another thing entirely for them to hear their own constituents speak directly about how arts activities fit into their lives and what they value about arts participation. The information resonates in a way that is not possible through other means of dissemination.

By the end of the study, board and staff members of Connecticut arts institutions were learning from each other, peer-to-peer. The final meeting in Hartford on November 17, 2003 was an intense exchange about the value of art to individuals and to society as a whole. How often do arts leaders get together and talk about art, mission and relevance? Not often enough, if this study was an indication.

The Values Study was more than a conversation about art, however. The process was designed to confront arts managers and board members with a juxtaposition, however dissonant, between their existing programs and consumer needs and wants. For example, what are the programmatic implications to arts groups of the very significant value that consumers derive from home-based arts activities? The ensuing discussion cuts to the heart of mission, relevance and institutional identity.

As a result, the Values Study generated a substantial set of innovative ideas for how nonprofit arts organizations can achieve greater relevance in their communities. A small number of these ideas were funded through a follow-up granting process made possible through the Wallace Foundation's START program.

The policy implications of the Value Study are significant for the State of Connecticut, as well. The State's Arts Division has a new framework for building public value around arts activities – a holistic framework centered around benefits to the individual rather than one that responds to the artistic vision and financial needs of arts organizations.

In short, the Values Study was an organic, participatory learning experience for arts administrators and board members. The study's most important outcome is not this report, but a new level of clarity and understanding of the complexity of arts participation in Connecticut that lives in the hearts and minds of those who participated.

It is the sincere hope of the authors that the materials in this document will be useful to other arts agencies, funders and institutions as they seek to elevate the conversation in their communities about arts participation and public value.



### Red Threads

*An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle but will never break.* - Chinese folk tale

The following themes or “red threads” capture the essence of what was learned through the Values Study. These are not conclusions based on statistical analysis, but rather grounded theories synthesized from 100 individual depth interviews.

1. In the eyes of the consumer, we are all part of an inter-related arts ecosystem – a continuum of involvement opportunities across the disciplines that occur in a range of settings. The five modes of arts participation are inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational and ambient.
2. The more creative control you have over an artistic experience, the more value it can yield. Inventive and interpretive arts participation creates value for others, as well as yourself.
3. Many people derive a great deal of value from collecting or “curating” art for their private use, including music, crafts and fine art. Collected art often takes on the added symbolic value of one’s life experiences. Not a lot of nonprofits are active in this mode of participation.
4. Value to the individual is not necessarily dependent on the level of knowledge, technical skill or competency with the art form.
5. Many people who are very talented and creative do not consider themselves to be “artists.” It seems that a lot of people have a low regard for their own artistic abilities, even if they are highly creative. This raises a key question: How can we build value around creativity, so that art-making at any level of skill is encouraged, valued and respected in our communities?
6. In almost every interview, we witnessed the impact of childhood arts experiences on adult participation and overall quality of life. The importance of arts experiences for children is a value that transcends politics, race and class. If this is such a deeply held value, then why are such scant resources devoted to arts education?
7. Some people are attuned to the intrinsic aesthetic value of their surroundings. They appreciate the compositional elements of just about any object or vision: color, form, texture, contrast, etc. They see the art of nature, and notice and appreciate the subtleties and nuances of design. This “aesthetic awareness” enhances their lives enormously.
8. Many people have latent or “unactualized” interests in various art forms and activities. One might infer that our communities would benefit from



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- more “low-threshold success opportunities” to explore and awaken more of our collective creative potential.
9. Some people access one art form through another art form that is more familiar to them. For example, visually-oriented people appreciate the visual aspects of a theater production (i.e., lighting, sets and costumes), while language-oriented people talk about the story. Art forms that appeal to “multiple intelligences” (e.g., musical theater) attract more people because they are accessible from different intelligences (i.e., kinetic, musical, visual, narrative).<sup>2</sup>
  10. Authenticity is a core value for some people, who are attracted to the “realness” of art, be it folk art, art of indigenous peoples, historically accurate settings, and personal connections with artists. Some people go out of their way for authentic arts experiences, and arts experiences in unusual settings.
  11. A small number of people seek a high level of risk and provocation in their arts activities (e.g., “I want to be disturbed”). These people are more likely to be arts omnivores – very interested in multiple art forms.
  12. Personal connections with artists can bridge a relevance gap and ignite latent arts interests and inspire participation.
  13. Parents, especially during their early child-rearing years, often don't have time for self-guided arts activities and shift their focus to facilitating their children's arts participation – which is sometimes their only connection to the arts for a long while. Retirement is seen by some as an opportunity to re-awaken old arts interests and to cultivate new ones.

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<sup>2</sup> *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, by Howard Gardiner, 1983.



## **Study Methodology**

The study was designed as a participatory learning experience for Connecticut arts administrators and board members, drawing on the technique of individual depth interviewing. Twenty organizations completed the study. A copy of the Participant's Handbook, including all the various protocols and discussion guides, appears in section three of this report.

Fifteen of the twenty participating organizations were selected to receive support from the study consultant, based on geography and budget size. Support included assistance with recruitment and facilitation of a synthesis meeting following completion of the interviews. Additionally, the study consultant, along with representatives from the State, observed approximately 40 interviews in all corners of the state, and led debriefing sessions immediately afterwards.

A summary of the study methodology follows:

1. Orientation Meeting. The Arts Division conducted a statewide study orientation meeting on July 17, 2003 in New Haven. Prior to the meeting, the entire study was conceptualized and a Participant's Handbook was written. Teams of three people from a cross-section of Connecticut arts organizations attended the orientation meeting, including at least one board member (required). The meeting included a discussion of the study process, a presentation on existing knowledge about "The Why of Arts Participation," a presentation on interviewing techniques by Rebecca Severson, an anthropologist with the Field Museum in Chicago, and two rounds of practice interviews. At the conclusion of the orientation meeting, teams were prepared to head back to their communities to recruit interviewees and conduct the interviews.
2. Role Assignments. Three roles were defined for each team: the interviewer (usually the staff CEO), who led the conversations, the recorder (usually a board member), whose job was to take notes during the conversation, and the recruiter (usually another staff member), who took responsibility for recruitment and logistics. More information about these roles appears in the Participants' Handbook.
3. Recruitment. Each organization recruited five interviewees based on their responses to an online pre-recruitment survey. The goal was to select individuals representing a range of involvement levels with the institution, including both high-frequency users and nonusers who are culturally active. During the interviews, information from the online survey was used by the interviewer to probe the respondent's various arts activities. Interviewees were required to sign a Consent Release form.
4. Interviews. Interviews were conducted across the state, usually at the participating organization's office, although a variety of other settings were used including coffee houses, restaurants and focus group facilities.



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Each organization was furnished with a customized interview protocol consisting of three sections: 1) an initial section exploring the respondent's various connections to the arts, 2) a section that hones in on the discipline of interest, and 3) a section that explores the respondent's relationship with the specific organization.

5. Debriefing. Whenever possible, the study consultant or a representative from the State's Arts Division attended the first interview, to observe and provide process feedback to the teams, and also to facilitate a debriefing session immediately afterwards. These facilitated debriefing sessions proved to be very useful in terms of generating hypotheses and other ideas about arts participation. At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were photographed digitally.
6. Written Profiles. Within 24 hours of the interview, the interviewer and the recorder co-authored a one-page written profile of each interviewee. The general idea was to capture the spirit of the conversation while the details were still fresh in mind.
7. Team Synthesis Meetings. After all five interviews were completed, the study team held a synthesis meeting, the purpose of which was to summarize each interview and discuss themes. Most of the synthesis meetings were facilitated by the study consultant. The product of each of these meetings was seven-page PowerPoint presentation, which served as a written summary of the five interviews. Two lists were produced during the synthesis meeting, a list of "grounded theories" (i.e., hypotheses that are supported by research data) and a list of meanings and values associated with the discipline.
8. Discipline Meetings. Four discipline meetings were held, one each for music, dance, theater and visual arts organizations. At the discipline meetings, two people from each organization discussed one interview each, while a photograph of the interview subject was projected onto a screen. Following these presentations, the study consultant facilitated a discussion about the range of participation levels for that discipline, and the associated meanings and values.
9. Final Meeting. A final statewide meeting was held on November 17, 2003 in Hartford. Rotating through the four disciplines, a representative from each of the 20 organizations was given three minutes to summarize key observations from the interviews and to comment on the study process. A limited amount of discussion followed each discipline. The first part of the day concluded with a summary of the entire study by the consultant. The second half of the program was devoted to generating a list of ideas for innovative programs and projects growing out of the study, and for reviewing grant guidelines.



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### Limitations of the Data

The Values Study was a qualitative research effort involving a very limited number of personal interviews. Five interviews were conducted by each of the 20 participating organizations, for a total of 100 interviews. Results are not statistically representative of any population, although many themes emerged. The value of the data lies in its depth, not in its breadth or statistical validity.

Generally, interviewees were recruited from within each organization's known universe of visitors, class participants or ticket buyers, although some organizations recruited nonusers from outside of their known constituency. Some level of randomness was achieved in recruiting interviewees within the constituent base of each organization.

Although numerous interviews were conducted with people of color, the number of these interviews was not proportionate to census estimates for the population of Connecticut. It was not a goal of the study to achieve representative demographics in the respondent pool, although an effort was made ensure some level of diversity with respect to age, income, race and geography.

Most of the data represents the viewpoints and life experiences of people who are involved – and in some cases extremely involved – in organized arts activities. Very few people whose cultural participation takes place entirely outside of the infrastructure of nonprofit arts groups were interviewed, although many people reported active participation in arts activities at home, and in churches and schools. A companion study to this one would investigate the values surrounding arts participation among people who are not connected to nonprofit arts groups.



### Process Lessons

The Values Study was an experiment in collaborative, experiential learning. The process lessons that follow reflect the experience of the study consultant and are not the result of a formal evaluation. They are offered for the benefit of those who might consider replicating the study in some form or another.

1. Even though only five interviews were conducted by each team, the total investment of time and energy on the part of participating organizations was much greater than anyone imagined. On the other hand, the financial investment in the study, not counting the value of everyone's time, was quite modest.
2. The interviews were organized in three sequential cycles. This iterative approach to study design allowed for mid-course process and content corrections, which benefited subsequent cycles. The iterative design of the study was beneficial in other ways: with each conversation, the interviewers got substantially better at interviewing; each conversation was informed by themes from the previous conversations such that the amount of learning increased across the five interviews; the stepwise design of the synthesis process (i.e., debriefing sessions after each interview, a team synthesis meeting, the discipline meetings, and the final statewide meeting) brought more and more context to each organization's discovery process and allowed for cross-fertilization of ideas across organizations; the consultant's understanding of the process improved with each cycle (e.g., the interview protocols were improved after each cycle, the agenda for the discipline meetings was refined after each one); and the conceptual models described in the next section were repeatedly tested and, in fact, evolved substantially. Future studies of a similar nature will benefit from iterative data collection and cumulative synthesis.
3. The conversations were deep and revealing – and at times emotional. In a comfortable and respectful environment, most people opened up with little hesitation. Of course there were exceptions. The skill of the interviewer had much to do with the quality of the conversation. Some people came to their interview with a pre-determined set of ideas (i.e., an agenda) to communicate.
4. Learning occurred on a peer basis, both within and across institutions. At the discipline meetings and final statewide meeting, people were prepared to perform in front of their peers. In hindsight, the peer dynamic was an essential ingredient in the study. The dynamic between board members and staff members within each team also tended to raise the bar in terms of effort level and quality of thinking.
5. Teams of board and staff members from different arts groups were on equal footing going into the study. This had the effect of democratizing the conversation about arts participation. In fact, some of the greatest



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contributions came from those associated with small organizations. The contributions of board members were particularly noteworthy.

6. The accumulated knowledge and experience of the investigators (i.e., board and staff members) was more significant to the overall success of the study than the data itself. The data served as a lightning rod for discussion. The knowledge and experience of the investigators was the prism through which data were refracted, analyzed and synthesized. Because of their qualifications, the investigators were able to hear things that respondents were trying to say but couldn't, and things that they said but didn't mean. Many of the interviews danced around the subconscious.
7. Individual depth interviewing takes practice, but the learning curve is speedy with an appropriate amount of training, feedback and experience. Almost everyone has conversation skills, and many people pride themselves on their conversation skills. Depth interviewing is really just disciplined conversation. As such, it is an accessible research technique for arts administrators.
8. The Values Study was a heavily facilitated process. A great deal of the value to participants happened through interactions with each other and with the study support team. The relatively small geographical area encompassed by the State of Connecticut made it possible for the study support team to appear for interviews and meetings across the state. This might not be the case in other situations. Future studies of a similar nature should be designed with this in mind.



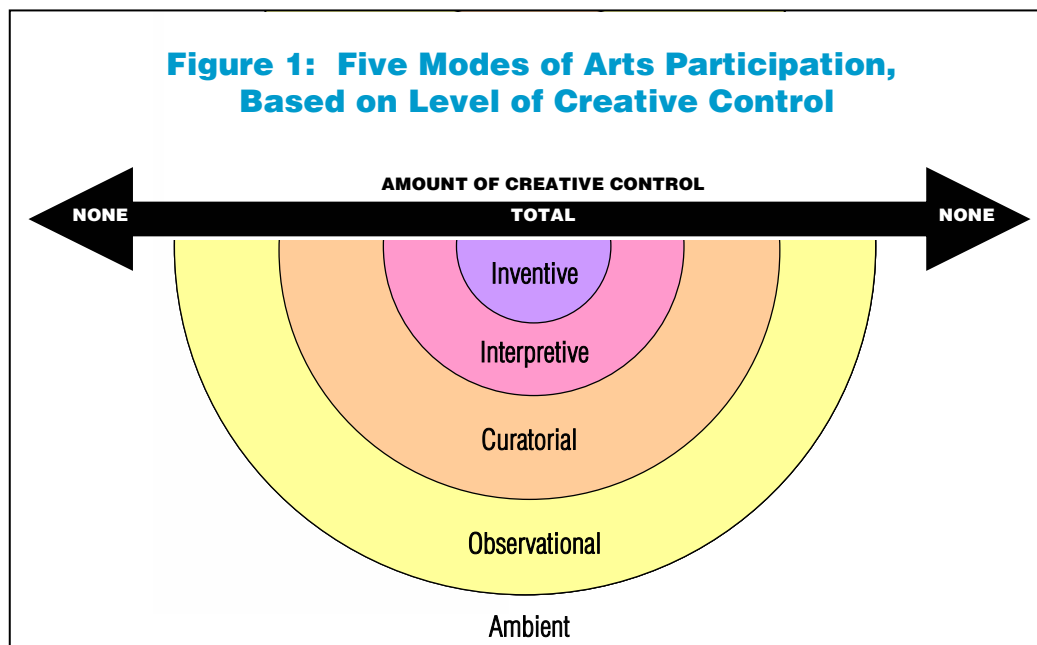


## Mapping An Individual's Arts Activities: Towards A New Conceptual Framework

What does the universe of potential arts activities look like to an individual? If we could map the answer to this question in a two-dimensional conceptual space, it would be possible to understand how individuals construct their total arts experience. We might be able to see connections between art forms and patterns of involvement across the art forms. Moreover, such a framework could be used as a policy tool – to evaluate the supply of arts opportunities in a given community and to understand how arts activities offered by specific institutions fit in to a larger picture. Gaps in the supply of arts programs could be identified on a methodical basis, as well as opportunities.

### Five Modes of Arts Participation

During the course of the 100 interviews conducted during the Values Study, respondents discussed their involvement in myriad arts activities. At the four discipline meetings, lists were made of the various types of arts activities within each discipline. Across the disciplines studied, five fundamentally different types of arts activities can be discerned, as illustrated in Figure 1, based on the relative amount of creative control exercised by the individual.





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1. Inventive Arts Participation engages the mind, body and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic, regardless of skill level.
2. Interpretive Arts Participation is a creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing works of art, either individually or collaboratively.
3. Curatorial Arts Participation is the creative act of purposefully selecting, organizing and collecting art to the satisfaction of one's own artistic sensibility.
4. Observational Arts Participation encompasses arts experiences that an individual selects or consents to, motivated by some expectation of value.
5. Ambient Arts Participation involves experiencing art, consciously or subconsciously, that is not purposefully selected – art that “happens to you.”

These five modes of participation transcend discipline, genre, cultural context and skill level. The framework is equally useful in describing vastly different arts activities. For example, downloading holiday music from the Internet and burning your own CD compilation would be classified as curatorial arts participation, as would collecting museum-quality art for home display. The amount of creative control exercised over these two different activities is the commonality.

During the Values Study interviews, it became obvious that characterizing arts participation as either “active” or “passive” was overly simplistic and inaccurate. Some people are passionately consumed by observational participation (e.g., attending concerts), while some of the people who make art are relatively detached from its meaning. In other words, the centrality of an arts activity to an individual is not always a function of the level of creative control.

Neither is centrality a function of skill level. Numerous respondents spoke of the great joy and satisfaction they derive from arts activities in which they have little training or technical knowledge. Later, we will discuss different levels of meaning that are possible with increased knowledge and skill. But in defining modes of arts participation, we must be careful not to make value judgments about the validity or worth of arts experiences based on skill level.

Given this framework, it is possible to map the various types of music, dance, theater and visual arts activities described by respondents during the Values Study interviews (see Figure 2 – Involvement Opportunities). In the center of the diagram are inventive activities for each discipline, and at the periphery of the diagram are ambient activities associated with each discipline. Unfortunately, it was not possible to extend the study to other arts disciplines such as media arts and literature, but one can easily imagine them as additional sectors in the Figure 2 diagram.

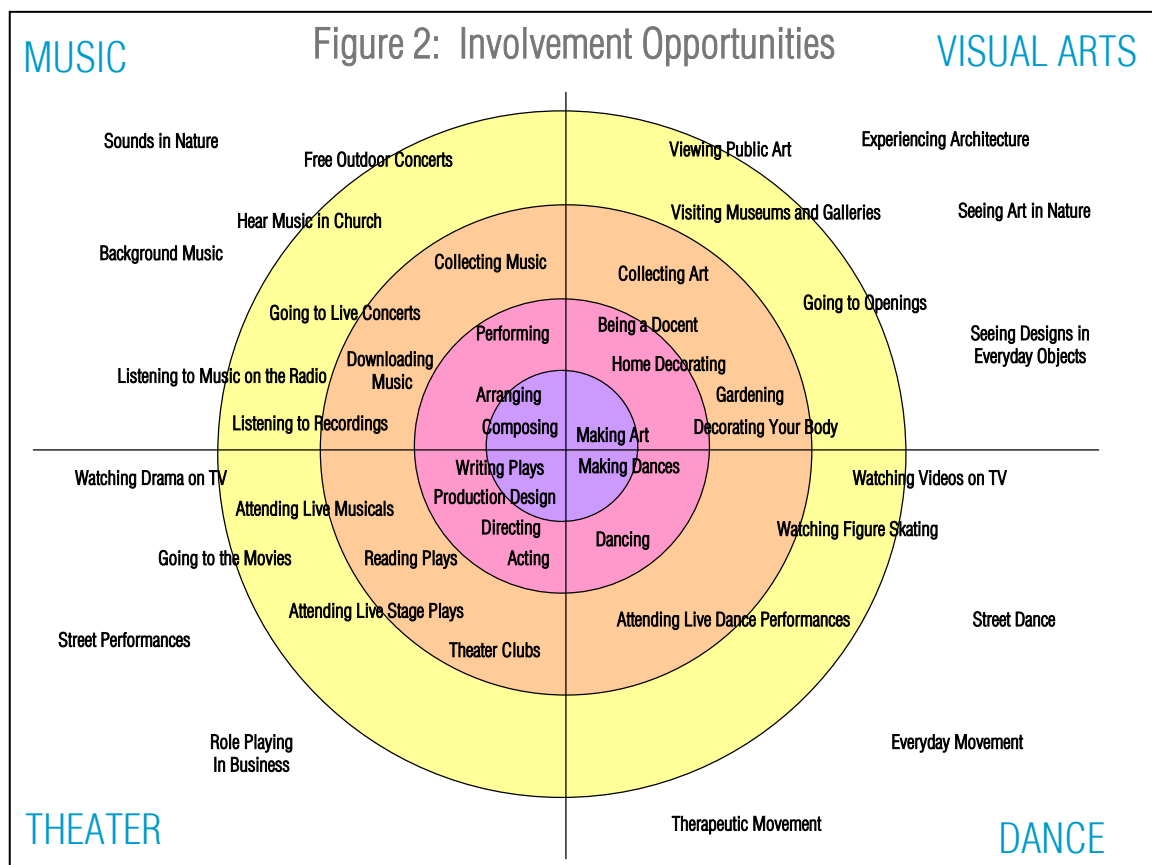
Imagine using this Involvement Framework to inventory the availability of arts activities in a specific community. One might discover, for example, an



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abundance of interpretive involvement opportunities in music but not dance. Similarly, one might find that curatorial arts activities, which are so meaningful to people, tend to happen outside the infrastructure of nonprofit arts organizations. What would be the policy implications of such a finding? It is not difficult to see the potential for such an analysis to inform cultural policy at the community level.



The Involvement Framework also holds potential value for arts institutions. Can you place your institution's program offerings into this framework? What modes of participation do you offer? What are some involvement opportunities that you don't currently offer that you might offer in order to tap into new veins of meaning and relevance in your community?

Lastly, the Involvement Framework can also be used to map the totality of an individual's arts participation at a given moment in time and, by extension, to understand how an individual's arts participation changes over time. It might also be helpful as a framework for understanding differences in patterns of arts participation across cultural groups.



## **Values Surrounding Arts Participation**

The primary objective of the Value Study was to gain new perspective on “The Why of Arts Participation” – why do people participate in arts activities? What value do they seek from the experience? What benefits do they reap? Nearly everyone understands that arts participation is beneficial at some level, although few people – including many arts managers and board members – can articulate more than a few general ideas as to how it is beneficial.

In an effort to “speak the language” of politicians and businesses, arts advocates learned to justify their programs in terms of economic impact: job creation, ancillary spending, incremental tax revenue, etc. Notwithstanding the grain of truth in the economic impact argument, it is tangential, at best, as justification for investments in the cultural health of a community. Advancement efforts are severely handicapped by a “void of germane metrics” – a cohesive and compelling value framework that justifies the real worth of arts activities in simple terms that anyone can understand.

If asked, how many arts managers or board members could answer the question “How are you different after seeing a live performance than you were beforehand?” How many public officials with budget authority over arts agencies could answer that question? The arts industry suffers for lack of a simple value framework that communicates our worth to society and to the individuals we serve.

Researching the meaning and value of arts participation is difficult because much of the action happens at the subconscious level which, of course, most people can't talk about. Advanced qualitative research techniques have been used successfully to uncover the labyrinth of subconscious constructs surrounding arts participation, although this knowledge has yet to find practical application in the field on any sort of a widespread basis.<sup>3</sup> While the Values Study relied on a relatively simple data collection method to gather information (i.e., the personal interview), the knowledge generated was informed by a great deal of experience with the subject matter.

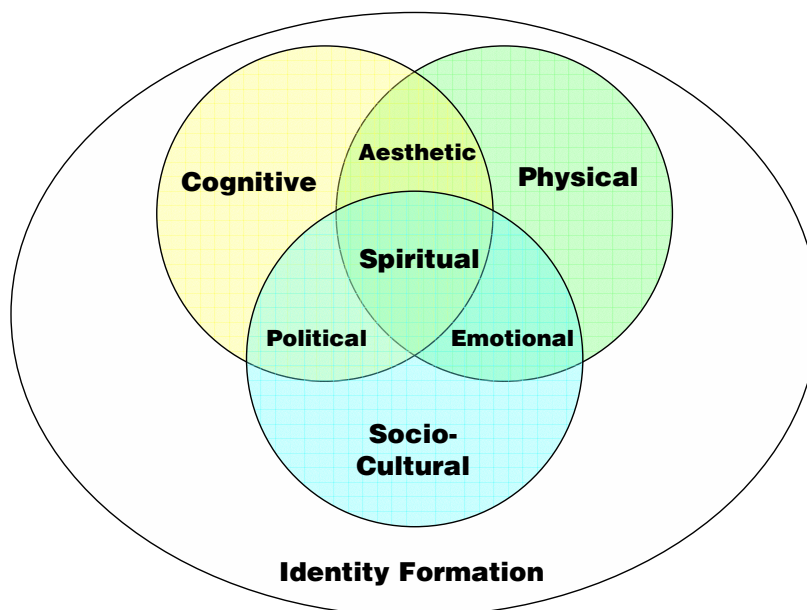
A synthesis of the long lists of meanings and values produced by each of the 20 Values Study teams suggests eight different value clusters associated with arts participation, as illustrated in Figure 3. A Venn Diagram was employed to illustrate the value clusters, because it depicts the dynamic and overlapping relationships between them. A short description of the eight value clusters follows.

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<sup>3</sup> Of particular note is the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), a proprietary methodology developed by Professor Gerald Zaltman of the Harvard Business School's Mind of the Market Laboratory. Zaltman's 1998 report “Understanding Thoughts and Feelings About the Arts,” commissioned by the Heinz Endowments, represents a breakthrough in understanding why people participate in arts activities.



**Figure 3: Values Derived from Arts Participation**



1. Arts Participation has cognitive value in that it productively engages the brain, activates the imagination and directly or indirectly helps adults and children acquire new or improved cognitive skills.
2. Aesthetic value, the *prima facie* benefit of arts participation, is the most subjective and intrinsic of all values surrounding arts participation; during the art experience (and possibly for a lifetime thereafter), the participant's quality of life is altered in some way by the art.
3. A set of physical values surrounds some arts experiences, particularly dance, but also any of the other arts experiences that engage the body, such as playing a musical instrument or working with clay. The body acquires new skills or achieves consonance with mind and spirit.
4. Many people talk about the emotional value of music, but any arts experience that elicits an emotional response has intrinsic value. Art acts as a conduit for emotion, providing the participant with a means of feeling.
5. Almost all arts participation has socio-cultural value, in that it connects people with their community or with their cultural heritage. For many, art is also a means of understanding other cultures. Art is memory.
6. Sometimes subtly, sometimes not, art has political value. For artists and audiences alike, art is an essential means of formulating and expressing political views.
7. Some people talk about the spiritual value of art, but it is generally not something that most people can articulate. More likely, people talk about "being transformed" or "renewed" or "energized" by an arts experience.

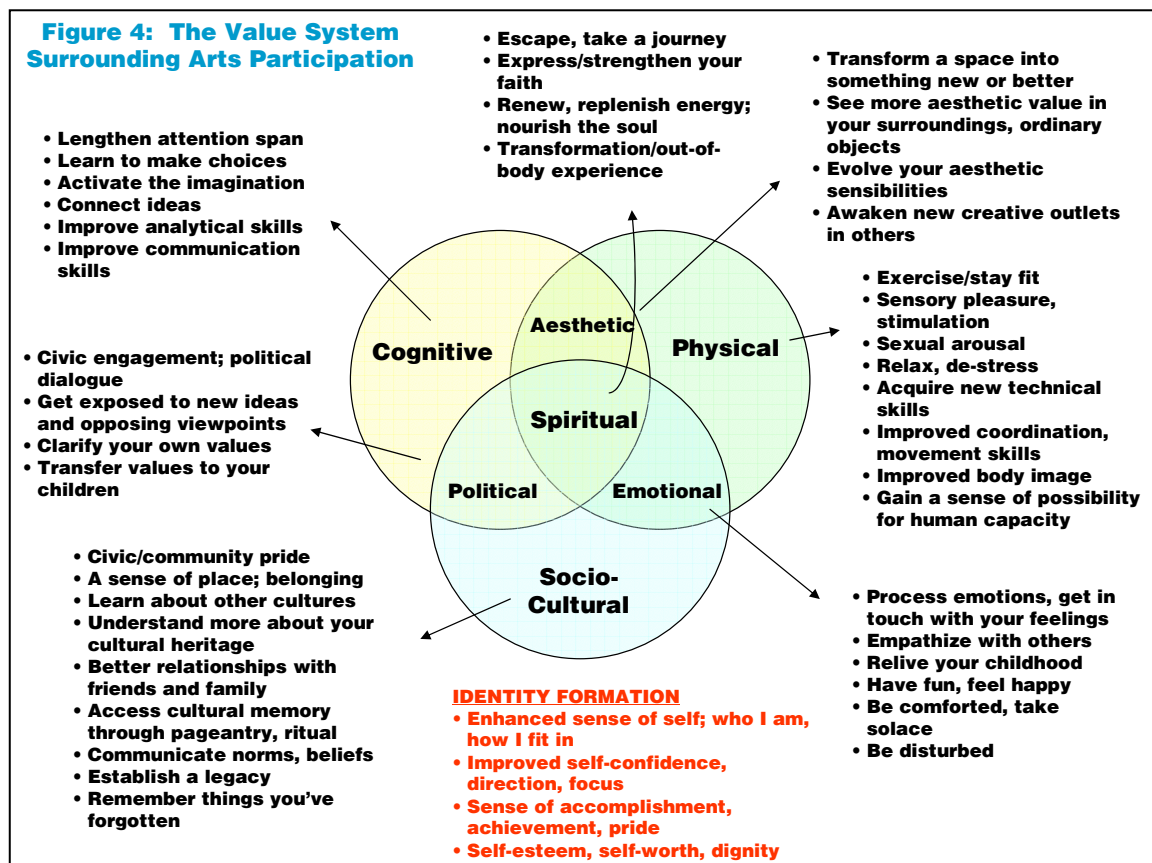


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8. In addition to these seven value clusters, another overarching value set surrounds arts participation – the set of values associated with identity formation, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, pride and dignity.

An annotated version of the value system diagram appears in Figure 4.



### Using the Values Framework

Arts organizations can use the Value Framework to better understand how their programs resonate with audiences and visitors, and to think about new programs or how to add value to their existing programs. The framework allows arts organizations to see their programs through the eyes of current and potential users. What value connections are being made? What other value opportunities might be offered through new or different programs? Several examples of how to use the Value Framework are provided below.




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### Example 1: Sitting on a Decorative Public Bench

Here is an example of Ambient Arts Participation. What value does this arts participant get from sitting on the bench pictured below? Through use of bolded text, some of the values that might be associated with this activity are identified.

<p><u>COGNITIVE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lengthen attention span</li> <li>• Learn to make choices</li> <li>• Activate the imagination</li> <li>• Connect ideas</li> <li>• Improve analytical skills</li> <li>• Improve communication skills</li> </ul>	<p><u>SPIRITUAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escape, take a journey</li> <li>• Express/strengthen your faith</li> <li>• Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul</li> <li>• Transformation/out-of-body experience</li> </ul>	<p><u>AESTHETIC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transform a space into something new or better</b></li> <li>• <b>See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects</b></li> <li>• Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities</li> <li>• Awaken new creative outlets in others</li> </ul>
<p><u>POLITICAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Civic engagement; political dialogue</b></li> <li>• Get exposed to new ideas and opposing viewpoints</li> <li>• Clarify your own values</li> <li>• Transfer values to your children</li> </ul>		<p><u>PHYSICAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise/stay fit</li> <li>• Sensory pleasure, stimulation</li> <li>• Sexual arousal</li> <li>• Relax, de-stress</li> <li>• Acquire new technical skills</li> <li>• Improved coordination, movement skills</li> <li>• Improved body image</li> <li>• Gain a sense of possibility for human capacity</li> </ul>
<p><u>SOCIO-CULTURAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Civic/community pride</b></li> <li>• <b>A sense of place; belonging</b></li> <li>• Learn about other cultures</li> <li>• Understand more about your cultural heritage</li> <li>• Better relationships with friends and family</li> <li>• Access cultural memory through pageantry, ritual</li> <li>• Communicate norms, beliefs</li> <li>• Establish a legacy</li> <li>• Remember things you've forgotten</li> </ul>	<p><u>IDENTITY FORMATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced sense of self; who I am, how I fit in</li> <li>• Improved self-confidence, direction, focus</li> <li>• Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride</li> <li>• Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity</li> </ul>	<p><u>EMOTIONAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process emotions, get in touch with your feelings</li> <li>• Empathize with others</li> <li>• Relive your childhood</li> <li>• Have fun, feel happy</li> <li>• Be comforted, take solace</li> <li>• Be disturbed</li> </ul>

Certainly the activity has some aesthetic value, but there are also political values and socio-cultural values, as well. If you were testifying in front of the City Council in this community, could you make a case for the political value of this arts experience?

What other values or benefits might accrue to the participant as a result of this activity?




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### Example 2: Break Dancing in the Street

Here is an example of Inventive Arts Participation. From the perspective of the participant dancing in the photo below (not the observers), what value does this activity generate?

The activity clearly holds various physical benefits to the participant, but also probably other values, including political, emotional and socio-cultural. Moreover, this arts activity may be closely tied to the participant's identity.

<p><b>COGNITIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lengthen attention span</li><li>• Learn to make choices</li><li>• Activate the imagination</li><li>• Connect ideas</li><li>• Improve analytical skills</li><li>• Improve communication skills</li></ul>	<p><b>SPIRITUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Escape, take a journey</li><li>• Express/strengthen your faith</li><li>• Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul</li><li>• Transformation/out-of-body experience</li></ul>	<p><b>AESTHETIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transform a space into something new or better</li><li>• See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects</li><li>• Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities</li><li>• Awaken new creative outlets in others</li></ul>
<p><b>POLITICAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civic engagement; political dialogue</li><li>• Get exposed to new ideas and opposing viewpoints</li><li>• Clarify your own values</li><li>• Transfer values to your children</li></ul>		<p><b>PHYSICAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise/stay fit</li><li>• Sensory pleasure, stimulation</li><li>• Sexual arousal</li><li>• Relax, de-stress</li><li>• Acquire new technical skills</li><li>• Improved coordination, movement skills</li><li>• Improved body image</li><li>• Gain a sense of possibility for human capacity</li></ul>
<p><b>SOCIO-CULTURAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civic/community pride</li><li>• A sense of place; belonging</li><li>• Learn about other cultures</li><li>• Understand more about your cultural heritage</li><li>• Better relationships with friends and family</li><li>• Access cultural memory through pageantry, ritual</li><li>• Communicate norms, beliefs</li><li>• Establish a legacy</li><li>• Remember things you've forgotten</li></ul>	<p><b>IDENTITY FORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhanced sense of self; who I am, how I fit in</li><li>• Improved self-confidence, direction, focus</li><li>• Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride</li><li>• Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity</li></ul>	<p><b>EMOTIONAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process emotions, get in touch with your feelings</li><li>• Empathize with others</li><li>• Relive your childhood</li><li>• Have fun, feel happy</li><li>• Be comforted, take solace</li><li>• Be disturbed</li></ul>

How would the value system be different if we looked at this activity from the eyes of the observers surrounding the participant?





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### Example 3: Viewing Human Sculpture in the Street

Here's another example of Ambient Arts Participation. Imagine that you walked around the corner at lunchtime and happened upon the scenario illustrated in the photo below. What value would you derive from the experience?

<p><u>COGNITIVE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lengthen attention span</li> <li>• Learn to make choices</li> <li>• <b>Activate the imagination</b></li> <li>• Connect ideas</li> <li>• Improve analytical skills</li> <li>• Improve communication skills</li> </ul>	<p><u>SPIRITUAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escape, take a journey</li> <li>• Express/strengthen your faith</li> <li>• Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul</li> <li>• Transformation/out-of-body experience</li> </ul>	<p><u>AESTHETIC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transform a space into something new or better</b></li> <li>• <b>See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects</b></li> <li>• Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities</li> <li>• Awaken new creative outlets in others</li> </ul>
<p><u>POLITICAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Civic engagement; political dialogue</b></li> <li>• Get exposed to new ideas and opposing viewpoints</li> <li>• Clarify your own values</li> <li>• Transfer values to your children</li> </ul>		<p><u>PHYSICAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise/stay fit</li> <li>• Sensory pleasure, stimulation</li> <li>• Sexual arousal</li> <li>• Relax, de-stress</li> <li>• Acquire new technical skills</li> <li>• Improved coordination, movement skills</li> <li>• Improved body image</li> <li>• Gain a sense of possibility for human capacity</li> </ul>
<p><u>SOCIO-CULTURAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic/community pride</li> <li>• <b>A sense of place; belonging</b></li> <li>• Learn about other cultures</li> <li>• Understand more about your cultural heritage</li> <li>• Better relationships with friends and family</li> <li>• <b>Access cultural memory</b> through pageantry, ritual</li> <li>• Communicate norms, beliefs</li> <li>• Establish a legacy</li> <li>• Remember things you've forgotten</li> </ul>		<p><u>IDENTITY FORMATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced sense of self; who I am, <b>how I fit in</b></li> <li>• Improved self-confidence, direction, focus</li> <li>• Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride</li> <li>• Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity</li> </ul>

Your space would be transformed, so the experience has aesthetic value. This particular experience also taps into a set of socio-cultural values because of the historic references. There may even be political values going on here. What other values might be possible, from the viewpoint of the observer. How would the values change if you considered the viewpoint of the performers? How would the value system change if the sculpture was bronze, and not human?




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### Example 4: Performing with a Symphony

This is an example of Interpretive Arts Participation. If you were the woman playing the violin in the orchestra pictured below, what value system surrounds this activity?

<p><u>COGNITIVE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lengthen attention span</b></li> <li>• Learn to make choices</li> <li>• Activate the imagination</li> <li>• Connect ideas</li> <li>• <b>Improve analytical skills</b></li> <li>• Improve communication skills</li> </ul>	<p><u>SPIRITUAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escape, take a journey</li> <li>• Express/strengthen your faith</li> <li>• Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul</li> <li>• Transformation/out-of-body experience</li> </ul>	<p><u>AESTHETIC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transform a space into something new or better</li> <li>• See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects</li> <li>• <b>Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities</b></li> <li>• Awaken new creative outlets in others</li> </ul>
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<p><u>SOCIO-CULTURAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic/community pride</li> <li>• A sense of place; belonging</li> <li>• Learn about other cultures</li> <li>• <b>Understand more about your cultural heritage</b></li> <li>• Better relationships with friends and family</li> <li>• <b>Access cultural memory through pageantry, ritual</b></li> <li>• Communicate norms, beliefs</li> <li>• Establish a legacy</li> <li>• Remember things you've forgotten</li> </ul>	<p><u>IDENTITY FORMATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enhanced sense of self; who I am, how I fit in</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved self-confidence, direction, focus</b></li> <li>• <b>Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride</b></li> <li>• <b>Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity</b></li> </ul>	<p><u>EMOTIONAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Process emotions, get in touch with your feelings</b></li> <li>• Empathize with others</li> <li>• Relive your childhood</li> <li>• Have fun, feel happy</li> <li>• <b>Be comforted, take solace</b></li> <li>• Be disturbed</li> </ul>

One might imagine a set of emotional and cognitive values, but also physical and other values.

How would the value system be different if you were the photographer taking this picture?



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### Example 5: Seeing a Broadway Show

Here is a classic example of Observational Arts Participation, using one of the most popular forms of live entertainment that includes music, theater and dance (photo credit: *Wicked*). What value system surrounds this arts experience?

<p><b>COGNITIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lengthen attention span</b></li> <li>• Learn to make choices</li> <li>• <b>Activate the imagination</b></li> <li>• <b>Connect Ideas</b></li> <li>• Improve analytical skills</li> <li>• Improve communication skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>SPIRITUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Escape, take a journey</b></li> <li>• Express/strengthen your faith</li> <li>• Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul</li> <li>• Transformation/out-of-body experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>AESTHETIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transform a space into something new or better</b></li> <li>• See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects</li> <li>• Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities</li> <li>• Awaken new creative outlets in others</li> </ul>
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<p><b>SOCIO-CULTURAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic/community pride</li> <li>• <b>A sense of place; belonging</b></li> <li>• Learn about other cultures</li> <li>• <b>Understand more about your cultural heritage</b></li> <li>• <b>Better relationships with friends and family</b></li> <li>• <b>Access cultural memory through pageantry, ritual</b></li> <li>• Communicate norms, beliefs</li> <li>• Establish a legacy</li> <li>• <b>Remember things you've forgotten</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>IDENTITY FORMATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced sense of self; who I am, how I fit in</li> <li>• Improved self-confidence, direction, focus</li> <li>• Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride</li> <li>• Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity</li> </ul>

Before the show there is a great deal of anticipation in the audience. People are dressed up. Many of the patrons have already been to dinner. What value has already happened, before the show even starts?

Judging from the thunderous applause at the end of the show, it seems that the participants were pleased with their experience, but why? As they file out of the theater, how are people different compared to when they arrived?



## **Summary: Five Strategies for Adding Value**

The Value Framework can be useful in stimulating discussion about how consumers experience a wide variety of arts activities. Picture your organization's activities in the middle of the Value Framework, and talk about what benefits people get from participating. Make a case for your programs using the Value Framework. Then, think about what additional values you can deliver to your constituents. To summarize, five strategies for increasing participation are suggested by the Value Framework:

1. Paint a better picture. Gain a better sense of the values people derive from your programs, and do a better job of selling people on the value, not just the art. In other words, be a better advocate for your programs, and use values-based promotions to convince people that your programs are a good investment of time and money.
2. Improve access to your programs by reducing or removing inhibitors to participation (logistical, financial, social). Or, use inducements to lower the decision threshold or create new value propositions (e.g., bring a friend for half-price).
3. Enhance the proposition. In other words, layer on "value added" features that tap into additional value sets. First, you must consider what additional values are possible by adding features to your existing programs (e.g., supertitles at the opera). For example, how could you add political value to a theater production?
4. Create relevance at new levels. Before people make a decision to participate in a given arts activity, it must successfully pass at least one relevance test, and probably two or three. In hierarchical order, the seven levels of relevance identified in the Values Study are:
  - Relevance of the specific work(s) of art (e.g., "I love Brahms's 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony")
  - Relevance of the artist(s) ("I'll go see any Matisse exhibit")
  - Relevance of the genre, idiom, medium or discipline ("Gilbert and Sullivan is my cup of tea")
  - Relevance of the institution presenting the art ("Artspace always does provocative exhibitions")
  - Relevance of the activity category ("It's important to be exposed to great art")
  - Social relevance ("My friends are involved in drumming circles")
  - Cultural relevance (i.e., the activity is consistent with my cultural identity)
5. Innovate programs that creatively tap into new veins of value. Be proactive about responding to your community's needs for different kinds of value. Design new programs and partnerships with other organizations in your community that fill specific value needs (e.g., the healing of racial tensions).

**Connecticut Commission on  
Culture and Tourism**

# **The Values Study Part 2: Portraits in Arts Participation**

*Forty Profiles of Connecticut  
Arts Citizens*

Written by board and staff members of twenty  
Connecticut arts organizations

Made possible by The Wallace Foundation's State Arts  
Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) Program

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## Introduction

This section of the Value Study report presents written profiles of 40 interviewees or “Connecticut Arts Citizens.” Each of the twenty teams representing music, dance, theater and visual arts organizations across the state was charged with preparing narrative profiles of each of their five interviewees within 24 hours of the interview, while the conversation was still fresh. Of the 100 written profiles, 40 were selected for inclusion in the report, two from each organization.

Since the interviews were not recorded, the written profiles, including digital photographs, are the surviving data resource for the study. The goal of each profile is to capture the spirit of the interviewee through the lens of arts participation. The process of writing the profiles also served as a means of synthesis for the authors. With a few exceptions, the profiles were not edited and appear as submitted by the participating organizations.

Qualitative data is very useful in stimulating conversation about important issues like arts participation. Our hope in presenting such personal and anecdotal data is to begin the process of building a new picture of arts participation in Connecticut, person by person. Each story is unique. Together, they begin to describe a far more comprehensive and nuanced picture of arts participation than has been achieved through quantitative research.

It should be reiterated here that the study was not designed to achieve a representative sample of Connecticut adults. Most of the individuals profiled here have ties to one or more nonprofit arts organizations, although an effort was made to include people who are not involved with the specific institution (i.e., non-users).

The time involved in producing these profiles represents a significant investment in the Values Study process. Our thanks go to the authors for producing such fine work, and to the interviewees for sharing their stories without reservation.

Following the profiles are compiled lists of “Grounded Theories” and “Meanings and Values” synthesized by each team following their interviews.

### A Word About Privacy

In an effort to reduce privacy concerns, only the first names of interviewees are used in the profiles. All interviewees signed consent release forms in connection with their interviews. The views represented in the profiles are those of the authors and not of the State of Connecticut or its contractors.



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## **Discipline Focus: The Visual Arts**

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### **Mark**

*Mark is a lawyer in private practice in New Haven, and an avid art collector. He was interviewed by Helen Kauder of Artspace, Inc., with assistance from Bitsie Clark.*

For Mark, art is an ongoing process of discovery. “A lot of art is ambient...good industrial design...a well-designed building. It’s a source of intellectual stimulation that can take as much or as little time as you have to give.”



While he does not consider himself an artist, Mark is a frequent attendee of exhibits and collects museum-quality art for his home. He seeks opportunities to integrate these arts experiences into his daily life. On a lunch hour, he will deliberately take his walk past buildings of architectural significance. His business trips often include stops at museums.

This interest stems from childhood “attending art museums with my father,” including the Yale Art Gallery, the British Art Museum, the Wadsworth and the Met. His family was steeped in art appreciation, though no close relatives were artists themselves. His personal taste for art deepened during college in Washington, when he spent many hours in the Hirschorn and the National Gallery. As he grew into maturity, Mark seems to have developed an eye for quality.

When asked about the cabin in Vermont he spent time talking about how much he enjoys and gets satisfaction from the designing and decorating of his living loft.

Discipline Focus – The Visual Arts. Mark makes visual art an integral and important part of his life. His conversation is full of descriptions of using his spare time to look at and appreciate art. He loves architecture, especially designs of the 1950’s and 60’s. When he is in New York City he often deliberately walks past the Seagram’s Building or Lever House. He has found Albers hanging in the Time Life Building and has gone out of his way to see the art in the Chancellery in Bonn Germany and the great collection belonging to General Mills in Minneapolis.

He sees arts as an “oasis.” It seems to be an important natural high for him. He especially likes seeing art in places that others may not know about. Instead of seeing the Chris Ofili Madonna at the Brooklyn Museum during the Sensation show, he sought out the gallery where Ofili’s work was being shown.

His interest in art collecting is a result of another spur-of-the-moment art investigation. Arriving early for his girlfriend’s train he decided to wander into an arts auction house he had often passed by but never visited. He was astounded



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by the quality of the art being auctioned at what often turned out to be reasonable prices. Although he bought nothing that day he has since frequented auction houses and has made some very good buys.

One does not get the feeling that Mark has spent much time in the academic study of art, though he has quietly acquired a degree of connoisseurship over time that serves him well. As he says, "I know enough to know what I like."

Artspace. Mark is an enthusiastic advocate and supporter of Artspace. He feels that the organization often exhibits art that is different from what one normally sees in a city of this size.

Mark appreciates the broad spectrum of talent and outlook that Artspace offers. He believes the organization should be a venue for New Haven and Connecticut artists to show their work and express themselves. He is not as in favor of shows by artists from elsewhere. He likes City Wide Open Studios because it is open to everyone and gives opportunities to both established and emerging artists.

Artistically, Mark is curious, open-minded, tolerant and a risk-taker. He likes the new, he loves to see his favorites, he keeps his eyes open and sees the world around him and he is supportive and understanding of the need for artists to begin somewhere.

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## Lee

*Lee is a nonuser of Artspace's programs, but is active in the local cultural community. He was interviewed by Helen Kauder, with assistance from Elinor Buxton and Bitsie Clark.*



For Lee, art is about people. "I consider myself to be a creative problem solver. I use my creativity to help others." This longtime community activist resides in the Fair Haven section of New Haven. Growing up in New York, none of his family members were artists in the traditional sense, "although I do consider gardening an art form and my father kept 60 plants in a three-room apartment. It was a veritable jungle. He was very creative in the way he tended and displayed those plants."

Lee counts himself among those who will say that they're definitely not artists but have "an 8 or 9-year-old recessed artist inside." He is familiar with the scenario of children having their art harshly critiqued, and how this can halt creative expression. "I would say there were elements of that in my own upbringing."

Nonetheless, he has remained an enthusiastic observer of many art forms. "Am I an appreciator? Absolutely! I like to listen to poetry. Or singing. Or see visual arts." Citing an arts exchange program in Nicaragua that he helped organize



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while residing in that country for 12 years, he demonstrates keen interest in finding ways to help others be creative.

Lee thinks it is vital to communities to help bridge the perceived gap between arts and other things that many people consider to be “more important.” He is heartened by the value placed on the artist in Nicaraguan culture. He also sees a need to create bridges between art and economic development, so “people see art as a tool.”

In terms of his own attendance at cultural events, Lee prefers outdoor concerts and street performances. “I don’t mind buying a ticket; I just don’t like the idea of going indoors.” He would like to see New Haven become more of a breeding ground for public sculpture, street painters, and guerilla theatre troupes.

Discipline Focus – The Visual Arts. Lee has attended visual arts exhibitions on Audubon Street (former location of Artspace), but especially enjoys “buildings not intended for exhibits: hospitals, banks, restaurants.” He loves the fact that his Fair Haven neighborhood now has a café that features exhibits of local art and history.

While considering himself a novice, Lee has a strong affinity for two subgenres of visual art: black-and-white photography and sculpture. The former he recalls being interested in as a child, the latter is a more recent interest.

Lee experienced a transformational moment when he recognized the power of photography. Reflecting on the event over twenty years later, it still brought him to tears. “The year was 1981 and I was at Riverside Church in New York City. At that time I was a Marine; I was considering becoming a conscientious objector. After the worship service a man spoke on the relationship between militarism and world hunger. He began his talk by passing around a photograph, reproduced from Time or something, that is quite famous. It simply shows a child’s hand, deformed by hunger...It really put me over the edge. That photograph made me change the direction of my life, or reaffirmed for me a change I was thinking of.”

Lee is a firm believer that visual art should be appreciated in the company of others. “A work of art encourages you to converse, express opinions and feelings. To use a psychological term, it’s a transitional object.” He cites an example of two people walking down the street and coming upon a public sculpture. “It evokes something. Maybe they talk, have a conversation. The work accomplishes something more than maybe what the artist intended.” He thinks more art should be incorporated into our physical surroundings. “When it’s not there, we’re missing something.”

Artspace. Lee is not familiar with Artspace’s programs, and revealed that he does not make a mental distinction between the organization and the Arts Council of Greater New Haven (which has offices upstairs in the Audubon St. building where Artspace formerly held its exhibits). “I venture to say the same is true for



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many people.” His own definition of “art space” includes the New Haven Green and other public venues for community gatherings and performance.

Once the terms were clarified, he was candid enough to guess that the Artspace audience includes “Latin-American or Hispanic people who, like me, have moved up the socio-economic ladder. Not the average people from the neighborhood, typically.”

Reflecting on his lack of participation in Artspace to date, Lee states “I have gone to City Wide [Open Studios] and not been aware that it was this organization that was doing it.” He relies on trusted friends and associates to help make him aware of arts opportunities in the area, and suggests more use be made of such valuable word-of-mouth promotion.

If Lee were in charge of the organization, he would “like to see more art out in the street, in public areas.” Noting the presence of many so-called “hidden artists” among the large immigrant population in Fair Haven, he supposes that “if art were physically outside, it might be a way to connect and encourage and support them in being artists.” Lee would be more inclined to “come inside” for programs “if I saw more stuff outside to remind me and make the bridge for me.” That, he says, would help him set aside time to attend.

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## Kay

*Kay works as a youth services program director in New Haven. She earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts/Theatre from Howard University in 1979. Kay was interviewed by Manny Rivera, with support from Debbie Hesse.*

Kay is an educated leader and social activist and community leader. She has been involved in the New Haven community for over 15 years’. Kay is African American and has a strong passion for youth development. She feels the



greatest way to connect our youth of today with positive enrichment is through the arts.

In fact, Kay is more or less a “walking piece of art.” Everything in her life revolves around art, from her stylish way of dressing and setting her hair to the artwork in her home and her passion for theater. Music has always played a prominent role in Kay’s life, and contributes to her overall wellness. Her brother was one of the original “Five Satins” responsible for the great hit song “In the Still of the Night.” She also has a niece who is a writer in the sitcom “The Bit Hit.”

Discipline Focus: Visual Arts. Kay enjoys going to museums and particularly likes visual art that has to do with women and children. Most of the walls in Kay’s home are decorated with posters of African American art – images of women and



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family, which is important for her. “Art is education,” she says. At her place of work, she describes a large mural that was painted by youth program participants a few years ago. “It’s a beautiful piece of art that reflects so many colors – celebrating children, youth men & women of every color and creed in a community setting ‘enjoying life.’”

Kay is also responsible for an after school program for youth that involves art and drama, called “Arts at Work.” As another example, she cites a play that her kids mounted, called “Runaways,” about a group of runaway teenagers who form a support group to deal with family problems. Last summer, she took all of her kids to see the “National Black Theatre Festival” in North Carolina.

The Arts Council of Greater New Haven. Kay was knowledgeable about the Arts Council and its mission. She said: “the Arts Council brings awareness in the community about art.” Kay realizes how big of a challenge it is to reach out to the needs of our diverse population in the greater New Haven area, especially with the needs of African Americans and Latinos. But she feels the Arts Council has taken a step forward by hiring a new community cultural development director.

Kay ended her interview with emphasizing that art, to her, is a spiritual healing process.

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## Luz

*Luz works as the director of a Hispanic community organization in New Haven. She was interviewed by Betty Monz and Paula Armbruster at the Arts Council of Greater New Haven on September 16, 2003.*

Luz describes herself as an active artist because she practices and excels at the art of working with people. Luz was born in Puerto Rico and has lived in the United States since the age of three. She has children and grandchildren including a wonderful 16 year old granddaughter who loves to paint.



Her connections to the arts are deeply rooted in her everyday interactions with people and community.

Cooking is an important creative outlet for Luz, and she often creates her own dishes. Her family owned a restaurant, and she began cooking Spanish food at an early age. She was very innovative, creating all sorts of different dishes with chicken and rice. She takes great pleasure in cooking for friends because they love the food she cooks. Cooking is her gateway to creative expression.

As we talked, Luz revealed that she meets quarterly with a group of Latino women for tea and to discuss writing, poetry and politics. She is passionate about writing poetry, claiming that poetry and writing allow her to talk about feelings,



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experiences, how she sees the world in all its beauty as well as its tragedy. For her, poetry provides a way of communicating and dealing with issues that she may not be able to speak about. When she retires, Luz plans to write a book covering everything in her life: her experiences and how she dealt with things. It is clear that she has had a life of many rich and personal experiences. She hopes that this book will inspire others.

Luz loves music and says that it relaxes her. This love of music has inspired her to sing and compose (e.g. Viegues). Luz loves to dance and likes salsa, meringue, and going to concerts. She also likes to rent old movies, especially black and white films focusing on old New York. She really appreciates the beauty of the old streets and architecture in these films. She loves the architecture of old cities. These films remind her of times gone by.

Luz says that she can see art all around her, all over – in a tree, the water. She loves water and it's this love of water that continues to draw her back to Puerto Rico.

Luz remembered a time when she actually was “marooned” in Vermont. All she had was her pen and paper and she used this time to write. She recalls it as peaceful, with no phone, no TV, just her, her thoughts, her pen.

Discipline Focus: Visual Arts. Luz has a friend who painted who was her roommate when she lived in Boston. This friend often goes diving and paints deep-sea life, sea and water. Luz cannot paint, she says, because she was too close to this friend. Instead, she takes a lot of candid photos. As an adult, she was influenced by a photographer in the 80's who had had an impact because he took candid photos of life as it was in the Puerto Rican community in Hartford on Park St., snapping pictures of people looking out of windows or carrying groceries.

She loves how anyone can gather meaning from photos and personalize what the pictures mean to them. She watched him go to parades, then saw the art exhibit. As she grew older, her participation in the arts increased as she became more aware of the art around her. She developed a real passion for arts when she lived with a roommate who was an artist. She also enjoys other visual art, such as nature. She feels that art holds great value to her, and that it inspires knowledge and makes her feel part of something. She is very drawn to memories of Puerto Rico, as Old San Juan makes her feel good.

She says that art tells her things, and gives her more knowledge, appreciation, respect. At first she never participated in visual arts organizations because she couldn't afford to go and felt they were only for the well-to-do who could purchase the art. She then “threw that idea away,” and began to visit museums and galleries.



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The Arts Council of Greater New Haven. Luz knows that the Arts Council does a lot for the community by showcasing art, but does not have a clear picture of what the Arts Council does as its primary functions. This interview was only the second time Luz had ever been to the Arts Council. She has seen exhibits, but doesn't know how the Arts Council is directly involved those exhibits, or how they work with youth and with the community. She is involved through her work with a summer camps for AIDS infected children that lasts one week for 6-15 year olds. She would love to see the Arts Council can link with them.

Since Luz could not directly connect with the Arts Council, she reflected on things she would like to see the Arts Council do more of. In Chicago there is a Mexican Museum that showcases Mexican artists and art. She suggested that the Arts Council could sponsor a Latino show. She noted that in arts, everyone can interpret what they want and they don't need formal training to do so. She feels enriched by the experience and after she sees any exhibit. She always learns something new. She thinks art is a safe but powerful way people can connect to the community.

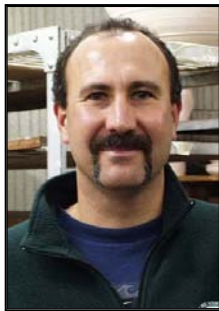
She thinks the Arts Council can provide more programs or scholarships for artistically talented youth and youth with a lot of potential. She also sees potential for expression for youth in graffiti. "We have many talented young people; we need to know how to access them. The art is a good way to make that connection. Perhaps the Arts Council could help."

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## Ron

*Ron has been attending pottery classes for over 5 years at Creative Arts Workshop in New Haven. He was interviewed by Susan Smith, with assistance from Tom Griggs and Rusti Icenogle, on September 29, 2003.*

Ron signed up for his first pottery class at Creative Arts Workshop 5 years ago, and a new passion was born. The 41-year old Guilford, CT resident is a field biologist, and has a high appreciation of the outdoors. He grew up in a household that valued the arts and science. His father, a physicist, played big band trombone in a number of groups, and his sister, also a scientist, is a serious photographer. Ron himself played guitar for many years, although it's now a "passion sitting on the side".



Ron spends much time out in the field for his work, and his interests include gardening, fishing, and sea kayaking. He describes himself as an "outside person" and travels through the Northeast on fishing trips, to attend kayaking conferences. Now that pottery is a very significant aspect of his life, he also makes it a point to work visits to galleries into his travel plans.



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He has a couple of his own pieces of pottery in his office. He occasionally scans CAW's course brochure for courses outside of pottery, but because he finds great satisfaction in pottery, and has only a finite amount of time and a need to balance time for all his interests, he signs up quickly for the advanced pottery course. He does not have much interest in pursuing other art forms, but preferred to continue to focus on pottery. He has introduced some of his colleagues to taking arts courses.

When asked what kind of art he would take with him if marooned in a Vermont cabin, he wasn't sure. Given electricity and an internet connection, he said that he would bring his laptop computer, where he has "a million pottery sites bookmarked". He uses his computer to research his interests, including looking up the websites of potters, analyzing techniques, and using his computer as a "virtual gallery."

Discipline Focus – The Visual Arts. Ron first signed up for a pottery class because some friends were doing the same, and he has been taking pottery classes ever since. He enjoys the interaction between the pottery, the instructor, and the students that the classroom environment fosters, and values the social aspect of working in the class coupled with the learning opportunities there. Although he has a wheel at home and the beginnings of a studio space, even if he were to set up a home studio, he would continue to take classes. He is drawn toward instructors who can deepen his knowledge and who "bring something new every week" to the class. Ron enjoys furthering his knowledge of ceramics, understanding how they are made, as well as the historical background of techniques and in particular is enthused about a rope texturing technique with which he is currently working. Ron knows what he likes in pottery. He appreciates earthy textures and tones. The functionality of pottery is key; recently he attended a national juried exhibition and was disappointed by the high number of sculptural rather than functional pieces in the show.

There is a connection between his outdoor activities and the way he enjoys pottery. He uses ceramics both inside and outside his home, such as birdbaths in his garden. "I enjoy the process (of making pottery) and working with my hands," he says. He helps a local potter who lives "twenty seconds" from his office, who wood-fires her kiln, a labor-intensive process that takes a week to load, a lot of chopped wood, and around-the-clock firing that lasts 24 hrs or more. He enjoys the physicality of helping her, and the company of the many potters who come to help in this process.

He has a sophisticated appreciation of technique, and desire to facilitate his learning. He quickly discovered that if he used a higher quality of clay, his skills developed faster. Taking pottery classes has helped him develop a finely tuned appreciation of hand-made pottery. "I threw out all my mass produced pottery," he says, and has replaced it with the work of local artists he knows and whose work he appreciates. A bit ruefully he lamented the size of his home on the Guilford waterfront for the lack of space to collect more. With wall space at a





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premium, although he would like to collect paintings, he readily acknowledged that had he the choice of hanging a painting or shelving to display pottery, he would chose to display pottery.

As Ron has pushed to deepen his knowledge of pottery, his involvement with pottery has deepened—he has gotten involved with firing and collecting fine pottery. He is less interested in learning about glaze techniques, as he already has a science background. Higher-level values that he attaches to attending courses are more along the lines of intellectual engagement, rather than spiritual nourishment

Creative Arts Workshop. Ron is a frequent student of advanced pottery classes at CAW, attending on average 1 per session. He is loyal to CAW, “knows the system,” and although there are other options for pottery, continues to attend the advanced pottery course to learn from Stephen Rodriguez course. Initially, he took pottery at CAW because it was convenient to where he worked. Now he takes it for the instruction that he receives here. He has enjoyed getting to know the studio potters, and other relationships he has formed with area potters. CAW has given him entry to pottery, and to potters, and enabled him to enrich his life outside of the school with pottery experiences. Pottery seems quite central to his life. He would like to take more workshops from visiting artists. He expressed interest in traveling to long-term workshops at Haystack in Maine, because of the beautiful location, but has not pursued this because their courses run for three weeks, and he sees taking at most a week-long vacation from work as feasible.

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## Deborah

*Deborah, a museum education grad student and mother, has never been to Creative Arts Workshop. She was interviewed at the Westport Library on October 10, 2003 by Susan Smith with assistance from Tom Griggs and Rusti Icenogle.*



Deborah values the visual arts highly and struggles to keep arts as central to her increasingly busy life. Every year she tries to take a fine arts workshop or two, and emphasizes the importance of it being a hands-on experience. “If I don’t sign up I won’t make the time.” The thirty-three year old resident of Westport grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and describes herself as having “heavy exposure” to the arts growing up attending free concerts, the theater, and museums. In college, she majored in fine arts. She is on leave from her museum education graduate program, but sees the theories she studies happening every day with her two-year old son. Her husband is supportive of her arts activities, but not a participant himself.

She is very sensitive to the aesthetics of her everyday surroundings. At home: “I need things to look colorful and pleasing. It’s very important to me.” Cooking is



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also an expressive activity for her. She plays music at home and in the car, and likes to buy art from places she visits. "I like to support artists," she says, and buys art also from those she knows.

She likes to attend theater and concerts, and her most recent concert was a children's concert with her son. Her life has changed dramatically since having a child. Speaking of that change, she says, "I'm frustrated that I have to make choices... due to time constraints." She actively pursues ways to keep art in her life and in her son's life as much as possible. Marooned in a Vermont cabin, Deborah would take tools and materials for stone sculpture, "because it's messy. I tried it once and would like to do more, but it just would be difficult to do at home."

Discipline Focus – The Visual Arts. She enjoys doing art for several reasons: "It makes me feel good and think differently about things. I like being overwhelmed by the beauty and intensity (of art)." Deborah always knew that she was interested in visual arts, and started drawing her junior year of high school. She majored in fine arts in college. "I used to be interested in technique, then in ideas. Now it's coming together. I'm not just reacting to a white, male, euro-centric view of art." She was critical of outside, judgmental opinions determining what is "good." Art for her should be "the essence of being an individual person."

Deborah likes going to galleries, but she is skeptical of how art is valued according to "what's in galleries and what the museums are buying." She knows the vocabulary of visual arts well, and interested in making visual art in many genres, but focuses her energies on learning techniques that she can reproduce at home, particularly off-press printmaking processes. She has a studio space in her new home, but doesn't spend much time in it because it's difficult to find the time.

Values that Deborah associates with making visual art include expressing herself, asserting her individualism, and personal development. She emphasized her need to get the hands-on experience of workshops.

Creative Arts Workshop. Deborah has never taken a course at Creative Arts Workshop. She has looked into many of the options available to her near home. She didn't like taking certain adult education courses because the students weren't serious enough, but had a good experience at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT. She would rather have a good instructor than a famous artist who does not teach well. Scheduling her responsibilities as a mother is her main barrier to class participation. Also, her best day to take a class is Sunday because she is Jewish and observes the Sabbath. Because of these scheduling difficulties, she takes workshops that fit her schedule, cover new techniques that she would transfer well to a home studio environment, and have class environments with students who approach their work seriously. She asked for a CAW brochure in the past and was amazed by the



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abundance and diversity of courses offered. She would be interested in attending workshops on Sundays.

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### Robin

*Robin is a very creative individual who instinctively creates cultural experiences for others. She was interviewed by Cindy Clair at Silvermine Guild Arts Center.*

Robin is very culturally aware and seeks out arts experiences for herself and her children. She has diverse interests in the arts, enjoying a wide variety of art forms and media. Robin values different perspectives and wants her children to have an appreciation of different cultures. Music is extremely important to her. She doesn't attend many concerts, but has a large CD collection. She chooses to listen to music that reflects her mood. Robin is passionate about sharing music with friends. When she hears something new that excites her, she sends a



recording to friends. She is very pleased when they also respond to the piece. If she were stranded alone for several weeks, it would be important to have a variety of musical recordings with her.

Robin expresses herself creatively through decorating her home, listening to music, and antiquing. She relishes her friendships with artists, and frequently travels with a good friend who is a modern dance teacher. Through these relationships, she "sees things through their eyes." She described both her tastes in visual art and in music as eclectic. She enjoys a wide range of styles, from classical to modern. Robin also enjoys public television, and particularly enjoys broadcasts of British theater.

Robin's parents were both artistic. Her father was an avid photographer, taking the family to various outdoor destinations as he photographed wildlife. Her mother pursued crafts. Robin proudly professed that all of her children have artistic talents. Her daughter, a student at Maryland College of Art and Design, studied at Silvermine for many years. She still comes back to talk with the students in the high school portfolio class. Another daughter is a violinist and Irish step dancer.

Discipline Focus: Visual Art. Robin doesn't attend art exhibits on a regular basis. Her free time revolves around family activities. She took many art classes in college. At Silvermine, she took "Drawing for the Absolute and Utter Beginner", which she thoroughly enjoyed, but the subsequent class was disappointing, not the advanced beginner class she needed/wanted. Robin doesn't feel that she knows much about visual art, noting that her college classes were "a long time ago." Her favorite medium is painting, though she also loves folk art. She appreciates things that are handmade. She is attracted to color in paintings. Robin loves the work of the Dutch masters; she is drawn to the light in those paintings. While she couldn't recall an early art experience that shaped her, she



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has fond memories of visiting many art museums with her parents, and believes that art is an important part of one's education. Robin has carried on this tradition of sharing cultural activities with her own children.

She feels that her participation in the arts has increased over the years. She has bought a number of paintings and always visits museums on her travels. When she has more time, she'd like to try another painting class.

Robin believes that individuals who enjoy visual art just "connect" with it. She has observed that her daughter, who has language problems, relates to the world visually. Robin finds that some images in life are powerful. She vividly recalled a beautiful image from a train trip in England. The amazing image of a swan flying against a very orange sky is stamped in her memory.

Silvermine Guild Arts Center. Regarding Silvermine, Robin is most interested in the art classes. She usually comes here for the holiday show, but doesn't frequent the gallery, assuming the hours are limited. She believes the school youth program is very strong and extremely valuable. Robin doesn't think that most people in New Canaan realize that Silvermine is a great resource, and suggested that Silvermine needs to create more programs, such as an arts festival that would involve the community. She feels her daughter received an extremely good education here, particularly in the portfolio class. Robin recalled that in searching for an art school for her daughter, they found that many colleges did not offer as much as Silvermine. One college actually told them to go elsewhere after reviewing Jenny's strong portfolio.

Robin enjoyed taking an art class with a friend, and would repeat that experience. For her, a successful visit to Silvermine involves a good interaction between the teacher and students. At the end of an art class, Robin feels freer. "You're so tight and restrictive when you start and then you loosen up and take more chances." She feels more aware, more "tuned in" by the end of a class.

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## **Candace**

*Candace is an extremely sophisticated cultural citizen. She was interviewed by Cindy Clair at Silvermine Guild Arts Center.*

Candace is an educated arts participant with a well articulated aesthetic. She is a lifelong learner and a risk taker, continually seeking out arts experiences that are unfamiliar, that engage and challenge her. The arts permeate both her professional and personal life. She has degrees in Art History and Architecture, and currently works as an architect and real estate developer. She worked for a time at the Art Institute of Chicago and also at a commercial gallery. Currently, her main creative outlet is playing the piano, a lifelong passion. She began playing in 3rd grade and took private lessons through college. Seven years ago, she began studying privately again with a fabulous teacher. She confessed that the lessons have tried her patience, but she is learning many new things.



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Candace is an avid theatergoer, who prefers off-Broadway to musicals. She clearly perceives herself as different from the mainstream theater patron.

Candace has a subscription to Long Wharf, and told of a marvelous one-person drama she had seen the night before. She enjoys the writing and direction of performance in addition to the acting and follows the work of favorite contemporary playwrights. Concerts at Silvermine, Caramoor and Carnegie Hall are also on her calendar.



Candace grew up in a family that valued cultural life; she was raised to enjoy the arts. Her mother was a painter. Both her parents played piano. Her father, a book collector, recently donated a collection to the Newbury Library in Chicago. Her immigrant grandfather was a cabinet maker whose work is now in museum collections.

Discipline Focus: The Visual Arts. She attends many art exhibits, though not as many as when she lived in Chicago and Fri evening openings were a staple of her social life. She has a variety of art in her home, including some works by major artists, though she doesn't consider herself a collector. Painting is her favorite medium. She is particularly fond of the Impressionists. Candace appreciates the technique of drawing and lithograph, etchings. Watercolors are enjoyable, but not as intellectually engaging for her as drawing.

Candace rates her knowledge in the visual arts as an 8 or 9. She has not taken many studio art courses –is impatient with being a beginner, putting into practice what she knows intellectually. She believes that her strong educational background in art makes her a knowledgeable viewer. Candace loved the new DIA Beacon, because she found the work challenging.

Candace has an emotional connection to music, describing music as “filling up her soul.” She finds music and theater more immediate than visual art. Visual art does not impact her in the same way, because it has a distance, existing in its own space. While she described an emotional connection to music, her experience of visual art is more intellectual. She believes those who value visual art enjoy the challenge. Art can make one uncomfortable. Candace believes people often dismiss visual art because they don't have the tools to understand the process or intent of the artist.

Silvermine. She enjoys coming to Silvermine for both the gallery exhibits and the music program. Silvermine's proximity to her home is a big plus and she wants to support this community. She finds the atmosphere at Silvermine very approachable and comfortable. Candace particularly likes the warm, intimate setting of the summer music series.



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A successful visit to Silvermine involves learning something new. She likes to depend on a curator's decisions about what is being presented. Candace indicated her trust in Silvermine professionals has led her to try new musical genres in our summer concert series. She has come to rely on our selection of artists even though they may be unknown to her. As a result, she enjoyed last summer's Celtic music program and the previous year's Ethos percussion group. Each summer, she throws a pre-concert dinner party and invites friends to accompany her to Silvermine for music, frequently choosing a concert that is outside her past experience. A highlight of her gallery visits here was Christo show. She loved this exhibit because she learned more about his creative process. A good arts experience is one that takes her out of everyday existence, one that transports her.

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## Ralph

*Ralph owns an investment firm in Farmington, one of the most affluent towns in Connecticut. He lives in West Hartford, where his wife owns a luxury-bedding business. Their three children are grown. Ralph was interviewed by Emilie de Brigard and Cindy Weiss.*

Ralph took time from his workday to come to the museum for the interview, dressed in a navy blazer (the traditional costume of the Connecticut businessman) and bright yellow tie. He has a ruddy face and hooded blue eyes, and the general impression is one of substance and comfort (his questionnaire says that he likes to cook). He is beginning to plan what he will do with his time in retirement.



Ralph responded to our survey query on the Internet. He uses the net increasingly these days, complaining that he is "overwhelmed by information during the course of the day." Ralph sees himself as an artist "to a certain degree"--he paints, draws, takes photos, and plays the piano and guitar: "Maybe not well, but I do enjoy it." He expects to have more time to paint in the future. "I don't relax very well...you have to block out time if you want to be creative." His father was "somewhat artistic", a lifelong photographer and a painter in retirement, who stopped creating when he "got Alzheimer's." His oldest son has a degree in theatre and owns a comedy-improv club in Chicago.

Ralph speaks proudly of his Scots and French ancestry. He has traced the French line to 1575 in a Loire village. He and his wife visit his "favorite city," Paris, "as often as possible," and there are etchings of Paris on the walls of their home and a map of Paris in Ralph's office. ("I wouldn't classify us as art collectors", though, he said.) His people on his mother's side were "master craftsmen" from Scotland; his maternal grandfather was a restorer for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Ralph began college studies in engineering, branched out into English,



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and has worked since graduation in the investment field, chiefly on the sales side. His lifelong habit of "prolific" reading continues, mostly novels.

"There was always music" in Ralph's childhood home in Boston. He took piano lessons as a boy and now, though "I don't pretend to understand the technicalities", he has a good "layman's knowledge of classical music." When the Gaudets first moved to Hartford in 1966, Ralph's wife became involved in the community by joining the board of the symphony. At her instigation they performed a concert outdoors at CIGNA under the stars, featuring the 1812 Overture and fireworks.

Discipline Focus: The Visual Arts. Ralph also had an early interest in painting, winning an award in high school for a painting of a railroad crossing near his home; he has no idea what became of it. In the last ten years, he has taken courses in watercolor and oils at the Farmington Valley Arts Center. He is especially drawn to the latter medium, because it is "more forgiving". Again, he says he doesn't understand all the technicalities, but he knows what he likes. Skill in creating an image that is "sensuous" and "real" is what he admires. He is awed and moved by the works in the Musee Rodin, without feeling that he understands them fully (he leans forward and places his hands on the table, gazing earnestly at the interviewer). The visual arts evoke other emotions too. One of them is recognition, when he sees a painting in a traveling exhibition that he remembers from its home museum. Art that is "attractive visually gives you a sense of pleasure, a sense of calmness, in some cases excitement..." He cuts himself off (this is New England, after all).

"Some people enjoy art for solace at the crossroads. Music is a real soother. Some people's only source of excitement is a movie. There are so many different kinds of movies! Of artists!"

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Ralph and his wife are long-time members of the museum, and when the children were young they brought them here often. Lately, however, they don't get downtown very often. However, prompted partly by the request for an interview, he "re-upped" his museum membership. In the past, he was part of a premium membership group, since disbanded, that "went behind the scenes" and heard talks by curators. He enjoyed this, as well as a similar group he once belonged to at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He likes to see "new exhibits" that "interest" him, but prefers to avoid a "mob scene" or long opening-day lines. He likes "things you can participate in, rather than just walking around." He and his wife enjoyed the Holiday Festival of Trees, the museum's fund-raiser--"There's not enough of that done today." They liked the "reasonable price--not \$350 a head." Often they would bring neighbors with them to these parties, and thereby "sparked their interest". "Once you get someone inside the museum there's something they will appreciate--furniture, china, the old masters, Miro, Dali." He personally prefers the Impressionists, and his wife is "very interested" in costume and textiles. They enjoy the film program, curated by Debbie Gaudet ("no relation").



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Ralph's opinion of the museum's recent expansion plan seems well grounded. The proposed addition "probably wasn't the way to go", particularly since it involved closing the museum during construction for a period of two years. From his experience in sales and marketing, he found the plan "unbelievable and insane", and moreover, "not communicated well". Going forward, it would be good for the board (some of whom are his personal friends) to have "more involvement with the community."

"I have more appreciation than knowledge" of art, Ralph, concludes. "You don't have to be knowledgeable." He often buys the catalogue of a show, so that he can "go back and remember it and have more understanding than when listening to the tapes." The whole package is a "sensuous learning experience." Visiting the museum reinforces this experience; when you are away from things, you forget them.

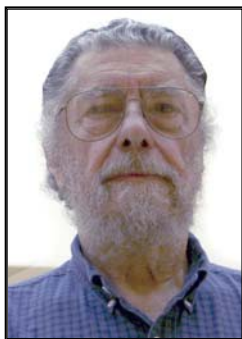
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## George

*George is a retired teacher of language, literature and film at the University of Hartford. He is a grizzled, hirsute, bespectacled fellow with soulful brown eyes. He arrives at the interview in casual attire. The book on Caribbean religion that he carries with him contributes to an overall counter cultural impression. He was interviewed by Emilie de Brigard and Cindy Weiss.*

The picture that emerges is one of intense attachment to aesthetic and intellectual experience, and an almost frenzied urge to communicate it. George listens to music every day on two public radio stations and the university's station. Since 1975, he has hosted a weekly public affairs program on this station as well; indeed, his melodious voice is well suited for this. George confesses that it is harder to get out to cultural events lately, particularly in New York, because he and his wife are helping to care for his 19-month old granddaughter.

When asked how he expresses himself creatively, George says that he writes, thinks creatively, and anticipates music. By this he means that as he listens, he can predict where a composition is going (how dissonance resolves). He feels delight when b-flat becomes b-natural in a Bach piece at St. John's Episcopal Church.



His parents both came from the island of Braz, on the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia, to Cleveland, where George was born. His father, "a very mean man" who worked for Republic Steel, was "probably a mathematical genius"; he "could dance the shoes off the ladies", and was the "closest thing to Rudolf Valentino this side of the Balkans." His mother, burdened at times with two jobs, still found time to take her son, aged 4, to the Cleveland Museum. She used to send him to the library to "pick out something for her"; in so doing he became familiar with a wide range of





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literature. George remembers his mother as a fine sculptor (using Ivory soap), watercolorist, bowler and softball player (attaining a .400 average). As a young man, George wrote poetry while sitting outside the Cleveland Museum. He tried his hand at painting while a graduate student at Columbia. He would like to study figure painting.

"I see the difference between someone whose spirit is compressed, and what you know of yourself. Art is the psychic expansion of the self," he says. Art is "like getting some really good news. We walk around with a sense of ... (here he hunches forward in a constrained position), and art is transformational, even healing."

"You can't separate life from art," but people need some knowledge of art to enjoy it. "It takes a long time for some people to get to the point where they can transform experience." But in addition to art, people need math, history, philosophy, and the sciences. Personally, George says he is "enlightened, inspired, lifted up" by art. "I like to be disturbed. My wife likes it too." (He pats himself on the chest.) "Art keeps me alive."

According to the vita, which George brought to the interview, he is a contributing editor of the *Journal of Assassination Research*. He has organized conferences on JFK, his presidency and death. He was invited to give testimony to the Assassination Records Review Board in 1995, and is currently working on a film of "Jackie Kennedy's" funeral route--"deadened dreams". He is also writing a study of the "American intellectuals' misuse of religious individuals since World War I", a manuscript which so far has "2000 end notes". ("I delight in finding pieces.") To his chagrin, he has been unable to get the Kennedy Library to give him access to their material. As a break from this, he is working on 8 short stories.

An overriding theme for George, in his creative thinking, is the "image of reticulation", like a Greek key, in understanding "how our consciousness is enlarged." Thus we can grasp the relationships between old works and new. George relishes innovation, in new poetry, music and theatre (though he confesses that he does not understand poetry slamming). However, he also enjoys the academic painting exhibited at the Dahesh Museum in New York. He visited Cuba and played the piano in the hotel bar where Hemingway drank. He is working on a major study of "The Great Gatsby", and has six publications, including a novel, "Ephesus", in the planning stages. He's not sure that he is a Renaissance man; maybe "Baroque or Rococo man" is better, he says, or perhaps even "over the top man."

Discipline Focus: The Visual Arts. What is clear to George is that his involvement with art, begun at an early age, has increased over his lifetime. Sharing this involvement is essential--"without shared experience there is a shallow humanness. If someone says, 'I don't like that', we have shared something." He tells an anecdote about asking a student, during his trip to Cuba, why there are



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so many pictures a Che Guevara about, and none of Fidel Castro. "Fidel may be alive, but Che is eternity!" (He points towards the interviewer, back inside, then up, down and forward.) He tells us that a departed friend, a display artist in the G. Fox department store, can still be seen from time to time by the people who use the building, now a community college. (He cradles his arms, rocks forward and back.)

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. George "attends every show" at the Wadsworth. "I like to see this place periodically taking chances." "I like the people who come here." The restaurant is "fun, but pricey." He would like to see "more readings". "I like closure, some sort of structure." Parking is a problem, but one to which he has found a solution, at least for the present: there is a free parking lot under the Public Library, which is unknown to most people.

When asked what work of art moved him, George re-launched a discussion of his aesthetic theories but when pressed for specifics, he said he was touched by the museum's movie of Chick Austin's Paper Ball (in the 1930's). When asked what he would take to the cabin in Vermont, he answered that although "music is central", he wouldn't take an instrument, because "I can always find a way to make noise." Instead, he would take a "set of slides of the 100 most interesting works of art", such as the "Degas young ladies with flared skirts", a Cycladic goddess, and some Bacon, Picasso, and Caravaggio, so as to study their "form, content, color, juxtaposition of color and line, and inexhaustible meaning."



## **Discipline Focus: Music**

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### **Mike**

*Michael is a youth coordinator for the Long Hill Community Center's After School program. Though he doesn't consider himself an artist, he enjoys a wide variety of arts-related activities by himself or with his family. Michael was interviewed by Christine Jewell with assistance from Kjell Wangensteen on September 26, 2003.*

Michael's first association with arts participation was his gardening. He and his wife decided to plant a garden in order to spruce up their home, and planted some vegetables, annuals, and perennials. After a year or so of gardening, they noticed other neighbors had begun similar projects.

Michael enjoys reading poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Among his favorite authors are Langston Hughes, John Grisham, and James Baldwin. He also likes Broadway plays. He recently saw a production of a show called *Ada*, about a woman taken at a young age to be the concubine of an emperor. When asked, he found out about the show on the internet (Broadway.com), but refuses to buy anything online. He often has a family member or friend pick up the tickets for him. High prices tend to discourage his attendance, and he does not pay attention to show reviews.



Discipline Focus: Music. Michael loves jazz and gospel music. He remembers hearing some big band on the radio when he was about 12, and began frequenting a music store on Bank Street called Vic's Record Store (the store no longer exists). In particular, he likes John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie, and Count Basie. He wishes he were more knowledgeable about jazz of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. During his "wilder days," before he was married, he would go to jazz bars in New York such as The Blue Note and Tin Pan Alley.

Whenever he feels sad, Michael can always turn to gospel music. Gospel affects him the most of any art form. Whether in church or on the radio, gospel keeps him upbeat and gives a sense of relief that's hard to find anywhere else. "It wakens my spirit and livens me up," he says. He has attended a few gospel concerts in New Haven, but wishes they were better advertised, so that he could attend more.

Though it is apparent Michael is somewhat critical of today's music (e.g. hip-hop), he tries to be open about it. Having a 15-year old daughter and two sons, he gets exposed to it every day. Nevertheless, he finds that there is little redeeming value in it for him. To Michael, music is for enjoyment, and should give a sense of something "true." Hip-hop does not do this for him, and thus holds no interest.



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Michael's family has been somewhat involved in the arts as well; for instance, he has a cousin who plays cabaret music professionally. Michael's wife likes to draw and sketch, but his kids don't do much in the visual arts save "fingerprints and handprints on the wall."

If marooned in a Vermont cabin, Michael responded that he would take a "really fat book" that would occupy him for the duration. He feels this would keep his mind active and curious, and would help retain a sense of wonder about the world while stuck in one place for a long time.

The Mattatuck Museum. Michael grew up in Waterbury and has been familiar with the Mattatuck Museum since he was a child. He was first introduced to the Museum on a school field trip, and then returned often by himself. Michael attributes his early interest in the Museum partly to his interest in Larry, the Mattatuck's skeleton of an African-American slave who lived in Waterbury, and to his interest in his own ancestry (his grandmother was a Blackfoot Indian).

His visits to the Museum have become fewer and farther between over the years, in large part because of the demands on his free time made by his family.

Though he has taken his children to museums around New England such as the Baseball Hall of Fame and Mystic Aquarium, he only brought them once to the Mattatuck. Mostly, this is because he feels that they would not enjoy it. He feels that his daughter (being a teenager) would not care, and his sons would be too young. This disparity he also ascribes to the influences to television, video games, the internet, and popular entertainment. Kids are overwhelmed with choices regarding how to spend their time, so less and less is devoted to self-enrichment and indulging curiosity. He remarks that the same held true for the youth group he coordinates in the Long Hill neighborhood.

Michael's impressions of the Mattatuck are of a great institution that could be made more relevant to a younger generation. He stresses that the Museum should make itself more present in the mainstream, and should cater to a generation that is growing up on hip-hop music, the internet, etc. One point Michael stressed was that children, especially children in school groups, should not have to pay to get to the museum. "If Six Flags is free for them, why shouldn't the Museum, too?" The Museum should also target parents, as a way to bring kids into the Museum and encourage their interests.

As a community-minded individual, Michael sees an art to living such that one can enjoy art and pass it on. Having a good role model for youngsters is critical to maintaining their positive outlook on life. Though you can't "force feed" them culture, every attempt should be made to introduce them to it at a young age, so that they will become familiar with institutions like the Mattatuck. He cites his own experiences as example.



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### Sue

*Sue is an avid follower of the arts in Hartford and has been attending Chamber Music Plus performances for almost ten years. She was interviewed by Johannes Neuer, with assistance from Don Carso, on September 5, 2003.*

Sue doesn't think of herself as a creative person but expresses herself in her business writing, gardening, and special attention to presentation when entertaining. However, she surrounds herself at home and in her office with art collected from her travels throughout Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean. She "sees" art everywhere: in architecture, parks, and even offices. "You notice when it's not there," she says.

Although Sue never followed up on music lessons, her brother is a percussionist who played in a band and now gives local performances whenever he can. She traces her love of the arts to attending the ballet with her father on her birthday as a child and fondly remembers attending the opening of the Lincoln Theater in New York City.



Sue has expanded these early encounters with the arts into continued attendance at concerts, theater, and art shows, both gallery exhibits of fine art and craft shows. She is, also, an avid reader and finds that reading and the performing arts help her connect, enrich, and fill her life.

If isolated in a cabin in New Hampshire for a month or more, Sue would bring with her a big book to keep herself occupied. The scenery alone would provide all the art she needs and fulfill her need to connect, be enriched, and avoid boredom.

Discipline Focus: Classical Music. Sue's father loved classical music and often played it and discussed it with his daughter. Now Sue has a good knowledge of classical music and opera. She loves the symphony and finds the music relaxing but not sleep inducing. Of the many arts activities she attends each year, more than one-third are classical music performances, both indoors and out. She supplements this by listening to classical music on the radio and purchasing CD's.

"Classical music reaches my soul. I find it an intense, deep experience," she says. "Dance is visual, theater intellectual, while classical music is more about emotion."

Chamber Music Plus. Over the last ten years, Sue's appreciation of Chamber Music Plus has increased continuously. The piano and cello are her favorite instruments and she finds the music selection of each performance excellent. She especially likes the Parallel Portrait series for its combination of story and music.



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She believes this mixed media format allows more people to enjoy chamber music. The pre-show talk by Harry Clark also adds to the enjoyment, she thinks, as it pulls the audience into the performance. "This doesn't happen often enough in arts presentations," she says.

She thinks the venue at the Wadsworth Atheneum is perfect and a big improvement over the Seavern's room at the Bushnell where the seating was uncomfortable, the room was too warm, and traffic noise interfered with the performance.

Sue likes the celebrities that perform in the Parallel Portraits but doesn't go because of them. She likes Harry Clark and Sanda Schuldmann, the theater at the Wadsworth, and the reasonable ticket price. She doesn't think you need to be especially knowledgeable about classical music to enjoy a concert. You either like it or you don't. She loves it and always wants to see a full house. If she doesn't, she thinks a whole group of people are missing out.

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## Suzi

*Suzi has been attending Chamber Music Plus programs for more than a dozen years. She was interviewed by Johannes Neuer, with assistance from Don Carso, on September 5, 2003.*

Suzi enjoys her home in a rural setting where nature provides constant enjoyment. Her home and her garden are her bedrock and there she writes about family, friends and everything she wants to be remembered by future generations of her family. She loves to write and has done so for as long as she can remember.



Suzi's daughter was a writer, painter and computer graphics professional. She created multi-media CD's as a freelance artist about Native American Indian tribes.

Her extensive interest in the arts has led Suzi to become very involved with Jacob's Pillow Dance Company. She, also, attends performances of Chamber Music Plus, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Hartford Stage Company, Music Mountain and the Shakespeare Festival. Each November and December she lives in Paris, France, where she attends concerts, exhibits, ballet and opera three or four days each week.

Very concerned about her local community, Suzi directed the Gallery on the Green program in Canton for many years. She led the Creative Arts Council for more than twenty years in order to bring performing artists into the schools to enrich the arts experiences for the students.



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Suzi brings art into her home with paintings and prints. She prefers contemporary art to the classics and seeks out new artists at galleries in Paris each year. Still, landscapes and nature are her primary love and, if she were to be stranded in a cabin in Maine for a month she would probably take a book and a television with her so that she could continue to be involved in the world. Her connection with art would be fulfilled by the natural world around her. "I feel quite rewarded by nature," she says, "and I just believe in keeping my eyes open and absorbing what I see. There is always something there to enrich you."

Discipline Focus: Classical Music. Dance is Suzi's first love, both the visual aspects of it and the music. She ranks theater and painting next with classical music in fourth place. She attributes this to knowing less about classical music and having a greater intellectual understanding of the other art forms. She believes she has no musical education and so goes to concerts and listens to radio and her few classical CD's to discover things.

Her love of classical music might stem from her youth when her father and she often listened to classical music. Though she was never encouraged to take up an instrument as a child, she has always wanted to play one. In college, at Bennington, there were many opportunities to experience modern music and she took full advantage of them. However, she never developed a taste for modern music like John Cage and doesn't think she understands it. "Charles Ives is basically noise to me," she asserts.

Suzi believes that she and, perhaps, most people appreciate the timeless quality of classical music. "You know something about the lives of the composers and can put it in historical perspective. It gives you a window on history. I like to think that I am enjoying the same music as people two hundred years ago, perhaps even my own family. It gives me an impression of continuity," she says.

Although she can't remember any specific event that triggered her love for classical music, Suzi says she liked it as a youngster and it has grown even stronger later in her life. Attendance at art events has leveled off over the last six years due to changes in her life and may depend more on whether she can get someone to attend with her than on the particular event. Still, she finds the arts a powerful influence and participates frequently.

Chamber Music Plus. For more than a dozen years Suzi has been attending Chamber Music Plus performances. She doesn't like musical comedies. "That's too trivial for me," she noted. Nor does she care for the symphony, preferring small groups. "I love chamber music. I love being able to distinguish the instruments and appreciate the virtuosity of the individual players," she says. "I'm crazy about the cello."

She particularly likes the Parallel Portraits series. "I like a story," she says. "I like to know what's going on. They are written and performed very well. I haven't seen



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one I didn't like." Nor is she influenced by the guest performers. "I don't care who the performer is as long as he or she is good. I don't come to see a star."

Suzi enjoys each performance. "I'm not judgmental," she says. "I don't come with an educated, judgmental ear and I don't like people who do. There is always something to get out of a performance. I respect the talent and work that goes into each performance."

Although no one Chamber Music Plus performance stands out for Suzi, just as no one Hartford Stage performance stands out; she likes them all. She feels enriched by her attendance at the performances. "I just have a good feeling about all of them and I continue to come back."

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## Marty

*Marty is married to a singing member of the Connecticut Choral Society and a volunteer at CCS concerts. He was interviewed by Cindy Hunt-Stowell, with assistance from Alice Seymour on September 7, 2003.*

Marty teaches Earth Science to 9th Graders. He is reluctant to describe his teaching style as theatrical, but will admit that he will do almost anything to catch the students' attention and excite them about learning. "Prove that the earth is round", he'll say, as he guides his students through the concepts of scientific reasoning.



A gifted amateur photographer who wrote poetry in college, Marty uses parody, humor and acting in his teaching. He enjoys singing along to all kinds of music from rock to classical and listens to about two hours of music daily in his commute to and from work.

Furnishings in his home include photographs and prints that he and his wife have selected on vacation trips.

Marty studied trumpet for a year in grade school but moved to a new school where instrumental music was not offered. In 6th grade, his class saw a performance of La Traviata at City Opera in New York City, the play Julius Caesar in Stratford, and attended a ballet performance. He felt he understood nothing about these performances because the class was not suitably prepared for the experience.

Discipline Focus: Music. Marty loves to attend concerts of all kinds of music and has an eclectic collection of CD's. He is very aware of background music on television, in commercials and in the movies. "I use music to help me sustain or intensify a mood I like, or it helps me get out of a bad, stubborn or angry mood."





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If he had to choose between photography and music when marooned in a cabin in Vermont, he said he would choose music largely for this reason”.

It is evident, that Marty is much more knowledgeable about music than he realizes since he knows the names of performers and their recorded music, and since he regularly mentions familiar pieces of symphonic music and composers. Marty, however, does not think he knows much about classical music, he believes that he knows pop music much better.

Connecticut Choral Society. Marty enjoys both choral and instrumental works, but has difficulty listening to high strings. He attributes much of his increasing enjoyment of choral music to his experience attending the CCS concerts and following the progress of the organization.

One particular concert five or six years ago sticks in his mind, and he observes that the chorus has tremendously improved since that time. He notices that all the voices in one part sound as one voice. That, as well as the blending of all the parts with the orchestra makes a glorious sound. “The confidence of the singers doing in concert what they have practiced individually makes me feel relaxed and delighted and very impressed.” He knows it is all going well, and particularly enjoys that feeling in concerts.

Marty feels that there is great value for the ticket price in the CCS concerts – hearing a fine performance along with the opportunity to learn more and broaden your experience in choral music. He leaves a performance happy when everything went well and he enjoyed himself. When he hears a good performance, he wants to hear it all over again – “like replaying a CD you particularly enjoy.”

He points out that you don’t need to be very knowledgeable about the art form to enjoy one of our concerts. He loves the ambience of a fine hall or church, and the combination of the space, the sound and the music all fitting together- “you only have to be willing to walk in, sit down, and listen”.

As a volunteer member of the committee that organizes the ticket sales and collection at the front of the house he is delighted to help and be involved, and especially is impressed that the director goes out of his way to greet each volunteer by name.



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### Mario

*Mario is a retired schoolteacher who is a long time friend of the Connecticut Choral Society. He was interviewed by Cindy Hunt-Stowell with assistance by Alice Seymour on September 12, 2003.*

Communicator is the best word to describe Mario. He taught elementary school as part of Head Start, studied copywriting, and has worked in summer stock. Currently his “multiple-duty” volunteering gets him involved in charitable thrift shops, music scholarship programs and hosting a radio program of classical music on WMNR.

Mario’s family was not terribly interested in the arts, but a much older sister took him to a Broadway show when he was eleven years old. This opened a whole new world of artistic possibilities for him. He later added ballet, concerts and art galleries to his experiences.

College experiences included summer stock theatre in New Jersey one year. He learned what it is to be truly creative and was involved in all aspects of dramatic production.



Now that he is retired, Mario has time to write fiction, keep a journal, and draw. He does all this for his own pleasure and sees art all around him. He particularly likes the spoken word and thoroughly enjoys books on tape.

Discipline focus: Classical Music. At the radio station where he has volunteered since 1988, his training began with an excellent mentoring program from a fine cellist with whom he worked. He learned how to listen to music, and how to present and explain it to a radio audience.

In his work today at the WMNR Fine Arts Radio he organizes programs, plays and hears music and then discusses it with the audience. The interaction with the call-in audience is very important to him, especially when people understand and enjoy what he has selected to play. “The phones ring off the wall when they don’t like something”, he says.

Mario would take heaps of books on tape to his Vermont cabin, along with a radio. He has a large collection of classical music and enjoys listening very much. “I feel deprived if I do not hear music.” He enjoys going to live performances and finds many excellent opportunities for this in Connecticut.

Mario particularly enjoys the Romantic period, and enjoys all musical eras with the exception of atonal music.



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Educated in the public school system in New York City, Mario and his fellow students were all exposed to music appreciation classes. He remembers listening to the Lone Ranger and learning that the William Tell Overture was the background music. “Classical music opened up the world to me”, he said.

“Classical music allows me to go outside of myself. I find it a pleasant escape in times of stress; it buoys my spirit, and can change my moods. I feel it enriches me.”

Connecticut Choral Society. Mario has been intrigued by the development of the Connecticut Choral Society - its musical growth and the direction of its programming.

A good concert makes him feel exhausted as he invests so much of himself in the performance. He often volunteers in the front of the house. He is delighted when the audience leaves on a high, because their enthusiasm level is up and they feel the concert was worth attending. “The people in the organization work very hard and are pumped up with anticipation.”

He concludes, “When it is an artistic success, and the audience is with you, you know it worked.”

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## Bruce

*Bruce is a real-estate attorney in New Haven. He was interviewed by Larry Zukof, with assistance from Linda Burt.*

One of the first things we learned about Bruce Peabody is that he is “a bad audience member” because he gets “bored.” “I’ve seen all the Shakespeare plays and don’t need to see them all again.” Lest you think this indicates Bruce has a blasé attitude toward the arts, read on. If marooned in a Vermont cabin for a month, Bruce would bring a set of Shakespeare’s plays with him. “Yeah, I’ve read them all, but you can read them again and again.” The important element for Bruce is his active participation.



Bruce is a full time real estate attorney in New Haven who describes himself as an “architect wannabe”. He does not view attending concerts or theater with friends as an opportunity for social engagement. “I go to the movies every week, by myself. The point is to see the movie. If I want to go out and see people, I socialize.” He also likes to be free to stay or leave based on his own critical assessment of the event. The social value of the arts is revealed in his comments about taking a class. If the scheduling and content of a drawing class were practical for him, he “would do it without question. And I’d



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probably call up some friends and say 'let's do it together' because it is always more fun to do with friends."

In the broadest sense of the word, the "arts" are central to the way Bruce experiences life. He values the interplay of light, color and structure. "I am a New Haven cheerleader. I work downtown because...I want to be in a city, with people and buildings. How things look in my house is very important. I own original art at home that I've bought from galleries around here."

Discipline Focus: Music. Bruce's primary artistic expression is singing. He studied voice for one year at Neighborhood Music School about 20 years ago when a friend of his, Ann Young, taught at the school. Until recently, he sang with the New Haven Chorale where he was active in the high school outreach program. He continues to sing in his church choir. For six years he sat on the advisory board of the Yale Art Gallery and the Center for British Art where he was president of the members group for two years.

"I grew up in a community where the arts were valued." As a student in Pittsburgh, PA, he reaped the benefits of a lively and varied arts curriculum. Singing began in the first grade and students in grades four through six were expected to study an instrument. Bruce played trombone. "I was tall, so I could carry the instrument home. [It] is still in my closet at home." The only negative experience he has had with music lessons was in high school when he studied trombone with a member of the Pittsburgh Orchestra. "It was clear to him that I had talent but that it wasn't going anywhere. I wasn't going to be a professional musician, so that frustrated him...and me, too." Although he is single and has no children, Bruce expressed his concerns about the lack of art opportunities in the public schools and, while singing with the New Haven Chorale, he was active in their high school outreach program.

The eldest of four brothers, Bruce is the only sibling who is active in the arts. However, music and crafts are part of his parents and grandparents legacy. "My mom's a church choir singer." After they retired, his parents "picked a craft every year and taught themselves how to do it. Broadway – it's the only music my parents listen to. That's the family activity. We get a hotel and tickets to shows."

Neighborhood Music School. An articulate and passionate spokesperson for the arts, he believes "grown-up, educated people support live theater, live music, live art of all types." He is equally passionate about the importance of participation, not just passive exposure, to the arts. "I think you have to be an active participant in order to internalize (the arts) and make it part of who you are." But finding the time as an adult to take lessons at local institutions such as Creative Arts Workshop and Neighborhood Music School is difficult. The best times for adult classes would, according to Bruce, be after work, before dinner and would involve a commitment of four to five weeks. He would be interested in courses that introduce him to new ideas and skills such as writing music. His criteria for evaluating a successful class are not the same as they would be for a public



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performance. “These things are most valuable when they’re done for personal growth, not for public acknowledgement. In our society, however, ‘doing something for yourself when you’re 40 or 50 is not valued.’ ”

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## Heather

*Heather is a nurse who works for a large insurance company. She lives in Madison, CT, with her husband, who is a musician, and her two children, Anastasia and Samuel. She was interviewed on October 7, 2003, by Linda Burt with assistance from Carol Ross.*

From the onset, Heather said that she was eager to create things: beautiful gardens, well-stitched pillows and dresses, children who appreciate the arts. Her mother, a nurse and head of a convalescent home, passed down many of these talents to her, and quickly Heather learned the joy of working with her hands on knitting and needlework projects and, more recently, on sewing tasks. She also loves reading and finds it difficult to go to sleep without spending some time working through her bedside pile of books. Currently she is reading *Hatred* by Dr. Willard Galen which she described as an ‘incredible book’.



If she had time and money she would take a drawing class, perfect her needlework skills by “mastering that beast of a sewing machine,” and study the violin so that she can play duets with her daughter Anastasia, a current cello student.

Although she does not consider herself to be ‘an artist’, much of her life is devoted to ‘the arts’. Heather’s primary creative outlet is gardening. She comes from a family of farmers and remarks that “the earth is a spiritual thing for me.” She loves to stand in her house and look out at the garden, viewing the colors, shapes, and heights of plants and bushes and trees. She looks for balance in the relationship of one plant to another and strives to plant flowers that appeal to birds and butterflies, creating a ‘resting stop’ for them on their migration paths. Recently she has found herself staring at the river that flows at the back of her yard, and she is eager to create a garden like Monet’s with irises leading down to the marsh. But she ends her reverie with that caveat that we should “Remember that the marsh is delicate and necessary.” Interacting with the environment, the rocks, and the landscape is important to Heather and if she were stranded in a cabin, she would garden.

Heather believes that she looks at the world through an artistic prism. Her husband takes their children to museums to discover painting and sculpture. She takes them outside to share the joys of the ‘jewel weed’ with its teeny orange, orchid-like flower.



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The arts are important to Heather and she stated that “children have an innate interest in the arts. Coo to a baby and they sing back to you. But, be careful! It is easy to squelch their instincts.” She thinks that it is valuable to involve children by having music playing throughout the house and keeping art supplies on hand. The walls should be full of children’s drawings, and, as they walk down the street, they should examine the architecture. “Look at what human hands have created!”

Discipline Focus: Music. “Music brings peace and opens up another avenue to the human heart and the human mind.”

Throughout the interview Heather expressed the belief that it is extremely important to have music in our lives. It is “part of who we are.” Music has cognitive benefits, creating pathways in the brain and opening it up to math, science, and spatial learning. Music also has cultural benefits, enabling people to relate to one another. Jazz, blues, rock and roll are playing in their house a lot.

With the latter statement in mind, Heather related a lovely story about two of her daughter’s friends who came for a ‘sleep-over’. In the course of the evening, they discovered that each of them was taking music lessons and spontaneously began to play with great delight. This re-enforced Heather’s feeling that music is a universal language and is a wonderful way of socializing.

Heather’s husband is a drummer and singer who has played in bands since he was 14 or 15 years old. She marvels that he has perfect pitch and that he can pick up any instrument and play it!

Her daughter, Anastasia, (a 10 year old with a theatrical flair) is studying cello and is interested in pursuing dance lessons. Her son, Samuel, at 4 likes to play the drums. He has incredible natural rhythm, and Heather notices him tapping his foot when his sister plays the cello, encouraging her to “get the beat”.

Heather found great joy in her violin lessons. Her teacher was terrific. She remembered arriving for class in the winter months when the teacher would start by warming her hands for her, accompanying her, and then playing a record that would inspire her own playing. She was motivated to study and loved the feeling that came to her when she truly understood what her teacher was saying about intonation and finger positioning. She would like to continue her study again and finds herself motivated to do so after listening to a piece on the car radio. Until recently her job required that she travel a great deal. This commuting was made more pleasant by tuning in to National Public Radio. “After I heard a fabulous piece, I wanted to feel what it would be like to play that music.”

After these positive memories, Heather discussed some bad musical experiences that she had had. She remembered getting lost in a group class; she was concerned about not understanding chord changes; she cringed when recalling having her head shoved down close to the speaker so that she could ‘hear the



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bass'. This compounded her feeling of "being too stupid to understand music." She is determined, however, that her children not suffer these negative experiences and constantly imparts to them the message that "everyone can play".

Neighborhood Music School. Heather's daughter started studying cello at public school and then, encouraged by her teachers, began to take private lessons at the Neighborhood Music School's branch in Guilford last summer. Her experience there was very positive. She found the Guilford branch manager helpful and the production that was presented was extremely impressive. She probably would have stayed at the shoreline branch had her teacher not moved to the main facility on Audubon Street in New Haven. As Heather said, "We would follow her anywhere."

Heather continues to be very enthusiastic about the staff, the teachers, and the offerings of NMS. She read through the catalog in toto, and, although her main relationship at this time is with a specific, 'wonderful' teacher, she hopes that her daughter will progress into theory classes and an ensemble, and will eventually try out for the Youth Orchestra (she is in the orchestra at her public school now).

Heather would love to take lessons at NMS, too, but finds it difficult to do at this time because of financial constraints. Clearly, living on one income is difficult. She did look up on-line about the possibility of applying for a scholarship, but felt too nervous and uncomfortable about the application process to request help. Furthermore, she believes that children should have priority in the distribution of funds. She expressed interest in learning more about the way the financial aid program is funded and administered.

Heather concluded the interview by stating that she would like to be involved and to volunteer to promote the School or make money for it. Her question was, "How do I discover what resources there are for volunteers at the School?" The interviewers assured her that someone would call her.

Heather's final comment was a wonderful one: "When you come onto Audubon Street you're in a totally different world...the colors...the sounds...the sights – it's great!"

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## **Graham**

*"Our family is really all about the arts", says Graham, a 46-year old resident of Old Greenwich and the father of three. Graham was interviewed by Nick Rudd, with assistance from Elaine Carroll of the Stamford Symphony Orchestra.*

"Education for our children is exposing them to arts and culture of all kinds." Equally, how Graham has come to incorporate the arts in his own life dramatizes and reinforces his search for authenticity.



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Owner of his own financial services company in Stamford, Graham began his life journey through the arts as an 11-year old schoolboy in England when the first classical music concert he attended sparked a powerful emotional reaction. As a



self-styled “math and sciences person”, he resolutely explored his experience by library research. To this day, he will prepare in advance for the transcendent emotional experience of a live concert by listening to CDs, reading the program notes and learning more about the composer’s historical niche.

World travel, living abroad and a fascination with the world’s cultures have driven Graham to encourage cultural and artistic sensibilities to his children, Tom (16), Sophie (14) and Amy (7), each in their own ways. In this, his wife Sue is a strong partner, herself a Royal Academy-trained string player, a pre-school music teacher and the executive director of a local instrumental ensemble.

Tom plays clarinet “as a serious hobby”, while Sophie’s talent with the violin, enhanced by top-flight coaching, has already led to professional engagements. While studying violin, Amy appears to prefer the graphic arts at this age.

Graham reinforces the children’s artistic endeavors by taking them seriously. He and his wife have more than 300 framed objects created by the children. Similarly, their eclectic but aesthetic collection of indigenous art drawn from their travels (a six-foot African statue, New Mexico pueblo pottery) is enhanced by objects the entire family chooses to remind them of their various trips. As he puts it, Graham is the “facilitator” of his children’s exploration of the arts, doing the groundwork to enable their (and his) learning and development.

Besides concerts (of all kinds), Graham and his family enjoy theater, ballet, opera, film and art exhibitions. He reads extensively and has installed a wine cellar in the family’s new home to support his penchant for serious meal preparation and presentation.

Discipline Focus: Music. But classical music is at the core of Graham’s life in the arts. Snowbound in a Vermont cabin, he would take along his collection of 700-800 classical CDs (admittedly some purchased for Tom and Sophie’s study), mostly for the emotional engagement the music provides him. He says, “I get pleasure out of listening to music.”

“We were not a musical family”, Graham recalls, so that schoolboy concert in Liverpool (“It was the ‘Four Seasons’ and I found it phenomenal.”) was a transformative experience. “It was kind of confusing at the time – the emotional reaction – I was so science-based,” he recounts. A ballet visit later that season, also through the school, reinforced the confusion. Again, unaccustomed emotions drove him to try understanding through research what he was feeling.





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Now, he says, "I'm interested in the music from a historical perspective and for the cultures it represents. Music reflects the economic and political times. Einstein was a great violinist. Michelangelo was a great scientist. I find that fascinating from both sides of my mind."

This is the voice of a self-aware person who consciously appreciates and seeks out certain benefits from classical music. "It's a combination of the joy of the experience with the learning aspect of it." Graham and his wife carry over their interest in nurturing musical appreciation to adults in their circle. They put on home recitals for 60-70 people at a time ("We've always had a large room in every house we've had, big enough for the grand [piano]).

As Graham's understanding of classical music has grown and evolved, so has his reaction to performance. "What I don't like," he continues, "is when I know the technical performance is not good. For me, that severely dents the emotional experience." Similarly, he says, "One thing I do not like is that the arts can be incredibly aloof. What goes with that is elitism."

"For me," Graham says, "(classical music) has to feel sort of interactive. It's got to connect with the audience...It can be the ambience of the theater (or) as subtle as how the soloist walks on stage and greets the audience...Is someone trying to connect?" What it boils down to for Graham is genuine communication and respect for the audience. "One earns respect on an ongoing basis (and) I like the subtleties," he notes. "I like seeing the cellist smile at the end of a passage."

Stamford Symphony Orchestra. Graham responds positively to the Stamford Symphony Orchestra's concerts, which attract both him and his family on the basis of programming and soloists. "I don't view it as a minor, small town orchestra, (but) the major New York orchestras can attract the major soloists. That's where the SSO can't compete. Generally, (the SSO) is good quality, which means we can enjoy it. We tend to be supportive of local things, generally."

Graham observes that a 5-program season does not provide much presence for an orchestra purporting to be a community institution. "You are representing yourself as this city's orchestra. You have a big gap, six months with nothing happening. That impacts loyalty," he says.

In fact, Graham believes the SSO's community connection is not very deep and that increased community involvement could benefit the SSO. "I'm not aware of any programs in the schools or any chamber music programs. Why not get subsets of the Orchestra into the schools," he suggests, "or have Commendation Award winners (Ed. - 8th-graders) have a workshop with the Orchestra's musicians or sit in on rehearsals?"

Attention to detail would benefit the SSO, he says, recounting an experience he had attending a student recital at the Rich Forum last August. It was an ideal



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opportunity for promoting SSO concerts, he said, but the SSO poster on display showed last season's programming. Frankly, he continues, it's better to drive an orchestra's finances by "putting bums in seats" rather than through contributions. "With more audience participation, it's more of an experience for everyone." And programming benefits from understanding the needs of the audience. "(The repertory) shouldn't all be war horses, but neither should they be ego trips for the music director."

Graham astutely assesses the SSO's situation at the moment. "You are at something of a crossroads. It's a significant thing to be changing the music director (Ed. – over the next two seasons). With change comes opportunity. Are you doing well? Yes. Can you do better? Yes, you can."

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## Tim

*"(As a young percussionist with the Wisconsin Youth Symphony) I was part of a really exceptional team of people... I liked classical music, and to be doing a cymbal crash at a climactic moment – it's a rush!," says Tim, a 53-year old physicist who works as an optical engineer for a global technology company. "I can't explain intellectually what sends shivers up my back," he continues. "It's kind of an addiction." Tim was interviewed by Nick Rudd with assistance from Elaine Carroll of the Stamford Symphony Orchestra.*



Tim begins, "I consider my work to be a creative outlet." Seeking to design a test mask to manufacture electronic chips, "...I understand...building the chip as extremely intricate artwork...a fractal design...and sometimes the creative spark meets against hard-nosed engineers!"

An organ teacher in college set him up to meet his wife-to-be because they shared a love for music. "In tough moments, it's nice to have the music connection." He has sung in the church choir since coming to Ridgefield 13 years ago and occasionally fills in for the organist. He has also played keyboard to support his wife's choral work as the music teacher at the middle school.

He takes great pride in his children's musical accomplishments and uses a shared love of music to sustain and reinforce his relationships with his daughters. Playing on one of the two grand pianos the family has at home ("the only things of value in the house"), he accompanied his older daughter, now in medical school, as she learned to sing well enough for her college group to perform the national anthem at a Celtics game. He did the same for her younger sister, now a high-school sophomore, who takes private voice lessons, loves musical theater and goes to Broadway shows on half-price tickets. The two middle children, both boys, played trumpet and saxophone respectively, but haven't kept it up in



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college. In the context of this conversation about music, they get only fleeting mention.

It was “the music nun” in the parochial school across the street in the small Wisconsin town where Tim grew up who got him started on the keyboard in the 3rd grade. She offered free lessons on the organ (for which he ultimately paid by playing for the 5:30 am Sunday service). “The first time I hit a C major chord...Wow! I'm a major musician!” He played through college and made some useful money in graduate school with church playing.

Going to the regional high school brought him to band and a director who sent Tim into a practice room with a drum manual and a practice pad. That led to a percussion slot at the Wisconsin Youth Symphony (“a gigantic group of great musicians”) and an experience which resonates in his life (“I still give money to it.”)

Tim will go to a museum exhibit (“every couple of years”) and appreciates a local quilt artist’s work, but “when I don’t know that much about it, all I can do is admire it.” He saves his enthusiasm for music. “I think there is a tremendous connection between musical activities and any job I can think of,” he states. “I have a feeling that participating in music has helped my brain become more flexible at seeing things.”

“At 50 I made a list of the top ten most influential people in my life and sent them a thank you letter,” Tim recalls. “Four of the ten were music teachers.”

Given a snowbound winter in a Vermont cabin, Tim would take a powerful PC with some good MIDI software and a keyboard. “I've never really had time to explore a wide open musical world.”

Discipline Focus: Music. Tim and his wife have subscribed to the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra for 6 years, though they haven’t been attending much for the last couple of years. Concerts by the Armed Forces bands, like the Coast Guard Academy, attract him, too. He goes to high school musicals, now that his younger daughter is involved.

With a 45-minute commute each way in the car, classical radio and recordings are a part of everyday life for Tim. He has about 200 classical recordings, and while he knows one can listen to music on the internet, he hasn’t started to do that.

On reflection, Tim considers himself relatively knowledgeable about classical music. He is familiar with the symphonic literature, for example. “I enjoy trying to figure out who the composer is when I hear a snippet,” he comments.



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Tim likes Baroque and Renaissance music, both instrumental and vocal, and will listen to a Celtic music program on the local NPR station. He once went to a Tokyo String Quarter recital and while “I enjoyed it, it didn’t light my fire.”

What galvanizes Tim is “big sound... think of Copland’s Common Man,” he says. Perhaps it’s connected to the first community band concert he attended, a performance his grandmother took him to when he was 7. “I remember the shiny brass and the big sound. I couldn’t believe it. It seemed huge to me then, though it probably wasn’t. I had never heard anything like that.”

On the whole, music in the family was quiet. Tim’s father and mother sang in church, and he remembers his mother and sister harmonizing as they did the dishes. Perhaps that accounts for the benefits he ascribes to classical music: serenity and calmness. “Music offers solace,” he says. That balances the other key value he has found in music, “(learning how to) participate in a group with a larger purpose.”

Stamford Symphony Orchestra. Tim has never been to a Stamford Symphony Orchestra concert. While he has been to the Palace Theater in Stamford for a Penn & Teller show, he didn’t know the SSO played there. “I guess it’s just not on my radar screen,” he guesses.

Some particular repertory might attract him, he says. But he has never seen an ad for the SSO (he typically reads the Danbury News Times and the Ridgefield Press). Tim and his wife generally plan the weekend by looking at the Friday calendars in their newspapers, but he admits he might easily skip over any mentions there, since the SSO is not in his overall consideration set.

Having attended the Ridgefield Symphony (“only 5 minutes away and a really good group”) and the New York Philharmonic a couple of times (“I’m lucky to have the access, I enjoyed it immensely and it’s an expensive evening”), he believes the SSO would offer him an “in-between” experience.

If a friend invited him to an SSO concert, he would probably go, though he’d be likely to check the program first. Given a choice, he would seek out programs with big sound: “Copland is the man,” he declares. “Lots of Copland, Samuel Barber, the classics, Beethoven, the Mahler symphonies – I don’t even know if you do large ensembles.”

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## Lynn

*Lynn, a long time Westport resident, was interviewed by Eileen Wiseman and Herb Meyers of the Westport Arts Center.*

Lynn has become an active Westport Arts Center user only since first participating in a very strong Westport Arts Center course in classic literature



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about three years ago. Until that time she did not realize that the Westport Arts Center was anything but a place for artists to gather and show art.

While she does not consider herself to be “creative” in any way she participates as an audience member in a variety of arts disciplines although she is “deeply involved” only in theatre, literature and film.



“I can become intensely involved in theatre in a very, very emotional way” Mrs. Fisher reports, “and although I go to museums and art exhibitions and listen to music at home, in the car and at an occasional concert, it’s just not the same.

“Attending a concert at Caramoor or Tanglewood, is a beautiful social experience---dinner before, with friends, a wonderful setting. I can enjoy the evening but I don’t feel an emotional essence within the music itself that makes me want to do it again. I’m just not a part of the performance scenario. When I see a good play I devour the program afterwards...at a concert I look at the program notes before the music begins, if I have time, and that’s it.”

“I think it’s the language. I understand what they’re saying and how they are saying it in the theatre, and so I can get involved. That doesn’t happen with visual arts or music. I listen to classical music a lot---in the radio, CDs, the car, but I don’t focus, it’s just background. I have played the piano, I can read music, my daughter plays the flute... Perhaps if I knew more... if I understood the language better. Maybe if there was a music course like the literature class...”

Lynn was first taken to the opera by her immigrant Grandmother and while her parents didn’t have much time or interest in the arts, “I wanted it my life. I have tried to convey my enthusiasm to the children by taking them to museums, theatre etc. “Now I am probably learning more about music from my son...”

Lynn’s choice of programs to attend depends largely upon her ability to “legitimize” the event by the writer, performer or the “brand” of the venue--she has subscribed to the Yale Rep and Long Wharf, but despite the cost she is most comfortable in New York. Westport Arts Center has gained stature as a result of her lecture experience, but for Lynn, it is still on trial.

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## Lowell

*Lowell, 66 and retired, knows the Westport Arts Center primarily because of his preoccupation with sculpture and his wife’s activities in commercial and non commercial visual arts. Both husband and wife have pieces on exhibit in the current Members Open show. Lowell was interviewed by Eileen Wiseman and Herb Meyers of the Westport Arts Center.*



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With degrees from both Brooklyn Tech and Pratt, Lowell relates that he was advised early in his career that for the purposes of gaining a livelihood he should pursue his stated interest in art only through commercial paths. Heeding that counsel he sought and found employment within the advertising profession, working in both graphic arts and services supplementary to photography.

Lowell recalls that throughout his career he was strongly cautioned to keep away from the “art” world – particularly in view of his interest in the nude form as primary subject matter – because such an association would jeopardize his business career. He followed this advice diligently, widening his personal perception of this caveat to a hyper-sensitivity to what he sees as a more generalized societal censorship and marginalization of the arts. He emotionally cites illustrations of this viewpoint and feels himself to be on a personal “crusade” to correct this situation.

While there is little question that his belief in the career-inhibiting aspects of active arts participation is sincere, and while it is equally clear that he believes that the visual arts has been forced to the edge of a society without knowledge or appreciation, it is not clear whether his perceptions are of a real world or of one that he has constructed to justify his delayed entry into a lifestyle that allows for true self expression within the arts and a place within the ranks of what he believes to be a similarly inclined “elite.”

With a passionate explanation of this background to his retirement, Lowell now talks in detail about his aggressive preoccupation with figurative sculpture – taking courses, finishing earlier, abandoned works, visiting exhibitions, etc. Despite the fact that his wife, a musician as well as a visual artist, encourages and facilitates (through social engineering) his participation at concerts and ballet performances, his emotional energies are concentrated on his creative output and related activities. While he states that he is immediately and repeatedly drawn to the many emotional layers of meaning in a visual arts piece, he refuses to even discuss such layers within a piece of music, although he readily acknowledges his wife’s sensitivity to such dimensions.

Lowell revels in his role as an artist, talking with exuberant delight of figures like Alexander Calder and others with whom he associates himself while at the same time expressing less than enthusiasm for Playtex and WonderBra, names representative of his years in the commercial world. For Lowell, the opportunity to show at Westport Arts Center legitimizes his chosen identity as an artist and he revels in that association.



## **Discipline Focus: Dance**

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### **Laura**

*Mayor Owen Quinn, of the City of Torrington, Connecticut introduced Laura to the Nutmeg organization. She recently relocated to Torrington after her own personal experiences with 9/11/2001. She is a private marketing and development consultant who spent the last eight years working for Mayor Giuliani in New York City. Mayor Quinn recently contracted Laura's firm to work as consultants on the Torrington Downtown Development Program. Although having never attended a Nutmeg performance, Laura did observe students in class prior to the time of this interview. As part of her project with the City of Torrington, she researched the history of the Nutmeg Conservatory, and was aware of the fact that we had just completed a major capital campaign. Sharon E. Dante interviewed her with the assistance of Sara Zordan and J.Kent Humphrey on October 7, 2003.*

Brought up by New York City parents who were familiar with the arts, Laura was exposed to many forms of culture while in New York City. After her family moved to Avon, Connecticut, trips to museums, antique dealers, and performances at the Bushnell were always on the calendar. The Nutcracker at The Bushnell was a must every year! Laura's mother, a graduate of Hunter College, introduced Laura



to a variety of art forms at an early age. Her father, a graduate of NYU, had a dramatic flair and the family regularly attended Broadway shows. Her two sisters attended ballet lessons while Laura preferred horseback riding lessons, where, she points out, dressage is an art in itself. In her late teens, she became more interested in music, dance and the arts. Today Laura has an extensive collection of musical CD's, paintings in oils and pastels. In addition, she owns a small but elite collection of ethnic sculptures which adorn her home. Laura is also proud to

say that social dancing is, and always will be, a big part of her life!

Over the last 25 years, her work has spanned a variety of professions; including management of exclusive New York nightclubs, fashion magazine consultancy, and acting as facilitator for NYNEX as the wireless field was growing. Laura does not consider herself an artist in any way according to her questionnaire, but as the discussion continued we found that indeed the arts are a big part of her life.

Thinking "out of the box" has become Laura's mantra in her own marketing business which focuses on promoting and developing municipalities. She works with many artists while developing specific marketing tools and brochures. She says, "I have a great respect for all artists. While it is important to keep my company on track from a business point of view, I realize it is the artistic point of view that contributes much to the success of my work."



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Laura understands the important role that arts and entertainment offerings play in the economic development formula, and was pleased to see the vital position that Nutmeg Conservatory holds in downtown Torrington. At an Economic Development Commission meeting some time ago, Laura remarked to the group how the “bun heads” (i.e., young dancers) brought the community alive during the day, strolling across the street for coffee, juices and lunches between classes. “What a positive economic and social atmosphere this brings to the community,” she commented.

Discipline Focus: Dance. Laura does not see herself as an aficionado of dance or classical ballet. The attraction to dance is the esthetic flow of body movement utilized by the skilled choreographers. Given a choice of classical ballet, modern dance or a musical, Laura would choose modern dance. She is aware of and has seen the work of many important dancers and choreographers. Further she lists dancers such as Baryshnikov, Nureyev, Jacques D’Amboise, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and Gregory Hines.

Social dance is still an important aspect of Laura’s life. As she navigates through her day from early morning till late evening, music is always in the background. Her toes are tapping as her body sways to the rhythmic beats of the drum. Many times during the interview Laura reiterated that dance and music “rejuvenate one’s soul” and “brings sunshine into one’s life.” One of her final comments was, “When I was a teenager, I was the “white kid with rhythm!”

When asked about what she would take to a cottage in Vermont she explains: “I am already in that cottage right here in Torrington! I have my mind, my computer, my art and great new friends. What else could anyone ask for? Why would I want to go to Vermont?” This is all said with spontaneous laughter and much joy. Those of us involved with the interview were all in awe of this special energy which flows from Laura and fits into our Nutmeg atmosphere so well

Nutmeg Conservatory. Laura is enthusiastic about the state-of-the-art Nutmeg facility and the professionalism of both staff and students. She remarked about the seriousness of the students as they maneuvered themselves through each ballet position. Although she readily admits that she doesn’t understand ballet technique, she says “I do recognize discipline.” She further commented on the positive energy surrounding the Conservatory. The quality of students, their eagerness to learn technique, their excitement and determination as they develop their skills across the dance floor made a big impression on her. Laura commented on the importance of arts organizations “sticking to core capabilities” while allowing students to explore different possibilities whether in the classical or contemporary repertoire

“Nutmeg is a very special place. We need to get the word out to the community on how special it really is and how lucky they are to have this facility in their midst, right in downtown Torrington,” says Laura. She further found it fascinating that the CCA and the Wallace Foundation were investing so much time and energy in





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this study. Finally, She also says with a wink, “I want to win first place in the Value Study! Just kidding!”

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## Shirley

*Shirley's previous contact with Nutmeg Conservatory is limited to a single attendance at a Nutcracker performance. She was interviewed on October 22, 2003 by Sharon Dante with assistance from Sara Zordan and J.Kent Humphrey.*

A graduate of Clarkston University in Gouverneur, New York with a major in engineering, Shirley is the mother of three children. She has just returned to Northwestern Community College where she is working on a fine arts degree with an emphasis on painting and graphic design. She is proud to say that she has managed to keep the arts as an important part of her life while always realizing the practicality of making a living. Perhaps, she says that is why she majored in engineering! She gives the example of recently designing her own kitchen and says her engineering background and her love of painting helped her to both design and decorate the entire room.



While at Clarkston, she was involved with the theatre company but always worked on the technical crew. That is where she met her husband who was acting and working crew with the theatre company. While dating, they regularly attended social gatherings where they loved to dance together.

Today, they have three children and live in Norfolk, Connecticut where each summer they house musicians who are performing at the Yale Music Festival. All three of her children study musical instruments and one is a member of Chorus Angelicas in Torrington. Shirley is quick to reply that in their own way, the arts are really a big part of their daily life. She says, “The arts are a good outlet for living life and sorting through problems.”

Attempting to do as much as possible as a family, the Metcalf's attend many local concerts, especially in the summer months at Yale Music in Norfolk. However, she expresses dismay about being able to travel to New York or even to Hartford to take her children to concerts because the ticket prices are usually not affordable. However, she explains that her own painting and music give her the “arts” fix that she needs to make it through her days. The thought of being marooned with her painting actually gives her a warm feeling and as she says, “it would not be bad at all – in fact it would be a relief from things!”

Discipline Focus: Dance. While growing up in Brockton, Massachusetts, Shirley's best friend was a dancer. She gave it a try, but realized it wasn't for her. She does enjoy social dancing with her friends, however, and loves to attend local Pilate and Yoga Classes. She feels “the dance” in a more spiritual way while



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participating in NIA classes taught by her friend Michelle Childs in Norfolk. While working on the technical crew at college, she enjoyed the dance as part of the musicals presented, but rarely remembers attending a ballet or modern dance concert. However, she smiles when she explains that her own parents loved to dance. She claims they were an amazing ballroom couple. In recent years she has seen MOMIX here in Torrington at a performance at the Warner Theatre. When asked what dancers or choreographers come to mind when she thinks of dance, she ponders for a moment and she looks up and says, "Baryshnikov"! Sorry, that is it she says!

Nutmeg Conservatory. Shirley explains that she loves Nutmeg's building and what they are doing for the arts. She brought her youngest daughter to pre-ballet for one year but then, on her own, determined that her daughter did not have the body for ballet and pulled her out of classes. She hesitates a bit and then explains that the youngster loved to dance and would love to be at Nutmeg, but given her own schedule at school it is impossible to get her to Nutmeg. Her daughter is now taking violin lessons locally in Norfolk.

Shirley shows a great interest and respect for Nutmeg's training for pre-professional ballet students. She is most likely going to attend the Nutcracker again this year and explains that she did go to Boston Ballet's *Nutcracker* as a child, she finds Nutmeg's *Nutcracker* much more memorable!

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## Sheila

*Sheila's son Timmy was a dance student at the Music & Arts Center for Humanity and is now an accomplished dancer. Elsa Sapien conducted the interview on October 8, 2003, with assistance from Denise Mallard and Shawna Johnson.*

Sheila is no stranger to the performing arts: her father was a musician; her brother played the saxophone for Lionel Hampton; her oldest son plays the saxophone and piano; and Sheila herself played the drums as a teenager.



Music is a big part of her family's life. She says at home they listen to varying musical artists ranging from Mozart to 50 Cents, a popular rap artist. Marooned in a Vermont cabin for several months, Sheila must bring her Yolanda Adams CDs. She describes the gospel vocalist's music as "soothing and very inspirational."

In college, she also enjoyed taking trips to New York City to attend performances and visit museums. Within the past 2-3 years, however, her participation in the arts has been through her younger son Timmy's involvement in dance. Sheila says that her participation in the arts has declined due to her work schedule and family life.



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Discipline Focus: Dance. Though her son Timmy has deviated from the family's musical trend, he has however found his niche in the performing arts in dance.

Sheila herself does not participate in dance, but nonetheless, she enjoys watching the art form and attends all of her son's performances. Timmy has performed with the Connecticut Opera, the Stamford Ballet, the Westport Dance Center, and AileyCamp at the Music & Arts Center for Humanity to name a few.

Her son dances tap, jazz, modern, ballet and hip-hop. Sheila says she likes modern dance the most, but she does not believe there is any particular type of dance she likes the least.

Sheila finds it difficult to articulate why she enjoys watching dance performances, especially watching her son dance. "It's hard to explain how or why I even enjoy it, but I do." Maybe it is the passion when Timmy dances that overcomes her. She was completely amazed at the level of her son's talent when she saw him dance with the Connecticut Opera last year. "He did some leaps and jumps that I didn't even know he could do," she exclaims.

Music and Arts Center for Humanity. Her son Timmy was a member of the first Ailey Camp class four years ago. Sheila is grateful for the program because it launched her son's interest in dance. "MACH is about helping the community, helping kids find goals and interests that they didn't realize they had."

Since then, his talent skyrocketed and opened doors for many scholarships and professional opportunities in dance. Timmy is 16-years old now and wants to study fine arts and dance in college.

"I like the Ailey Camp because it gave Timmy a huge amount of self-esteem." Sheila is proud her son obliterated many stereotypes being a young, African American male from the west end of Bridgeport, who loves ballet. She says now their community "respects ballet because Timmy performs it so well."

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## **Jeffrey**

*Jeffrey regularly attends program offered by the Music & Arts Center for Humanity. Elsa Sapien conducted the interview on October 6, 2003 with assistance from Denise Mallard and Shawna Johnson.*

Art is an integral component of Jeffrey's life. He says, "Art frees the soul and strengthens the heart." Accordingly, he experiences art and expresses himself creatively via several outlets.



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His profession is designing furniture, and his leisure activities include dancing, drawing, writing, listening to music, attending art exhibitions and cooking to name a few.

Perhaps his “inherited” creativity permits Jeffrey to appreciate art on so many levels. His mother use to be a painter; his mother-in-law recently received a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts; his goddaughter was a collage artist; and even his 3-year old son artistically creates things from his imagination.



In addition, there are members of his family that are musically talented. His mother played the violin; his father played the cello; and his siblings played several instruments including the piano and saxophone.

Discipline Focus: Dance. Jeffrey became interested in dance as a teenager growing up in Montreal, Canada. He attended an alternative high school where he worked in the school’s studio as a carpenter. A friend took him to a jazz performance that was an “incredible awakening” for Jeffrey. He was fascinated with the “vibrancy” of the dancers, and soon had his own opportunity to perform modern dance. “Dance is the most expressive art form,” he says. He notes the combination of the body, music, space, lighting and color can “quicken your pulse with excitement and exhilaration, and then it can bring you to tears.”

Jeffrey continued to study and perform modern dance through college. After college, he relocated to the United States and his interest in dance performance waned. He felt there was more emphasis on dancing for fitness rather than for expression. In addition, his new responsibility as a husband and father made it somewhat difficult to find the time to perform. Consequently, his participation as a spectator of dance performances dramatically increased.

Jeffrey enjoys attending performances with his wife and friends. He especially likes modern, Flamenco and folk music dancing. He has friends who perform Flamenco dance, and he has even visited Spain where he was enthralled to see an actual street performance.

Music and Arts Center for Humanity. Jeffrey has only attended one MACH performance, but nonetheless he is an avid supporter of the organization. He learned of MACH about 3 years ago when he was getting a head start in finding art enrichment programs for his then infant son.

His goal was to find culturally and economically integrated art education programs serving his Bridgeport community. Jeffrey was attracted to MACH because it is an “affordable and accessible outlet for families of all economic classes.”



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Jeffrey says he is looking forward to attending more art performances at MACH in the near future. His main interest is to see that MACH's programs prosper for the inner-city children who will surely benefit.

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## Joe

*Joe is a dynamic individual who does not think of himself as an artist or as having any creative ability. But during his interview for Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium, Joe expressed a quiet passion for writing, professed a love for architecture, and told us that he makes a point of attending museums, theater and live performances in order to keep art in his life. Joe was interviewed by Rhonda Patman on September 24, 2003, with assistance from Silas Shannon.*

Joe is Director of the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement at Trinity College. His life is community service, demonstrated through his involvement with several local community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, special interest groups, his membership at the Charter Cultural Oak Center and the Real ArtWays.

Joe has the ability to connect with the architectural structure of a building and then observes how its design fits into the community interacts with people. As a founding member of the Hartford Preservation Alliance, Joe has a particular passion for historic buildings. Joe has several books in his office on architecture and urban landscaping. He also sees beauty in nature. He feels intrigued and enlightened when he experiences the outdoors on nature walks, hiking, sightseeing and visiting parks.



Initially, Joe did not identify anyone in his family as an artist, although later he mentioned that his mother was a home economics teacher who was always tastefully and beautifully redecorating their home and coming up with new, creative ideas for her students. Joe makes it a point to attend any number of performances at Trinity College regularly, including the College's two major dance performance shows. As a community activist, Joe finds he does not have as much time as he would like to experience the arts. When he has realized that he has not experienced some type of art, he will make his way to a museum or a live performance -- then he is reminded to make the time to participate in more arts activities, which he enjoys. In other words, he desires to take more time to stop and "smell the roses" through the arts.

Joe has friends who are artists and has always made it a point to support their art form whether it was going to their performances or viewing their exhibits. His home is filled with paintings from his artist friends.



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If Joe were marooned in a Vermont cabin, he would take books and writing materials. He finds reading to be a catalyst for creativity by expanding intellect and one's knowledge base. The more he reads -- the more he wants to write. If he had more time, his dream would be to become a writer.

Discipline Focus: Dance. When it comes to dance, he enjoys and is impressed with all forms of dance. If he had to pick one form of dance that he would be most interested in, it would be ballet. He is most familiar with this type of dance (ballet) and feels he has a better handle on what is required to perform ballet than other dance forms. He did indicate his fascination with the high energy, physical demands and choreography of the African Dance. Joe is equally fascinated by the physical demands and abilities of all types of dancers to coordinate their movements in a rhythmic and choreographed way that is aesthetically pleasing and inspires the audience. Although Joe does not always get the interpretation of dance, he is in awe with the strength, beauty, coordination and the commitment level it takes to learn any particular dance form.

Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium. Joe was introduced to Sankofa at community-based events where he saw the Sankofa Ensemble perform on several occasions. Joe's experience with Sankofa's African dance was through seeing Sankofa perform at a number of community and Trinity College events. Joe appreciated and enjoyed Sankofa's performance, but did not feel he had a complete grasp or appreciation for this type of dance instruction -- until he personally met Nandi, Artist Director for Sankofa. He then learned that Sankofa is dedicated and passionate about teaching the richness of Africa Diaspora through arts education while providing positive youth development. Joe was unaware of the other programs that Sankofa offers such as its Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) objective based program and diversity awareness through the arts program. He indicated it would be nice for Sankofa to provide more services to the community to improve the diversity of the arts across the state, and, in addition, provide more intergenerational programming to improve the adult/youth relationship.

Joe feels the arts are an important and necessary part of life. He states, "not enough art, personal artistic expression taking place or diverse cultural outlets for the passive individual to expand their artistic horizon. We put art to the side as nice, but not necessary. I disagree. More is not good if it is not diverse. Sankofa can provide the arts community with diversity."

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## **Ayoka**

*Ayoka lives and works in New York City as a senior staff member of a community-based organization. She is very involved in the arts as a dancer and choreographer. She was interviewed by Rhonda Patman, with assistance from Silas Shannon.*



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Ayoka became involved in the arts at the age of three. Her earliest involvement in the arts was through music and writing. She was artistically influenced by her mother, who was a singer, dancer and textile designer. Her father was a percussionist and a stilt walker. Ayoka has seven brothers and two sisters who are also artists.

Now, Ayoka experiences the arts by attending dance performances, enjoying the art in her home, viewing sculptures, painting and appreciating the architectural structure of buildings.

Discipline Focus: Dance. Ayoka's favorite choreographer is Ron Brown, of the Evidence Dance Company in New York City. She likes to attend live performances of traditional African dance and ballet. She also likes television performances that involve the arts.



As a child and adult, Ayoka always had a feeling of accomplishment and spiritual enlightenment when involved in dance as an art form. She spends about three days a week on dance. Her time spent dancing has decreased because of her work. She feels dance connects her emotionally with the music and also believes this is how dance can have a positive impact on positive youth development. Through dance, it helps spark dialogue in other areas with the youth she is involved with in her community-based organization.

Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium. Ayoka gives her opinion of Sankofa by saying, "it's an excellent arts program that has a commitment to young people and the community. The pride and intensity of the performers is shown in every performance by the Sankofa Ensemble." She has performed with Sankofa several times in schools with a program linking social studies, literacy and math. She feels Sankofa is about finding connections with life.

Ayoka feels Sankofa is meeting the needs of the community with education, diversity training and is liberating people so they can feel good about themselves. She also noted that the quality and level of commitment with Sankofa's dance workshops hold performers accountable. Ayoka believes it is important that people be able to express and experience their culture in a city that has many people of color.

Ayoka felt Sankofa should expand its programs and develop relationships globally with other institutions.



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### Lee

*Lee makes his living as an artist; he is a stylist, a writer, a photographer and a craftsman, and attends dance performances at Wesleyan's Center for the Arts on a regular basis. He was interviewed by Pamela Tatge, with assistance from Kristen Olson.*

Thursday through Saturday, Lee employs his skill and creativity as a stylist, producing "20 works of art, about one every half hour, on a canvas that can talk back." He is also in the process of renovating an old building into a multi-use space where he will live, house his salon, rent space to artists, and rent apartments that he hopes will attract arts-minded people. In his spare time, he practices free-lance photography, serves as a motivational speaker and writes monologues for actors and promotional pieces.



Lee's involvement in different artistic forms started at an early age. He remembers drawing as a child, but feels that he drifted away from drawing because he didn't feel that he was very good at it. As a writer, he received early recognition when Reader's Digest published one of his poems when he was in the third grade. He loves the theater and has participated as an actor and a director. More recently, he finds himself called upon to give notes to directors during the last week of rehearsal, and they count upon his critical eye and his ability to be completely honest.

Art also serves as a form of relaxation for Lee. He enjoys reading at night, and each year, he sends friends and family an original Christmas story he has written rather than traditional Christmas cards. He enjoyed social dancing, especially during the disco era, but he finds that he does less of this now, in part, because there are fewer places to dance socially. Attending events is a social event for Lee, and he enjoys the theater, Broadway plays and musicals, and dance.

When asked what piece of art he would take with him if he were marooned in a Vermont cabin, Lee's immediate response was "Tanqueray," but he went on to add paper and a pencil. The paper and pencil would "give me company, allow me to talk with myself, escape, and take up those lonely hours."

Discipline Focus: Dance. Lee's involvement with dance also began as a child. He recalls attending weddings as a child and having adults clear the floor so that he could dance. He immediately felt an affinity for this art form, and he used this affinity to finance his way through college as a Chippendale dancer. He describes being a Chippendale dancer as an "outrageous" experience, but one that taught him a lot, especially about the power of an artist to engage people.





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Lee regrets that he was not given the opportunity to study dance when he was a child. His sister attended dance classes while he played baseball, but he always felt it should have been the other way around. He feels certain that had he studied dance at an earlier age, he would have pursued dance as a career.

Dance still plays an important role in Lee's life. He uses his choreographic skills in plays he writes; he is very attuned to movement when he provides feedback to directors; and he enjoys watching dance. He also admits to lots of spontaneous dancing whenever music motivates him.

While the frequency with which Lee dances socially has decreased over the years, his participation as a spectator has increased. He enjoys live dance in Broadway musicals or as part of a concert, as well as the performances he sees at Wesleyan's Center for the Arts (CFA) or at Dean College where he has friends in the Dance Department. When he does attend live dance, he attends with friends and attending the performance is part of a social evening.

Lee likes dance that exhibits strength, athleticism and physicality. Lee's experience as a Chippendale dancer has given him an appreciation for how much hard work goes into each dance piece and into a dancer's struggle to stay fit. When watching dance, he likes stories that he can follow and tends to dislike abstract dance. He admits that if the performance is not engaging, he gets bored easily. "I do so much everyday. It has to grab me."

Describing his experience seeing the all male production of Swan Lake from London, Lee pulls together many of the values he attributes to a good dance performance. "The music was phenomenal... The costumes were simple but outrageous... The lead performer awed me from the start. He was over six feet tall and muscular but could fly like he weighed three ounces." He also describes being impressed with the concept of an all-male Swan Lake. The evening gave him "new hope for what a person can do if they really want to do it badly enough" and "inspired me for my own pursuits."

Wesleyan's Center for the Arts. Lee has attended several events at the CFA, and recently, he subscribed to the CFA's 2003-2004 Breaking Ground Dance Series. He described the factors that went into his decision to forego subscription offers from other organizations, including many in New York City. Subscribing to the Breaking Ground Dance Series was "realistic." The events are "close, cheap, and if I can't make it, I am not going to cry."

When reviewing the CFA's Breaking Ground Dance Series promotional materials, Lee focused first on the pictures, looking for the qualities he sought in dance – athleticism and physicality. A familiarity with the music to which the dances would be performed also seemed important to Lee. He seemed much less interested in dances described in ways that made him perceive that the evening would be "edgy." "This means the piece could be very bad or very good," but he seemed uncomfortable with the risk of it being very bad.



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If given the opportunity to program for the CFA, Lee would present a repertoire he described as “new-old-edgy-old.” He would not stop doing what the CFA presents now, but he would present the “edgier” pieces along with “more social type dancing” like a Swing Company, pieces from Broadway or a piece from Lincoln Center.

Lee’s experience as a patron of the CFA has been positive. He describes the venues as convenient and comfortable. “You feel like you’re in a big living room.” Also, he often sees people he knows at CFA events and this adds the feeling of being at a social occasion to the overall experience.

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## Susan

*Susan expresses herself artistically through her painting, her greenhouse and her photography. She would love to paint more on canvas, but with a full time job as an analyst for the Judicial Department, a husband and children ages 13, 10 and 4, she finds herself painting on whatever she can – gourds and slate most recently. She was interviewed by Pamela Tatge, with assistance from Kristen Olson.*

Susan has a very broad view of art. She sees it every day “in the way the house is laid out, the way the plants are positioned... noticing the autumn light first thing in the morning.” For Susan and her husband, their greenhouse has become



“more and more of an outlet” over time. They enjoy photographing the flowers they raise, and recently, friends gave them a stereoscope that allows them to study the structure and architecture of the flowers. Susan would love to paint the flowers, also, but she finds painting difficult with the kids. They always “want to help” when she takes out her paints, so for now, she uses photography as her primary means of artistic expression.

Susan also makes it a priority to ensure that her children are exposed to all types of art. Her children have taken classes at Wesleyan Potters, and she encourages their various interests. She also enjoys family outings to museums and especially likes the New Britain Museum of Art because she considers it to be very “kid friendly.”

Attending events is something that Susan usually does with her family. However, she and her husband also enjoy attending events as a couple, and they try to see Laurie Anderson “every time she comes around.” The last performance her family attended was Stomp! at the Shubert in New Haven, and they have attended several events at Wesleyan’s Center for the Arts (CFA).



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Discipline Focus: Dance. Susan's primary connection with dance is as a spectator, and she likes all kinds of dance, particularly tap, jazz and ballet. Aware that her parents exposed her to "a lot of ballet," Susan is consciously broadening her exposure to different types of dance. She especially enjoys ethnic dance as a way of "trying to understand something about their culture by the way they move."

Susan did enjoy dancing socially, but admits that her dancing has "decreased pitifully." She attributes this to a lack of places to dance and her growing discomfort with dancing in public. "I feel like maybe I should start behaving like a middle-aged woman... and I don't know where I can go to throw that aside." Her attendance at dance events has increased in recent years, in part, because of her friendship with a member of Wesleyan's Dance Faculty. Through her friend, Susan learns about all types of events at the CFA and attends because she enjoys the events and because "I want to expose my children." Susan knows that she has attended a really good dance event when "my heart is racing... I am asking a million questions... I am taken away for a few minutes and don't want the lights to come back on."

Wesleyan's Center for the Arts. Susan's experience as a patron of dance at the CFA has been very positive. "I get the feeling that I should come every time." She attends visiting artist events, faculty performances, Dance Major thesis events and concerts featuring the introductory dance classes.

Susan and her husband moved to Middletown specifically because of the opportunities they perceived would be available to them because of Wesleyan University. She considers the CFA a perk of being a Middletown resident and regrets that "so many people in Middletown are not tapped into Wesleyan and what they can do here."

There are several reasons why Susan enjoys attending events at the CFA so much. The reasonable pricing of CFA events is very key to Susan, because she likes to attend events as a family. She also knows what to expect at the CFA. She knows that the visiting artist events will be high quality and that the student events will offer quite a variety of choreography and different levels of talent. She also feels comfortable in the venues. Her 4 year old is often captivated by the performances, but when she gets restless, the large CFA lobbies mean that Susan's son can take her daughter for a small break.

In addition to her own enjoyment, Susan appreciates that her children are being exposed to "healthier ways to move their bodies than what is on MTV." She also appreciates that her children "will know that it takes education and hard work to get to be a dancer."



## **Discipline Focus: Theater**

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### **Philip**

*Phil is keenly interested in the arts as a window on the human condition. He is a retired English teacher living in Waterbury and frequently attends plays and musicals in Connecticut and New York City. Phil was interviewed by Christine Jewell, with assistance from Kjell Wangensteen, on September 16, 2003.*

Phil has become increasingly involved in the arts since he was young; now retired, he enjoys everything from plays and musicals to art exhibitions and film. He is sixty years of age, married, and still lives in Waterbury, where he grew up. Phil was exposed to various art genres at a young age: one of his earliest memories of enjoying music was listening to the Saturday Metropolitan Opera broadcasts with his grandfather, who was a knowledgeable opera fan. He later attended a Metropolitan production of *Rigoletto* with his mother, and remembers vividly how passionate the audience was about opera.



As a student, Phil was involved mostly in the literary and performing arts: writing poetry, plays, and short stories. This avocation grew into a career as Phil went on to college and returned to teach at his alma mater, Crosby High School, where he would teach for the next 35 years.

Though he says that he has no skills as a visual artist, his older brother is a painter and has much interest in the visual arts. His preferences, quite similar to Phil's, tend towards new and challenging artworks, and Phil often accompanies his brother to museums to seek them out. To Phil, a good art exhibit will make him feel "uplifted, knowing [he] came away with something new." To him, all of the arts create a sense of beauty and wonder (especially in the traditional sense), but they also should create a sense of disturbance that provokes thought in the viewer.

Phil's exposure to the visual arts came early in the form of reproductions of artworks in the books of literature he read from in grammar school. He regularly visits museums, and mentions a few that particularly interested him: the Walters and the American Visionary Art Museum, the Met, the Florence Griswold, the Hillstead Museum, and the Mattatuck.

He and his wife have many reproductions of artworks at home, ranging from Vermeer to Southeast Asian prints. He admits that, though he loves the visual arts, he feels more comfortable talking about poetry and literature, in which he has a more thorough grounding.



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In talking to Phil, it becomes clear that he values a wide array of art and art forms, emphasizing that the term "art" encompasses a wide range of media and genres. For instance, one of Phil's first artistic impressions was of the architecture of downtown Waterbury as a child. Indeed, Phil sees artistic value "in a cup, a vase, or a piece of furniture ..." When asked, however, he says that he would probably bring one or more films with him to a secluded cabin in Vermont, though he would have a hard time determining which films he would take.

Discipline Focus: Theater. Beyond his early experiences with the opera, Phil has had much contact with the stage over the years. As a teacher, Phil was thoroughly involved in the theatre, directing the class plays and taking his AP English students to performances. Nowadays, he regularly visits New York City to see plays and musicals with a friend, as well as the Yale Rep and the Bushnell in Hartford. In general, he derives the most satisfaction from "serious works of art" such as tragedy, but enjoys satire and musicals as well. He confesses that, if alone for a week in New York, he would attend plays twice a day, with museum visits and films sandwiched in between!

In sum, Phil views works of art through the lens of his own experiences, and values them for "holding up a mirror" to life. He poignantly gives as example the play "Long Day's Journey into Night," which harkens back to his own childhood in Waterbury, confessing that O'Neil's play affects him so deeply that he has promised himself not to see it again in performance.

The Mattatuck Museum. Phil remembers visiting the Mattatuck as a child when it was located across the Green, and has been visiting ever since. He remembers being involved in a Teacher's Institute at the Museum lasting three weeks, taught by the Museum's former director of education, Dorothy Cantor. The project dealt with the history of Waterbury, and involved examining the Museum's paintings for clues about contemporary attitudes and values. Phil also did research in the Museum's archives on a local woman named Mary Abbott.

Though his main attraction to the Museum has been its historical component, he has long been interested in its artistic offerings. The permanent historical and art collection, the temporary exhibits, and the programs are what he appreciates the most about the Museum. He also has been delighted to see that the Museum is moving away from its "Yankee roots," and is reaching out to other members of the community, including Jews and African-Americans. Phil often gives a slideshow of historical postcards, focusing on the city's industry, parks, and architecture, which he has given at the Museum several times.

Phil has no dislikes concerning the museum, though he wishes it were easier to do research here. He feels like a burden when staff has to interrupt their work to help him find materials, but understands that staff time is very limited in a small organization like the Mattatuck.



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Some of the exhibits Phil has particularly enjoyed at the Museum have been the Neighborhood exhibit, the Jewish History Project, the African American History Project, and the permanent art and history collections. In general, his own personal interests determine whether he will attend an exhibition, and whether he will enjoy it. For instance, the Museum's Kennsett exhibit (called "Images of Contentment") was a little dull for him, because he appreciates more challenging and engaging works.

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## Mako

*For Mako, the arts are an important part of her every day life and have been since childhood. She was interviewed by Ronna Reynolds, with assistance from Tod Kallenbeck and Carolyn Hebert, on October 10, 2003.*

As a child, Mako was encouraged by her parents to express her artistic creativity in a number of ways. She took drawing and painting classes, studied ballet and took piano lessons, as well. Mako recalls her father, a musician, playing the jazz clarinet around the house. Her mother, she says, took her to many plays. She



ividly recalls waking in the middle of the night to watch *Man of La Mancha* on television. Becoming an accomplished pianist was her focus as a child. She began taking lessons at age 5 and continued through college. Also at five, Mako recalls being taken to open recitals of the Boston Pops by her parents.

As a parent, Mako finds value in instilling the same appreciation of the arts in her children. Mako says she has "deliberately exposed" her children to art and that they all have interests in art because they have been encouraged. She recalls when her children were very young purchasing poster art and placing it around the house at eye level. Her children have interests ranging from origami to the visual arts to music.

Mako says, "I've recently discovered how incredibly important art is for me. Art, particularly music, has served as a release at times from the pressures of parenting, and a soothing force when things are difficult. Other times, music has provided an energizing force."

As a college math professor at the University of Hartford, Mako has brought jazz music into the classroom as an educational tool to teach math.

Though Mako is well versed in Classical music and an accomplished pianist, she does not consider herself an artist. "I play well but haven't done it consistently. I don't create original works. I have only recently discovered that I have the ability to interpret Brahms in my own way."

Music would be the art object of choice for Mako Haruta while marooned in a cabin. She reasons that music "is both emotional and intellectual" and describes



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herself as “half rational, half passionate; half scientific, half artistic.” If she had to narrow her selection she chooses Rachmaninoff’s concerto for the emotion it evokes. Mako says, “My fantasy would be to play this with an orchestra.”

Discipline Focus: Theater. Mako’s history of experiencing theater is wide ranging. Growing up she accompanied the musicals for two years in high school. As an adult she finds enjoyment in critiquing productions she attends with her husband. She likes to discuss and dissect a performance. “It’s engaging.” Mako says following a performer’s interpretation of a role is one of the aspects of theater she finds value in. She also points to the multi-media nature of theater as another enjoyable aspect.

She finds that she can easily “lose herself” in a performance. She notes *Line of Fire* and *John Malkovich* as examples. *Proof* is another example of a production that she found both entertaining and absorbing.

Reading plays is also something that she has enjoyed as well. “I used to like to grab a book of plays and just read them.”

Mako recalls a specific experience in second grade that she believes prompted her personal recognition that she liked theater. This involved portraying “Little Pint the Cowboy” in a school play. Mako remembers feeling the thrill of performing and recalls the memory with vivid fondness.

Currently, Mako’s participation in theater activities has decreased due to time constraints of work and raising her children.

The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. When asked about her theater experiences at The Bushnell, Mako’s first area of focus was the acoustics – noting certain sections of not only the theater but the various performance spaces around the facility – that were acoustically superb, to average, to fair. Mako and her family had attended The Bushnell’s Open House in November of 2001 which featured 75 performances throughout the expanded facility.

The main reason she chooses to attend a production at The Bushnell is specifically for the performance. She wants to be familiar with the performance prior to spending her money on a ticket. Mako notes, “If I was wealthy and had time I would subscribe and see everything.” However, she does note that she is not as inclined to go to new plays.

A worthwhile trip to the theater for Mako involves a good performance and an adequate seat. She says “I can enjoy a performance anywhere if I see there is a heart and soul to it.” At The Bushnell, Mako expects “something professional.”

She comes to The Bushnell anticipating that it is going to be fun. “If it’s good, I’m moved.” She notes that she can be impressed by a wide range of themes from



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political statements to the intensity of the dancers to the tragic nature and music that “just rips your heart out” like that from La Boheme.

Mako is an intellectual who seeks out cultural experiences both for herself and her family. She values the arts both for its ability to educate, stimulate and entertain. Experiencing the arts in its many forms will likely remain an intrinsic part of Mako Haruta’s life.

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## Tami

*For Tami, growing up in the shadow of Manhattan (Westchester County) contributed to her early experiences with theater. In fact, Tami vividly recalls her first theater experience as a toddler watching the Easter show at Radio City Music Hall. She interviewed by Ronna Reynolds at The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts on October 10, 2003.*

In addition to treks into the city with her family to see shows, Tami says her early theater experiences included attending performances on family vacations, on field trips with school and day camp, watching dinner theater productions with her parents, and even renting a bus with families in her neighborhood to travel to show in Manhattan.

Tami retains the appreciation of theater that was instilled in her as a child. Tami feels “the arts are a major learning tool for me.” Tami has one daughter, age 12, whom she says is not particularly interested in theater, but Tami would like to see that change.



Currently, Tami expresses herself creatively with a new interest - scrap booking. She also enjoys baking, cooking and knitting which she learned from a grandmother. She recalls knitting and sewing clothes for her dolls as a child.

While Tami doesn’t consider herself an artist, she says she fits art into her life by watching movies, listening to music and reading – memoirs are her favorite. In addition, she likes to decorate her home with art and ceramics.

If marooned in a cabin, music would be Tami’s solitary “art object” of choice. She elaborates by saying she would specifically choose a piece of Classical music - something she is unfamiliar with but would like to learn more about. She feels this choice would not only provide serenity, but it would be thought provoking as well.

Discipline Focus: Theater. As a young adult, financial constraints and her social circle placed limitations on her ability to attend theater regularly. Nowadays, she feels some of those restrictions loosening, although she still lacks friends whose





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level of interest in theater match hers. As a result, she says, her frequency of attendance is not as high as it might be.

Recently Tami attended a production of Avenue Q in Manhattan, and she has tickets to see Chicago at the Oakdale. She mentions that a visit from a long distance friend who also loves theater provided the impetus to attend. Tami also recalls seeing various other presentations including Sarafina; Promises, Promises and Rent. Tami attends approximately four presentations annually.

Again, Tami points to her very first theater experience at the age of two years, for instilling a love of theater in her. "I was in awe of the whole thing, from the theater itself to the costuming and the production." As an adult Tami enjoys the relaxation and escape factor – "I don't have to do anything" – as well as notes a connection with the performers and their talents – "They are fascinating to me."

The core values that present themselves to Tami through theater are the ability to be enlightened and to be educated. Tami feels that "theater is a very important cultural thing to do." She thinks of her daughter when she says, "sometimes I think people who are not interested can be ignorant. I don't want my daughter to be in that group."

The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. As a resident of Guilford, Tami is not very familiar with the Hartford area and therefore finds that a barrier to attending more productions at The Bushnell. The most recent production that Tami saw at The Bushnell was Promises, Promises approximately four seasons ago.

Tami finds great joy and value in attending theater. She experiences a keen sense of anticipation prior to attending and carries with her a sense of "feeling alive" following a production. Theater can be an emotional outlet for her, a release, an educational tool and a cultural stimulus.

Although Tami attended theater regularly as a child, she is now a sporadic attendee. This is due to some of the common barriers mentioned previously. She is, however a good prospect for increasing her exposure to the theater throughout her adult years as she is predisposed to and inclined to look to theater as a positive and necessary form of cultural enrichment.

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## **Susan**

*Susan was a Shubert Theater subscriber for a number of years. She was interviewed by Ian Solomon, with assistance from Anthony Lupinacci and Kathleen Sloan on Tuesday, September 30, 2003 in New Haven.*

Although a long-time theater devotee, Susan does not consider herself particularly knowledgeable about the art form, even though she and her husband attend between 10 and 12 concert or theater events a year.



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Susan has just recently retired from a 30-year career at a consumer products firm, and says she is now finding the time to explore more artistic avenues. She is married with no children, and lives in North Haven with her husband. She loves to travel and she and her husband plan one or two trips abroad every year.

Susan herself was involved in performing arts as a child. She remembers singing in elementary school productions and was actually recorded at age 5 as part of a school group. She says both her father and brother were very musically inclined; her father played several musical instruments in a band. Susan herself played piano and trumpet when she was young.



Susan doesn't consider herself to be a very artistic person, but says she does express herself artistically through her home decorating, fashion, and writing to friends. Her home is filled with paintings and collectibles that, while perhaps would not be considered fine art, evoke sentimental emotions and pleasurable memories.

Discipline Focus: Theater. Susan loves going to the theater and views it as more than just the experience of a particular art form. For her, going to the theater becomes an event, and enjoys the entire experience, which includes pre- and post-show social activities. She loves coming into New Haven and appreciates the re-born vitality and diversity of the many new restaurants and shops in the downtown core.

She fondly recalls her introduction to theater as a child, when her mother took her to New York to see shows. Susan says that she rediscovered her love of theater only as a grown adult, when she had the financial means to act on her interest. Over the past few years, Susan's involvement with the art form has further increased, a direct result, she says, of having more time and money.

Her favorite theater genre by far is musicals. For Susan, "feel-good" shows and "lighter fare" such as Broadway musicals leaves her feeling stimulated and happy. She says she goes to the theater to escape and finds value in the sense of calm and relaxation it gives her. She also views theater as an opportunity to learn, and loves when a particular show sparks a lively debate or discussion afterwards with her husband or friends.

Susan finds a real connection with and appreciation of the "live" aspect of theater and peoples' performances on a stage - something she says, that is not as enjoyable through other mediums such as television or the movies.

Shubert Theater, New Haven. Susan has been a subscriber to the Shubert for many years in the past, but chose not to subscribe this year due to the scheduling of shows in this year's season. She likes to have an event to look forward to on a somewhat regular basis, every month or so. So the scheduling of



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programs within a season is definitely a primary factor in determining whether she will subscribe or not.

Overall, Susan has a very favorable impression of the Shubert Theater itself. She describes the Shubert as the “right size” venue in which to see musical theater shows, and finds it “cozy, intimate and welcoming.”

For Susan, a successful visit to the theater means that she’s still singing the songs after she’s left, or has something to discuss – in short, when it has a “good lingering effect.” She is satisfied when it leaves her in a better frame of mind than when she arrived. Susan believes that you don’t need to be knowledgeable about theater or its technical aspects to enjoy it. “What’s important is what you take away,” she says, “and everyone takes away something different.”

Susan’s husband describes her as a true “participant of life.” And it’s clear that the fun, energy and optimism of musical theater presentations are perfectly mirrored in Susan’s personal zest for life.

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## Lisa

*Lisa has not attended a program at the Shubert Theater in quite a while, and she goes to see theater very infrequently. She was interviewed by Ian Solomon, with assistance from Kathleen Sloan and Bridget Carmichael on Saturday, October 4, 2003 in New Haven.*

Lisa says she doesn’t attend theater programs very often due to a very busy work schedule, and feels ‘out of touch’ with what’s going on in the theater world. However, she does feel she expresses herself artistically through other avenues, such as photography and home decorating.



Lisa is a psychotherapist who specializes in gangs. She is single, in her early forties, and has only recently moved to East Haven where she now resides. Lisa says her family displayed artistic tendencies - both her father and sister were interested in photography. Her father also painted as a hobby.

Although Lisa doesn’t consider herself an artist in any way at present, she does have a background in the performing arts. As a student she studied music, played both the clarinet and saxophone, and was a voice major. As well, she acted in musical theater productions throughout high school and college. Lisa says she has thought about playing musical instruments again as a means of relaxation.

If there is any way in which Lisa expresses herself artistically, she says it is through her love of home decorating, which began as a youth when she would



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continually re-decorate her bedroom, finding great pleasure in this creative pastime. In addition, Lisa has an appreciation of the visual arts, in particular black and white photography. She goes to gallery viewings or exhibitions whenever possible. In her line of work, she also takes photographs of her subjects. Due to the stressful and hectic nature of her career, it is very important to Lisa that both her home and workspace are calming environments, and she likes to fill these spaces with scenic photographic pieces to achieve this effect.

Discipline Focus: Theater. Lisa says theater is not a part of her life at present, and she does not experience the art in its 'live' form very often. If she does attend a program, it is very important that she finds someone to accompany her. Lisa says that unlike the movies, she does not feel comfortable going to a theater presentation by herself.

In some ways, Lisa feels that she is still very knowledgeable about the art form and performing in general, having been involved in theater productions when she was younger. But now, she says she has lost that connection with the theater world and feels out of touch with what's going on in the industry. Interestingly, some of Lisa's reluctance to see more theater is based on her past experiences with the profession. In some ways she views actors as a group with a negative stereotype – as a 'type' they are ego-driven and find their life's work in 'escaping' from reality, constantly in performance mode. However, the number one reason that Lisa says she is not more involved is her lack of time, and she must force herself to make plans to attend a theater event.

When she does attend, Lisa gravitates towards more dramatic theater, especially presentations that contain a socially relevant message. She does enjoy musicals as well, but mainly likes to see any show that is new and innovative. When asked what she liked most about theater as an art form, Lisa says the 'live' aspect is most appealing. For her, when she's experiencing good theater, she can "forget where she is and get into the moment."

Lisa finds that unlike other art forms, theater makes her reminisce about her past, because she was once connected to the theater world. Overall though, Lisa can just enjoy theater and does not need to find value beyond just having a pleasurable experience.

Shubert Theater, New Haven. Lisa does not attend events at the Shubert very often, but does recall one or two shows in the past that she enjoyed. When she does come to the Shubert she finds it convenient, due the theater's close proximity to her home. In general, she feels welcome at the Shubert and would expect to find people like her attending, as well as others displaying a range of ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds.

Her lack of attendance at Shubert events is due mainly to fact that she's not aware of what events are happening here. Lisa's motivation to attend events is show-driven, and she says that to the best of her knowledge, in recent times the



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Shubert has not presented shows that would really impress her; shows that she thinks of as new and popular, or that she hasn't seen before.

If given the chance to program Shubert events, Lisa would like to bring in more dramatic presentations, and more 'first-run' shows that have a 'buzz' around them. She does feel that her participation in theater activities in general, as well as her attendance at Shubert Theater presentations, would increase if she had more knowledge of what was available to her within the community.

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## David

*David is a fireman with an intense passion for theatre. He was interviewed by Lou Ursone and Brent McKinley of Curtain Call in Stamford.*

Music and cooking play large roles in his life, but the performing arts are at the heart of his existence. When he retires, in the next three to eight years, he envisions a new career in the arts. No one else in his family is artistic at all. In fact he says they tried to dissuade him from all artistic endeavors. That obviously didn't work, and he now lives in Stamford with his wife, who is an actress.

His artistic life also includes enjoying the many paintings in his home, done by his wife's father, but he doesn't seem terribly aware of other sources of art. And while theatre, and more recently, film, have been dominant in the artistic side of his life, when asked about being marooned on a desert island with just one piece of art, he chose a piano as playing it (even poorly) provides hours upon ours of solace.



Discipline Focus: Theater. Like many, his introduction to theatre came in high school. His girlfriend at the time dragged him into a show and he was hooked. From there he began playing music (guitar) with a "bunch of guys" that later became a pretty busy wedding band. His college education was comprised in great part of music and theatre. Certainly, his knowledge of the genre is far above average.

In recent years, his interest has started to turn toward film. When he makes his career change, he sees himself working towards becoming a director. Again, in a somewhat incongruous way, his penchant is for dramas with a strong message. He rarely attends musicals at all. For a man who played in a band and occasionally hangs out at karaoke bars, this seems unusual.

He loves the theater for its sheer entertainment value, but also loves it as a means of escape, which he said is possible as both a performer and as a participant. He loves being in the audience and becoming "totally enraptured in the lives before him". It's the emotional bond created by performers with their audience that makes him so much fonder of theater as an art form. "It's harder to separate



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from a performance piece than a painting. You can walk away from a painting, but an actor can reach into your soul in a different and wonderful way.”

David's adult life has been committed to public service in one of the most self-sacrificing careers, but he sees future work in the performing arts as being just as service oriented.

Curtain Call. David is an occasional user at Curtain Call. He performed here several years ago and attends limited performances based on several factors: “If I know someone in the show. If I know the director's work and want to see his/her take on the show, weather or not I like the show. I go if it's a show I really love.”

At a recent performance, David found two actresses to be “brilliant” but found a third that he really thought was awful. He acknowledged that disparity such as that can happen anywhere. David believes that any time spent viewing theatre is time and money well spent. He can look at any piece, “whether it's a great show, poorly acted, or a weak show with brilliant direction, and find some value to him for future use. Maybe it's as simple as a great lighting effect, but he can always come away with something.

Whenever David sees a really good show at Curtain Call he said he feels “strange”. Upon seeing a well directed and performed show, he often regrets not having put himself in the running for one of the roles. But regardless, he believes every experience changes him in some way. It may be better appreciation for a particular author, or actor or designer; it may be that he cried. Recently, the movie RADIO moved him to tears. The relationship between mother and son was so real, honest and moving, he got swept away into their emotional lives.

He said seeing really good shows at Curtain Call reminds him that community theatres can produce really great shows.

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## Linda

*Linda was the most conservative interviewee we had. Her primary creative outlets pertain to music, mostly singing. She has sung on and off for many years in synagogue choirs and harmonizes with her brother or son at family gatherings. She was interviewed by Lou Ursone and Brent McKinley of Curtain Call in Stamford.*

Music has always been part of Linda's life with a father who was a professional musician and a mother who had a great appreciation for music. Her brother plays piano and her son plays the guitar. Her daughter is a wonderful visual artist who paints for pleasure.

While she did learn to play the piano at a very young age, she never continued it seriously. She will however, noodle at the piano occasionally and sometimes like



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to sketch and doodle. Years ago she performed in a few synagogue shows, but has not done so in many years. Outside of the above, she really is a very passive, but passionate participant of the arts.

Her interest in theatre was fostered by her dad, who took her to all the major Broadway musicals of her youth. Because of his connections, she saw original runs of *South Pacific*, etc., third row center...and loved them! She also grew to love the beauty, romance and passion of the ballet soon after. However, while



her dad exposed her to these things, she said it was her mother who nurtured the passion for the arts. Her mother was an avid fan of classical music, but adored any music played by her father as well.

Discipline Focus: Theater. She loves going to the theatre because it exposes her to different types of situations, history and examples of the human condition. She enjoys being able to relish an excellent performance. "At a musical, I get a huge thrill out of listening to the overture. I feel wonderful and spirited after a great play". She feels that theatre is more participatory, that is, it reaches you on so many more levels than any other art form.

Curtain Call. Linda is as avid a supporter and fan of Curtain Call as we could like. This is her second year as a subscriber and "loves everything you do. They're always great. Although, I didn't like *The Shadow Box*. It was too upsetting." Linda felt that if *The Shadow Box* had been her first exposure to us, she might not have ever come back. She is also not thrilled with the interactive murder mystery shows. She'd prefer to see a more conventional performance.

Besides knowing she can expect top quality shows, she loves the convenience, "And you can't beat the price of coming to Curtain Call". She told a story about being on a trip to the Los Angeles area about 8 years ago when a friend took her to several smaller theatres to see lots of wonderful shows throughout her stay. She felt her friend was so lucky to have these great options not available to her at home. But when she got home, she started looking for theatres, found us and others in the area and realized she had it just as good at home, if not better!

As a rule, she makes her decisions to see shows based on her knowledge of the subject matter, "If it's something I find appealing, or if it's a show I know and like. I've been a subscriber to the Westport Country Playhouse on and off for several years and they tend to do newer shows a lot of times. I don't like them as much as the older ones. Just like you, I'm thrilled you're doing *Arsenic & Old Lace*, but I don't know *The Foreigner*, though I'm coming to see it." "The other thing I love about my Curtain Call subscription is the variety...the big theatre and the little theatre are great. I love the intimacy of both. The cabaret is unique and great fun. Love the environment of eating there, having fun and then seeing a great show."



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As a widow, Linda goes to shows with friends. Her Curtain Call subscription is booked with two couples, but she does go to other shows with girl friends as well. Theatre is very much a part of her social life. Concerts and ballet performances are also included, but less frequently. However, it was at a performance of the *Nutcracker* that she was moved to tears last year. It reminded her of her youth...happy childhood memories...her mother's love of the classics. "As a kid, I was always embarrassed by my mom who would get weepy over a beautiful piece of music...now I do the same.

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## Christine

*Christine has never attended a Stamford Theater Works (STW) production. She is 27, single, and recently moved to Stamford. She was interviewed by Steve Karp and Larry Frenock on October 4, 2003.*

Though Christine is not a professional artist, she is extremely creatively expressive in a variety of ways. In the past, she has water-colored, played the piano and guitar, took acting classes, and as a child, put on small and original plays with her brother. Today, at 27, she ballroom dances, draws, still plays piano, loves museums and plays, but most importantly, travels extensively to foreign countries because she's interested in the cultures of the countries she visits. She's particularly interested in how countries reveal their cultures through art, particularly through music, dance, artifacts and archeology. As a marketing planner by profession, she is required to travel a lot, but loves traveling so much that she travels extensively on her own. She recently returned from two weeks in Ghana where she went to observe Ghanaian culture through their art.



Christine's mother was very influential in encouraging her to know the arts. Raised in New Mexico, she had season tickets to professional theatre, and during the summer she saw theatre in New York when the family often came to visit. She can remember acting on stage at five, and giving piano recitals. Christine's need for the arts, she says, is very much about escaping her daily routine, and provides her with a way to relax. Her interest in exploring other cultures, gives her a chance to see herself in the context of a larger world, and as part of a mosaic in which her own cultural experience is but one of many. It's the difference in others, and variety of human experience, that she finds so interesting. Christine makes a point of returning from every country she visits with at least a few pieces of art: clothing, sculpture, etc., with which to decorate her home. She is constantly amazed by the natural beauty of her surroundings, and by the human architecture of wherever she happens to be. Even stuck on the Tappan Zee Bridge, she passes the time being intrigued and inspired by the beautiful view, or taking the opportunity to just listen to the radio, or to a CD or tape. If marooned on a desert island, she would have a radio to listen to music, cultural events, or the news.





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Discipline Focus: Theater. Christine tries to get to theatre events in New York once a month. She enjoys plays, musicals and dance performances. She has resided in Stamford for only two years, and still does not yet know the arts and cultural activities that are available here – and, therefore, has never been to STW, though she has been to “Shakespeare on the Sound” in Rowayton. Though she has knowledge of theatre stage-craft, because she did it so young, she is not a master of any particular theatre discipline. Her interest in theatre is not in learning how it’s done, but in experiencing the performance. Though her current attendance at theatre may have decreased, it is only because of the demands of her work, and not because of a loss of interest. She said all her arts activities, including theatre, need to be planned. She loves the theatre because she can get caught up in the experience of the characters, and because it is a “live” event, made special by the presence of a live audience that adds a dynamic to theatre that TV and movies lack. She also, astutely, appreciates the technical demands – set, sound, costumes and lighting – that theatre requires, and the challenges that theatre presents for actors, as opposed to acting in film. Christine is very comfortable going to theatre alone, but often goes with a friend, and does not particularly see theatre as an opportunity for socializing. She simply loves plays and performances, and loves being transported to a different place because of them. For her, going to the theatre is an important event!

Stamford Theater Works. Christine, interestingly, had no knowledge of STW. She offered a few suggestions as to how we might reach someone of with her interest in theatre, but who is too distracted and busy with work to know what’s going on: we should send E-mails to companies so that companies could put schedules of STW plays and programs on the company calendar. She hates direct mail. For her, attending STW would be strictly a matter of working out conflicts with her work schedule. But now that she knows about STW, she would very much want to come.

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## **Zelda**

*Zelda has been very involved with Stamford Theater Works for six to 10 years, and is currently a subscriber. She is retired, and married to a retired physician. She was interviewed by Steve Karp and Larry Frenock on September 13, 2003.*

Zelda creatively expresses herself predominantly by dancing. She has loved all kinds of dance from an early age. She continues today to enjoy ballroom dancing with her husband, which they do frequently. Zelda told us a riveting story of how as a teacher of Special Education she offered a deal to a young black, female student of a single parent who was having considerable trouble learning her multiplication tables: “You teach me about Rock Music and how to dance to it, and I’ll teach you your multiplication tables.” The young girl agreed, and because Zelda could use her profound interest in dance as a vehicle to connect with her, she was successful in teaching the girl her multiplication tables. In the process, Zelda learned how valuable the arts could be as a practical means for



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communication. Zelda also used dance to stay connected to her four children, all of whom shared her interest in dance. Stranded on a desert island, the one piece of art she would have with her is a classical piece of music by Mozart or Beethoven, to which she could dance, sing, and enjoy on many different levels

Zelda also loves museums, and has been a docent at the Aldridge Museum in Ridgefield where she lives. She took graduate courses in art, just so she could learn and understand more about the “creative process,” and what motivated artists to express themselves. On a trip to Japan, she became very interested in Kabuki Theatre, which inspired her to further understand stylized theatre. Zelda



loves the theatre and the idea that the spontaneity and immediacy of live theatre has the power to touch people intellectually and emotionally. She seems to value greatly the use of theatre as a vehicle for intellectual communication. She believes her maturity allows her to be more available to theatre, and is particularly moved by Shakespeare, in whom she finds great satisfaction in the use of language and poetry. It is in the “expression of ideas,” however, that Zelda’s interest in theatre seems most acute. For that reason, she likes new plays, too, because contemporary playwrights are just as involved with the expression of the human condition as were

the classical playwrights. But for a new play to succeed with her, it must have something substantively unique about it. She is quite capable of walking out of anything she doesn’t like. She is not impressed by “names” or celebrities, just by the play’s content, and if it is performed well. Zelda saw her first play at age eleven, when she took herself, alone, on a bus, to a Yiddish Theatre production in New York. She was smitten!

Discipline Focus: Theater. Zelda believes that while theatre is there to entertain, it should also make you think. It should be an “intellectual exercise,” which, once again reinforces Zelda’s value of theatre as a vehicle of ideas. She loves plays as well as musicals, though her musical tastes don’t seem as adventuresome as her interest in plays. The more traditional Broadway musical (because of her interest in melody) seems to be the extent of her musical interest in theatre, excepting for a strong interest in opera, in which she again seems to favor the traditional over the contemporary.

Zelda and her husband often disagree about plays they see together. But she feels this is good, and healthy, as they complement each other in their divergent tastes, and often help each other to see another point of view. She believes the theatre definitely adds to the value and quality of their relationship.

Stamford Theater Works. In explanation of her long and consistent attendance at STW, Zelda praises STW’s strong selection of plays, and their consistently, high level of performance and quality, which she particularly admires because STW is a relatively small, regional theatre. She is never deterred by a bad review or adverse comments she hears from friends. She is very much an independent



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thinker, and often will disagree with critics, particularly with Alvin Klein of the New York Times. She says of Klein, “If he thinks it’s bad, then it must be good.”

Zelda remembers “A Rosen By Any Other Name” as being the only “bad” production she has seen at STW. What sticks out above all of the plays she has liked at STW is “From The Mississippi Delta” – which is not surprising because of the wealth of personal information that the play reveals about the subject of segregation in the Deep South, and because of the extraordinary performances of three intensely gifted actors. Just the kind of theatre that would, indeed, appeal to a more intellectually oriented Zelda Schwartz!

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## Mindi

*Mindi is a writer and teacher with experience in a range of arts. She was interviewed by Randy Voit, with assistance from Aviva Luria, on November 13, 2003.*

Mindi Englart is an unlikely candidate for an artist. She grew up in what she terms a business-oriented home: the walls were bare, there was no record player and no one listened to music. Neither of her siblings is particularly artistic, and her family didn’t even own a house plant. It wasn’t until she took a high school ceramics course that she discovered she had an interest in art. “I felt I could do stuff, make stuff, be kind of crazy, not just follow,” she says about working with ceramics. And yet, she began college as a business major.

After transferring to the University of Hartford, a psychology professor was impressed with a particularly creative project she’d turned in, and suggested she enroll in the art school. She had never envisioned a career in art and didn’t believe one was possible, but the professor introduced her to the dean of the art school. “Try it out for a semester,” the dean told her. She ended up graduating with a degree in art.



Her father wasn’t happy—as a shoe store owner, he did not see the value in paying tuition for art classes. Her mother was more supportive. She had grown up in the 1950s when women’s options were limited and encouraged Mindi to go her own way.

Mindi has two aunts who were influential in her early appreciation of art. One, who lives in New Haven, is very artistic, and encouraged the young Mindi to appreciate books and plays. This aunt later became a writer and poet. The other aunt took Mindi to plays and museums in New York. She was the main person to expose Mindi to the arts.

Mindi feels that her early creative endeavors went largely unappreciated. “People didn’t get it,” she says. So attending art school was a revelation. She felt suddenly understood. But it wasn’t until she was in her thirties that Mindi felt she could



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make her way in the world as an artist: there was too large a gap, she felt, between her need for artistic expression and her need to survive. Working as a graphic designer served to bridge that gap for a time, but it wasn't quite enough. Four or five years ago, she began to write. Now 38, she teaches and writes for a living, and is working on a novel.

Were she to be marooned in a cabin in Vermont with only one piece of art, she'd bring along a hefty book of short fiction. "I get bored very easily," she explains. A book of various short stories would "give me something different to look at. It would keep me engaged."

Discipline Focus: Theater. Theater is "one of the lesser arts for me," Mindi says. Yet a few breaths later she claims to love the theater. Musicals she finds "fluffy"—she prefers drama, humor, and theater that is "more avant-garde." A particularly important early theater experience was going with her best friend to see David Bowie in *The Elephant Man* on Broadway. As a young Bowie fan, Mindi found that show to be "amazing."

Now, Mindi sees plays almost exclusively at Long Wharf Theatre. Going to the theater is a special evening out, an opportunity to get a little dressed up and go out for dinner or drinks as well. It's been a long time since she's seen a play in New York, as the cost is prohibitive, but she and her husband go often to New York comedy clubs.

She feels cultured and special when attending a play, and considers herself very aware of what goes into staging one. Soon after graduating from college, she served as a "set apprentice" at LWT. "I kind of know what goes on behind the scenes," she explains, "the stuff you're not supposed to notice." She appreciates the actors, as well. "I feel like to be sitting there in front of these live people who are under a lot of pressure—you can see them sweating and spitting—is a unique experience." And yet she doesn't think about theater unless something particularly interesting comes up or someone else suggests it. As a writer, her creative expression is more inwardly focused than it once was.

Long Wharf Theatre. Long Wharf Theatre is Mindi's favorite local theater; she attends performances here two to three times per year. "I hardly ever go to Yale Rep and the Schubert tends to have musicals," she says. One of the Long Wharf's pluses: easy parking. A drawback is the lack of acceptable places to have a meal or get a drink after the show.

She especially likes LWT's Mainstage. She finds its set-up intimate—one is never too far back. "I think it would be hard not to have a good experience" [at LWT], she says. Although there have been "a couple of times" when she hasn't liked the play, discussing it afterwards makes the experience worthwhile.

As a teacher in an inner-city arts magnet school, Mindi is concerned that the audience at most theaters is primarily white and affluent. Even when a play



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addresses themes important to minority communities, written by a black writer and/or featuring black actors, few minorities attend. “I feel a tension about that,” she says. She found last season’s Lackawanna Blues to be a powerful play, one that might provide inspiration to people living difficult lives. “Seeing a play can change your life,” she says. “That’s how important the arts are.”

She suggests that transportation is a huge factor for people living in the inner city. If transportation were available, she believes more minorities would attend plays at Long Wharf Theatre.

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## Ed

*Ed is an amateur musician and writer who occasionally attends theater with his family. He was interviewed by Randy Voit, with assistance from Aviva Luria, on November 13, 2003.*

Ed Dorne considers himself to be an artistic person. At 40, he’s an avid guitarist, having begun to play at the age of 10, although he doesn’t believe he is good enough to make a living at it. He enjoys practicing guitar for hours at a time. His



musical tastes have drastically changed over the years, starting with his mother’s John Denver and Simon and Garfunkel records and progressing through various styles of music, from heavy metal to Baroque and classical Spanish guitar. He is now into “New Age” Celtic music – jigs and reels adapted for guitar.

Ed describes himself as coming from a working class background without much of a focus on the arts. Yet this interview seemed to inspire him to think of his father anew as an artist. A self-employed television service man, his father loved to work around the house. Once he built a staircase from scratch, researching the specific heights and angles required by the local building codes. Having finished the project, he displayed a great deal of pride in his accomplishment.

Although Ed has never before thought of his mother as particularly artistic, he now recognizes her making her own clothes as a type of creative achievement. She learned to sew from Ed’s grandmother, who was also a seamstress, as well as a potter.

Perhaps the most artistic member of his family, Ed’s uncle attended Pratt Institute and served as the art director of a public television station. He is a painter and a master potter. His aunt also painted, worked with pottery, and wrote children’s stories (although not professionally).

His wife is not particularly artistic, he says, but his daughter, 15, (who does not live with him) enjoys creating Japanese-style animé, web sites and music videos.



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She recently wrote a poem, which Ed considered “pretty good,” and then translated it into Spanish.

Ed finds that music is a way to connect with his daughter. He will play her a song and discuss the lyrics with her. He has discovered that these conversations enable them to address deeper issues. “In a way, art has helped me get across some of my ideas to her,” he explains. “I’d like to get her out of the box, away from shopping and the mall, and thinking about spiritual things.”

Born in Connecticut and raised in Pensacola, Florida, Ed has a deep-rooted pride in being a New Englander. He loves New Haven, and finds satisfaction in the Gothic-style architecture at Yale and the simple beauty of the New Haven Green, which he calls a “perfect example of a New England green.” Although he is not a religious person, he enjoys visiting churches, mainly out of appreciation for their architecture.

Asked what one *objet d’art* he would take with him if he were to be marooned on a desert island, he did not hesitate. “My guitar,” he said, making clear his passion for creating art.

Discipline Focus: Theater. Ed has been to several Broadway shows, all musicals. He saw *The Lion King* twice – on Broadway and at The Bushnell in Hartford, but says he was “roped into it” the second time. Surprisingly, he is not a fan of musicals. The choice of shows has often been dictated by members of his extended family, with whom he often attends these performances. He’s also had opportunities through his work to see shows in New York, and plans to take a work-sponsored bus trip to see *Hairspray* in March. He has also attended performances at New Haven’s Schubert Theater as well as the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford. Yet attending plays is not a regular leisure activity for Ed and his wife, largely because of the cost.

Ed claimed at first to be unaware that there was any kind of theater aside from musicals, and said he was a bit turned off by these. “I would like to see something similar to a movie,” he said, pointing out that breaking into song was not entirely realistic. Interestingly, this avid musician found that the songs in musicals distracted from the story.

Ed read *Waiting for Godot* in college and would prefer to see something in this vein. He liked the symbolism and the sparse set and believes this is because he thinks more abstractly than most people. Unfortunately, his family prefers musicals, and he is not inclined to go to the theater on his own.

As a fan of National Public Radio, some of Ed’s favorite radio programs are somewhat theatrical. “*Prairie Home Companion*” and “*This American Life*” incorporate theatrical elements, and he recently listened to a program in which actors read short stories in a theatrical way. Ed was so involved in this program



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that when he reached his destination, he remained in his car and continued to listen.

What makes attending theatrical performances or movies most worthwhile for Ed is the social element. He enjoys the evening out, going out to dinner, and spending time with his wife. The evening is not complete without having dinner out. "I can see a bad movie but still have a good time if I have a good dinner," he says.

Long Wharf Theatre. Ed was chosen for this interview because of his openness to the arts, his interest in "bettering myself," and the fact that he is not a patron of Long Wharf Theater. He is very possibly a person who can be convinced of the value of the dramatic arts. "As a somewhat artistic person," he says, "I consider art to be one of the good things about life. We spend most of our waking hours doing things to survive. But why do we survive? Art makes life worthwhile because we're doing it for the pure joy of it."

Although he has never attended a performance at Long Wharf, Ed has no qualms about feeling welcome here. He works on Long Wharf, and points out that considering the theater's surroundings, "it's hard for your organization to be hoity-toity. You're located next to a sausage factory." He expects that should he attend a play here, he would find the audience to be made up of people much like himself—"working class suburban people looking for a night out."

His lack of attendance is not an indication of his lack of interest. He's been meaning to get downtown to see a play at Yale Rep, and he is impressed by Long Wharf's history of sending plays off to Broadway. Although he's not sure what types of plays would entice him to buy tickets, he seems to be most interested in new work. "I've never seen the point of doing a different production of the same story again and again. Like Shakespeare. I don't want to know what's going to happen." He believes that package deals, like combining dinner and a play for one price, would be an incentive for him to come to Long Wharf.



## **Summarizing What We Learned**

Each participating organization conducted five interviews. The synthesis process was multi-layered and included:

1. Debriefing sessions that immediately followed each interview; some of these debriefing sessions were facilitated by the consultants
2. Writing profiles of each interviewee, the process of which was an important synthesis exercise
3. Synthesis summaries for each of the 20 teams, in PowerPoint format, with key points from each interview (one page per interviewee), and lists of grounded theories and meanings and values. For the 15 supported organizations, the consultant facilitated these synthesis meetings and created the PowerPoint documents. This was a key interim step in the learning process. The synthesis summaries for all 20 organizations are not included in this report, but compiled lists of grounded theories and meanings and values follow below
4. At the discipline meetings, participants verbally summarized two of their five interviews, and compared and contrasted what they heard with what the others reported.
5. The consultant's synthesis, presented at the final statewide meeting on November 17, 2003 and summarized in Part 1 of this report

During the post-interview synthesis meetings, each team generated two lists, a list of "Grounded Theories" that are worthy of further discussion, and a list of "Meanings and Values" that interviewees associate with the art form and the organization's programs, specifically.

Grounded Theories are not just hypotheses, but have a basis in the interview data. They are part conjecture (based on the researcher's experience and perspective) and part fact. These may be simple or radical ideas, intuitive or counterintuitive. Each "Grounded Theory" should derive from specific themes and even quotations from the interview data. The Grounded Theories that follow may serve as the basis for project ideas (e.g., a pilot program) or additional research, or they may live on simply as a record of the assumptions that inform our day-to-day decisions about programs, audiences and visitors.

Meanings and Values are "wins" that people get from their participation in arts activities, expressed sometimes as benefits (individual or societal), utility, skills gained, satisfaction, new knowledge, altered spaces, desired feelings or successful transactions.





## **Grounded Theories – Dance**

### Nutmeg Conservatory

- Personal connections with artists can expand one's horizons
- Theater has the ability to embrace every other art form (music, dance, visual)
- Figure skating is a widely accessible form of dance
- Because dance is nonverbal, it is accessible to more people; it bridges language barriers
- Lots of baggage around body image – can be stifling for kids
- Dance “stars” are role models for kids, but don't get enough exposure
- This is a difficult time for dance
- Classical ballet is perceived as an elite activity
- Children need repeated exposure to the art form in order to get interested

### Music and Arts Center for Humanity

- Liturgical dance is a growing form of expression; making worship more expository
- Dance is a good entry level place for arts involvement; immediacy of satisfaction is possible
- Dance is more deeply embedded in some cultures than others; culturally relevant in a more fundamental way
- Where are the low risk trial experiences? How to encourage exploration and discovery without judgment
- Just as positive arts experiences as a child can lead to fulfillment as an adult, many people were stifled by early negative feedback – “you're not talented enough”
- How to keep parents involved after their kids are done with an arts program?
- Growing popularity of some forms of ethnic dance (tango, salsa, merengue, ballroom, polka)
- People have stories to tell about how key arts experiences changed their life
- It might be possible to access dance participation through exercise/fitness

### Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium

- Early win is possible through dance; small investment can yield satisfying accomplishment; the opposite is true for classical ballet – a high threshold of competency is necessary for achievement
- Some people have a low concept of their artistic-self, even when they're talented in many ways
- Personal connections with artists can strongly influence arts participation patterns



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- Lots of people have unfulfilled arts interests
- A great deal of cultural leadership happens outside of the nonprofit infrastructure; particularly in communities of color
- Dance can be a way of connecting with music in a deeper way than just listening

### Center for the Arts – Wesleyan Univ.

- Dance is a team sport
- Some people look outside of their own culture to understand more about the world; most people are primarily interested in the art of their own culture
- Some parents use the arts as a means of passing on their heritage to their children
- Connection to artists can unlock participation
- Social dancing is a bridge to other forms of dance participation
- Where is the line between social dancing and “dance as art”?
- Music can be a portal to dance participation (they come because they’re familiar with the music, if they don’t know the company)
- New dance is more accessible than new music
- You need a friend to introduce you to new dance
- Some people form strong affinities for dance companies; they are more likely to repeat with a company they like than to attend a performance by an unfamiliar company
- Many people get involved in arts activities through their churches
- Shifting preference for informal venues; less structured; children-friendly; you can move around during the performance; places to interact with other attendees; more conducive to social intercourse

## **Grounded Theories – Music**

### Chamber Music PLUS

- Parents are important in developing love of music. Fathers seem to play an especially important role for women in developing this interest.
- Classical music provides continuity with the past.
- Combining stories with music makes it easier for the less knowledgeable to enjoy it.
- Knowledge of the art form allows a greater appreciation of Classical music.
- Music is portable, you can take it with you everywhere.
- People do not attend to see a star.
- Even though engaged in creative activity people do not think of themselves artists.



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### Connecticut Choral Society

- Participants generally underestimated their ability to create or consider themselves involved in art
- There was a traditional view of "art" being visual and music -- little mention of gardening, cooking, etc., unless we probed for those things
- There was a lack of comfort with participants knowledge level of classical music (They felt they didn't know much)
- There was an openness to learn more about the subject
- All interviewees were exposed to classical music as a child, either by a parent or sibling, or through school programs
- All interviewees accessed classical music regularly through the radio -- several mentioned a radio as the essential item to take to the Vermont cabin
- Feelings around classical music were positive - "energizing, uplifting, therapeutic"
- (Most) attended concerts with "a friend"
- Classical music is easy to experience without attending live concerts  
Participants like our concert when ..."the audience 'gets it"
- A good concert makes them want to hear it again (reason for CD's)
- Venues can add to experience -- space, sound, music all together

### Neighborhood Music School

- Children from families that value the arts are more likely to participate in the arts
- Key role of early arts education experiences
- Strong feelings about opportunities for youth participation in the arts transcend social boundaries
- Strong connection with instructor can unlock talent and interest
- People don't have enough opportunities to try out different instruments and see if they like it
- Some people don't have the patience to learn an instrument because it takes too long to achieve proficiency/satisfaction

### Stamford Symphony Orchestra

- Performers have to "connect" to the audience
- the audience turns away from inauthenticity
- Some people get involved with community arts groups as a means of civic engagement
- To be a community institution requires on-going engagement with the community
- which can be inventive, creative, inexpensive
- Prejudices interfere with enjoyment (technical flaws, repertory selection)
- Putting "seats in seats" is better for the institution than seeking contributions



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- Some adults get involved in the arts through their children
- Classical music tends to be a strong connecting interest between partners (and can become that between parent(s) and child(ren))
- Enjoyable distinctions are available in classical music regardless of one's level of expertise
- Early childhood exposure and involvement with music carries forward to adult life
- School music activities offer team building opportunities; learning how to work with others for a common purpose
- Some people sustain their interest in classical music through radio and recordings, in addition to live concerts

### Westport Arts Center

- Artists take their own work very seriously; there is no objectivity when it comes to their own work
- Art is therapy for unfulfilled self-concept
- The more you understand about the art, the more you appreciate it; but emotional meaning can happen without knowledge; feelings of inadequacy about knowledge level
- Some people see classical music as a passive experience, compared to other art forms
- Radio and recordings are gateways for building a constituency for classical music
- Theater appeals to people who want to understand what's going on with the art
- Sophistication in one art form doesn't always translate to sophistication in other art forms
- A community arts organization that is active across disciplines would serve its constituents by offering narrative-based programs for people whose connection to art is through literature and theater
- Narrative connections to other art forms can open doors
- Brand-name artists are given higher value and confer status on consumers, regardless of actual talent/quality
- You don't have many chances with people – if you don't get it right the first time, people might not come back (customer satisfaction matters)
- Artists can suffer for lack of exposure to the work of other artists; a role of a community arts organization can be to stimulate artists to grow
- People entering retirement have a opportunity to re-awaken, revisit artistic possibilities



## **Grounded Theories – Visual Arts**

### Artspace

- Many people find great value in gardening as a creative act
- Being able to appreciate the aesthetic value of your surroundings adds to quality of life
- People have a strong sense of whether they're an artist or not
- There's a lot of "hidden artists" in New Haven (immigrant populations); outdoor art would be a way of connecting with them
- Film can be a source of inspiration for visual artists
- Folk art/authenticity/indigenous art is very meaningful to some people
- There are some key distinctions between creating art and observing art, in terms of meaning and values
- Early experiences creating art can lead to greater satisfaction observing art later in life

### Arts Council of Greater New Haven

- Need to dramatically increase visibility and involvement with artists and entire multi-ethnic "community" (i.e. Council Gallery)
- Critical for children to explore the arts early (in our culture art takes the backstage to sports)
- Consensus of importance of a diverse cultural presence in community
- In US culture, arts segregated out from everyday life; in other cultures arts integrated with life

### Creative Arts Workshop

- Art form agrees with world-view, reinforces other life interests
  - Connects a holistic view of the world
  - If an "outdoor" or "nature" person, fits within personal view of self
  - Being artistic is a way of asserting individuality
  - Provides entry and connection to community of artists, personal history
- Art can provide strong emotional support and healing in times of crisis
- Sensitivity to outside opinions and judgmental attitudes
  - General discomfort with the label "artist," prefer "artistic"
  - Success does not equal talent
  - Some skepticism of how the value of art is determined
- Close connection to the art form or organization translates to social-consciousness about the arts in general and support
  - Motivation for agreeing to be interviewed for 3 interviewees was that it might help funding for the arts
  - Two interviewees expressed hope participating would help CAW
- Focus on a particular art form and acquiring new skills in that area



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- Main motivation for taking classes in the target art form seems to be acquiring skill--social benefits are attractive, but not motivating factor
- Knowledge of a particular art form can be very sophisticated, but may not translate to interest in exploring other art forms
- Hands-on, tactile, and process-based nature of creating art is key
- Greatest barriers to participation are demands on time (work, family)
  - Vermont cabin an opportunity to do art “when can I go?”
  - Programs that accommodate child-care or vacation schedules would be attractive
- First-time students enroll for several reasons: social interaction (friends), interest in nature, familiarity with another art form. To continue, students need engagement on multiple levels, skills and knowledge growth opportunities coupled with encouraging environment and instruction very important
- Welcoming environment of organization is important
  - Skills, knowledge, growth opportunities
  - Non-judgmental
  - Diversified student body
  - Community of artists
  - First contact with organization very important

### Mattatuck Museum

- Collecting art while traveling is a big way that people collect and finding meaning in art.
- School teachers, mentors and friends can spark a lifelong interest in the arts.
- Some artists make an important distinction between art they make “for themselves” and art they make to sell.
- For some artists, creating art is a means of achieving immortality; leaving a mark on the world.
- Museum is “first point of entry” for visitors to a community; objects acquired symbolize the trip
- Some people use museums as a window into their cultural heritage.
- Museums can serve as a gateway to other arts experiences.
- Some museums take on the role of community center in the minds of their constituents.
- One reward of retirement is the opportunity to reawaken dormant creative outlets.
- If “visual literacy” is encouraged at a young age, kids can grow up to recognize the artistic value of ordinary objects and their physical surroundings. They will also learn to recognize and appreciate the arts in their everyday lives.



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### Silvermine Guild Arts Center

- Travel is an important way that some people experience art.
- Visual art, perhaps more than performed art, defines the individual, because it exists in both space and time; visual art takes on an added symbolic weight for some people.
- Art is used very purposefully by some people as a means of intellectual development.
- Pursuing new arts experiences is an essential part of one's lifelong education.
- Many people derive great meaning from the art they collect for their homes, particularly art collected on out-of-town trips, work of friends and self-made art – a source of great pride and personal attachment.
- Some male artists can't express their emotional connections to their work

### Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

- Retirement is an opportunity to reconnect with and discover new creative outlets
- For aspiring community leaders, arts organizations provide entry to peer social groups and "tastemakers"
- We've become a society of observers and spectators; fewer people value personal participation
- Many people think poorly of their own artistic skills, even if they're active creators
- Some people who collect art feel that their collections don't measure up to museum standards
- Some people regard their own homes as art galleries
- Some people like to organize cultural activities for their friends and family
- Peoples knowledge and experience with an art form evolves over their lifetime

## **Grounded Theories – Theater**

### CAPA/Shubert Theater

- Most participants do not consider themselves artists and defined art in general terms; those that are artists tend to have very specific focus and interests
- First experiences with the arts were commonly through a school program and can be recalled with great detail; many were life-changing
- As participants become more established in adulthood they begin to experience and embrace the arts again
- Participants prefer LIVE theater due to the instant sense of connection and the emotions it invokes
- Motivation to attend mainly is show- or event-driven



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- Combination of the size of the venue and type of performance impacts the quality of the experience
- For some participants, ticket price is a key factor in determining participation
- Most people tend to associate the Shubert with Broadway musical shows, and are not always aware of the range of programming
- Participants place value on the intimacy of our house and quality of the Shubert product
- Many have a strong connection to the Shubert through childhood experiences

### Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

- Some people are impressed by the grandeur of the theater
- The scale of the theater is unique – spectacle; large scale/blockbusters can unlock a high level of meaning; production values amplify meaning for some people
- A great share of meaning comes from personal participation in creative activities at home
- One attraction to the arts is admiring talent, and projecting your own aspirations (or lack of talent) on the performers (a tinge of sadness)
- Some people really need a story to relate to
- Arts groups should work to create low threshold involvement opportunities in order to create opportunities to activate arts interests in children and adults
- Some people would participate in theater more often if they had a social network to tap into, to share the experience with
- Subscription requires a commitment that many people are not able to make, although they're interested in the theater

### Curtain Call

- People exposed early to especially music make theater a lifelong interest
- Theater helps you reflect on where you are in your life
- In theater you have no retakes – it's spontaneous
- Theater opens you up to different conditions, ideas, and human history
- Dance is silent acting
- People make decisions about attending theater based on author, actor, etc. They make decisions about movies based on Marketing
- Some people are afraid to go by themselves to arts events
- Economic and geographic constraints influence theatre-going decisions.
- Exposure to the arts early in life can translate into lifelong enjoyment of the arts.
- You don't have to be knowledgeable of the genre to enjoy the arts.





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### Stamford Theater Works

- More people are involved in the arts than would appear at first glance – in depth conversations and leading questions surprise many by showing their creativity and involvement in many ways.
- Exposure and encouragement at a young age almost guarantees adult participation.
- Added value of theatre is the enhancement of relationships (familial & not) through discussion, conversation, new ideas shared and debated.
- Fear of feeling things deeply can keep some people from the arts. A fear of being perceived as weak.
- Increasing work load both at home and at one's job can keep people from making time for theatre. "Getting it on my calendar" is the most important first step!
- Theatre can be an excuse for social interaction and for "dressing up and going out."
- Theatre is certainly an escape from the mundane
- STW's presentations of strong social relevance and important ideas attract both for intellectual stimulation as well as the entertainment value of a well-done presentation



## **Meanings and Values – Dance**

### Nutmeg Conservatory

- Develop a sense of rhythm and space, movement and shape
- Freedom/release/enjoyment that comes from dancing
- Romance/relationship/creating a shared experience
- A cause for understanding each other better
- Opportunity to socialize
- Nurturing children by exposing them to working artists
- Self esteem; children learn discipline
- Social status

### Music and Arts Center for Humanity

- Direct spiritual connection is possible in several senses: 1) transformative experience, 2) animism/invoking the animal spirit; achieve a trance-like state
- Parents grow a new pride in their kids through arts involvement
- Self-confidence (come out of a shell); better body image; acquire social skills
- New vocabulary/technique – a new skill learned
- Dance can help you awaken other creative outlets, as well

### Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium

- Healing value of art
- Art as a social support system for at-risk youth (e.g., hip-hop as a value system; it can be positive)
- Art gives people a chance to make choices – to evolve a sense of individuality
- Self-discovery; sense of pride
- Unlocks creative potential, especially among kids who might never have a chance
- Value in creating arts experiences for others; nurturing
- Sense of accomplishment; self-confidence
- Spiritual enlightenment
- A way to express yourself without having to verbalize anything
- Dance is like an out-of-body experience; you can have a break-through experience, even if you have a body that “isn’t the right shape”

### Center for the Arts – Wesleyan Univ.

- Able to witness human capacity
- Self-awareness; understand physical capacity and limitations of your body
- Enjoyment/entertainment



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- Sports analogy; dance is a team sport; teaches group dynamics
- Performing in public builds character, self-esteem
- Teaches discipline, hard work (especially dance)
- The arts are a way to travel (e.g., Balinese dancer), to be exposed to specific cultures
- Opportunity to socialize with friends
- Escape; be transported; go to another place
- Seeing spectacular bodies has erotic value; sensuality, celebrate

## **Meanings and Values – Music**

### Chamber Music PLUS

- Involvement as a volunteer in early days of organization made it “feel like a family.”
- Classical music is all about emotion, feeling, a blanket covering you.
- Reminds one of childhood.
- Classical music is essential for one’s life.

### Connecticut Choral Society

- Some people go to our concerts to relax
- Some people see our concerts as therapeutic
- Some people go to our concerts for enjoyment
- Some people go to our concerts to learn
- There is an emotional connection with the audience when we have a good concert
- Some cannot explain or articulate, but feel a spiritual presence

### Neighborhood Music School

- Personal growth & development (Bruce)
- An opportunity to excel at something
- An avenue to personal satisfaction; continuous discovery
- Community connection
- Intellectual development
- Therapeutic value; renewal; nourishment
- Escape; refuge; transformation
- Enables one to appreciate one’s surroundings (architecture, design, landscape, etc.)
- As human beings, everyone is innately creative

### Stamford Symphony Orchestra

- The arts enable one to lead a “whole” life



## **The Values Study**

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- Participation in the arts is a positive way of educating children
- Arts activities have recreation (re-creation) value
- some parents use arts - like sports - as non-involved babysitting
- Attendance at arts events can have a social dimension
- Supporting local arts institutions and organizations is a mode of civic engagement
- Classical music can be used for nurturing (self-learning, growing children, reinforcing friendships)
- Classical music offers comfort, refuge, solace, serenity, calmness
- Classical music engages the emotions
- Audiences and good performers seek authentic and sincere connection with each other (unique to live performance)
- audiences value sincerity and mistrust insincerity
- Music offers a physical rush; it has a sensual aspect – a heightening of the senses
- Music can help people process their emotions (can be a form of emotional therapy)

### Westport Arts Center

- Visual arts are an essential creative outlet; a validation of self-concept; a medium for expressing political views
- Ballet was “cathartic” after a long work day
- Finds meaning in the story, the narrative
- Value in being challenged with new thoughts
- Social fulfillment
- Connection between setting and the art is important
- Ability to tell your own story through poetry, other writing
- Value around nurturing others – opening up emotions

## **Meanings and Values – Visual Arts**

### Artspace

- A window into the minds of others
- Art allows you to travel by proxy
- Sense of being elevated, taken out of your life for a moment
- Art in public places can stimulate conversations that wouldn't normally happen
- Art as a means of political dialogue
- Art can provide a purpose in life for young people who lack identities
- Art as connection to community (for some people, civic-mindedness transcends taste)

### Arts Council of Greater New Haven



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- Art can connect people to each other and to the community
- Can be very personal and can evoke deep emotions and experiences
- Connected to religion and healing
- A way of expressing one's style

### Creative Arts Workshop

- Visual arts are an essential creative outlet &/or a confirmation of self and world-view (all interviewees)
- Visual arts have healing properties (Betsy, Gillian, Gail)
- Way to assert individualism (Deborah, Gillian)
- Interaction with others through art (all)
- Non-judgmental environment important (all)
- Emphasis on creativity rather than product important (all), reinforcing with own children (Deborah, Gillian, Gail)
- Exposure to arts and reinforcement from family as children (all)
- Advancement of technical skills key (Ron, Gillian, Deborah)

### Mattatuck Museum

- Museum contributes to a sense of place, belonging and community (Dorothy, Ellen)
- A means of discovering my cultural heritage – where I came from (Mike)
- Arts experiences are an investment in a child's future (Ted)
- Visual art is an opportunity to solve three-dimensional problems
- Being able to appreciate the artistic value of your surroundings enhances life
- Experiencing visual art is a means of sharpening nonverbal diagnostic skills (example: nurses)
- Making art allows you to create a legacy
- Reconnecting with childhood stories is a value around theater (Phil)

### Silvermine Guild Arts Center

- Art as a means of cultural understanding (Robin)
- Art enables a sense of personal freedom, a way to lose inhibitions (Robin)
- Exposing yourself to the art of different cultures makes you a better citizen (Robin)
- Value around the new, the unfamiliar, as a way of expressing a progressive outlook on life; a window into the new, the unknown (Candace)
- Making art offers one a spiritual experience, akin to meditation (Sally)
- Collecting art is a means of acquiring status, and creating a legacy that can be passed from generation to generation
- Making art together with your children is a means of bonding with your children



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- Art helps you become more aware of your physical surroundings (color, form, light, composition) and the artistic value of ordinary objects (Joe)

### Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

- Art is memory; evokes places, people and relationships
- Museums offer a sense of place; a symbolic representation of quality of life
- The building itself takes on historical meaning
- Art collected for the home takes on added personal meaning
- Satisfaction that comes from creating arts experiences for others
- Arts activities for children are part of the basic equipment for a full life

## **Meanings and Values – Theater**

### CAPA/Shubert Theater

- Some people go to the theater to “escape”
- For some people, theater takes them on a journey, and invokes strong emotions
- Some people go to the theater to feel stimulated and happy
- Some people enjoy the theater as it connects them with a part of their childhood

### Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

- A synthesizing thing
- Escape (from stress, pressure); taken on a journey
- Activates the imagination
- Social value
- Special occasion/chance to get out of the house
- Getting to dress up; ritual value
- Not abstract; what you see is what you get
- Easy to understand – a story
- Narrative value – connecting to familiar stories
- Music can be used as a tranquillizer, or as a stimulant
- Ambience is important; sense of place
- Building has symbolic value as a source of community

### Curtain Call

- Theater allows you to be “totally enraptured in the lives before you”
- Emotional bonds are created between the actor and the audience
- Plays open you to different conditions, ideas and human history
- Whether it's good or bad the process of putting on plays is interesting
- Theater takes you out of your everyday life



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- People want to be moved emotionally by the arts in ways they might not get elsewhere.

### Stamford Theater Works

- “Escape” factor – from mundane everyday, from work stresses, etc.
- Important IDEAS presented
- Discussion/Conversation motivator
- Intimacy of space – ability to feel a part of the action
- An event – to dress, to feel, to think, to enjoy, to feel special without being forced to be “whoop-de-do”
- Local, no stress, environment
- *Live* Theatre is so much more special than TV/Movies, etc.
- Affordability an important factor

**Connecticut Commission on  
Culture and Tourism**

# **The Values Study Part 3: Participant's Handbook**

*A Guide to Participating in  
The Values Study*

Made possible by The Wallace Foundation's State Arts  
Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) Program

Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism  
755 Main Street, One Financial Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103  
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*The participant's handbook was prepared for a study orientation meeting held on July 17, 2003. The various materials were authored by Alan Brown, with support from An-Ming Truxes and Frances Clark of the Arts Division. All rights are reserved by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and Alan S. Brown & Associates LLC. For information about using these materials or conducting a similar study in your area, contact Alan S. Brown & Associates LLC at 203-259-7219.*

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## **Part 1: Study Background**

### **Project Fact Sheet**

The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meanings and Values of Arts Participation in Connecticut

#### Project Outline

The Values Study is a participatory statewide qualitative research effort, with the goal of achieving a new level of understanding of why people participate in arts activities. Following an orientation meeting on July 17, teams of staff and board members from participating arts groups will conduct structured individual depth interviews with a minimum of five people in their communities, representing both users and nonusers of the organization's programs. Participation is open to all Connecticut arts organizations that attended the March 28, 2003 conference.

The teams will be responsible for writing one-page profiles of each interviewee. After the interviews are conducted, two meetings will be held, first at the discipline level (i.e., visual arts, theater, dance, music) and then at the statewide level (all together), to discuss findings.

Approximately 15 organizations will be selected to receive professional support throughout the study. Learnings from the study will serve as the basis for a limited number of follow-up grant awards.

#### Roles

Three people from each organization will be involved. The Recruiter will be responsible for identifying and recruiting a minimum of five people to be interviewed, representing a cross-section of constituents. Recruitment criteria and supporting materials will be provided. For the 15 organizations selected to receive support, a \$50 incentive will be provided for each interviewee. The Interviewer (generally the staff director or board president) will actually conduct the interviews and draft a one-page profile of each interviewee, using a template provided. The Recorder (generally a board member or senior staff member) will observe the interviews, take notes and provide input and feedback on the written profiles. The Interviewer and The Recorder may swap roles.

#### Time Commitment

The time commitment will consist of attending three group meetings, conducting a minimum of five one-hour interviews and debriefing sessions, and writing one-page profiles of each interviewee immediately afterwards. A quick outline of the process follows:



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- Project Orientation Meeting (July 17, 2003)
- Conduct five one-hour interviews at your office, over the course of two weeks in August or September, and debrief immediately afterwards
- Write one-page profiles of each interviewee within 24 hours after the interview, and submit with a digital photograph of the interview subject
- After the interviews, convene a team meeting to discuss findings and compile a list of themes and ideas to advance to the group
- Attend a discipline sub-group meeting in September or October
- Attend a final project meeting in late October



## **Project Overview and Rationale Statement**

### Project Overview

In connection with its grant from the Wallace Foundation's State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation (START) program, the Arts Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism has embarked on a groundbreaking study to reach a new level of understanding of why people participate in arts activities.

The study calls on teams of board and staff members from a cross-section of Connecticut arts groups to conduct individual depth interviews with both users and non-users of their programs. An orientation meeting will be held on July 17, 2003, at which time recruitment procedures and interview protocols will be reviewed. Each team will have the opportunity to conduct several practice interviews during the afternoon. Rebecca Severson of the Field Museum in Chicago<sup>1</sup> will illustrate interviewing techniques and provide feedback on the practice interviews.

Over the weeks following the initial meeting, teams will return to their communities and conduct a minimum of five interviews using standard interview protocols. The interview will be structured in three parts:

1. personal outlets for creative expression, and connections to the various art forms
2. knowledge of and history with the specific discipline of interest (i.e., theater, dance, visual arts, etc.), depending on the organization
3. feelings about the specific organization

The teams will submit written profiles and a digital photograph of each interviewee (no more than one-page), which will be compiled into a book at the end of the project. Each team will meet with a facilitator to discuss their findings and to generate a list of themes and observations.

Following this process, teams will reconvene first by discipline (statewide) and finally all together to synthesize and reflect on the core meanings and values that consumers derive from their programs.

The project is open to all arts organizations in the state. Approximately 15 organizations will be selected on a competitive basis for professional training and support. Programs and projects based on study findings will be eligible for subsequent grant awards.

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Severson is a public interest anthropologist currently at the Field Museum's Center for Cultural Understanding and Change, where she manages the Urban Research and Curriculum Transformation Institute, which includes training interns and faculty in participatory action research.



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The purpose of this rationale statement is to build a case for the study and to describe how the study relates to current thinking about arts participation. First, let us communicate the desired outcomes of the project, and the benefits of participating.

### Desired Outcomes

The overall purpose of the Values Study is to advance the Commission's goal of building a statewide learning community to help build a shared knowledge base about arts participation. More specifically, why should staff and board members of Connecticut arts organizations invest time and energy in this project?

- To gain a better sense of the personal meanings and values that people find in your programs, in order to communicate these values more effectively and become a better advocate for your own work
- To gain a larger perspective, collectively, on why people participate in arts activities and how this differs across the various art forms, in order to elevate the dialog about relevancy and understand more about the relationship between relevance, value, demand and revenue
- To see new connections between consumer values and artistic possibilities, that might lead to program innovation
- To acquire interviewing skills and exposure to qualitative research
- To initiate a participatory learning process that can continue within institutions and at the community level

### Rationale

1. We must enter a “learning consciousness” before we can expect our audiences to.

Learning is a value associated with successful people and successful organizations.<sup>2</sup> But unlike other industries where important business decisions must be substantiated by exhaustive research, the arts industry is generally not “wired” for research. Too often, important business decisions – including all-important programming decisions – are based on hunches, anecdotal experience, or artistic aspirations that are disconnected to consumer needs and wants.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most important resource for our industry on the subject of learning is *Learning Audiences: Adult Participation and the Learning Consciousness*, by George Thorn and Nello McDaniel, 1997, published by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

<sup>3</sup> Ironically, a recent survey of CEOs, musicians and board members of 15 orchestras found that 98% believe “...there is a role for consumer research at the artistic planning table.”



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### Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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Part of the reason stems from lack of resources (i.e., time, money, technical skills, etc.). Unfortunately, some of the skepticism and negative attitudes that surround research in our field are well founded. Board members and CEOs are reluctant to invest in learning opportunities for staff members who, on average, will be long gone in two or three years.

Consumer research is still regarded by many artists and arts managers as a threat to artistic autonomy, rather than as a tool for making more relevant artistic choices. Front-line arts managers regard most arts policy research as inaccessible, overly technical and ephemeral. At the tactical level, some research seeps into the consciousness of the industry, but seldom does it make the board meeting agenda.

In a chronically under-resourced field, learning generally happens through experience and informal peer interaction. Informal learning happens all over the place - over coffee with peers and in the hallways at industry conferences. Almost every successful arts manager that I've interviewed can point to a seminal early-career mentor relationship.

Outside of arts administration programs and industry conferences, however, there are few opportunities for structured learning, especially for board members.

Funders, consultants and support agencies wrestle with how to stimulate arts industry professionals and volunteers to work smarter. We ask, "How can arts managers and board members benefit from the extensive body of consumer and policy research? "How can we benefit more from each other's knowledge and experiences? How can we institutionalize learning as a core value?"

To address these questions, we must first consider how learning happens, and how people in our field absorb information in a manner that empowers them to act on it.

In my experience as a researcher, the most value I've seen clients take away from a research project is when they listen to consumers talk about their programs, typically behind the mirror in a focus group facility. Ask consumers what they think, and they'll tell you. But you have to be ready to listen. And you have to ask the right questions.

Researchers and consultants should not function as information bottlenecks, keeping new knowledge from its ultimate beneficiaries. It is my opinion that board members and staff members of arts organizations are highly qualified knowledge-gatherers whose capabilities are under-leveraged for lack of a better process model for knowledge acquisition and transfer.

With this in mind, the Connecticut START team has designed an experiential learning project that breaks the mold of didactic teaching methods and turns arts



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managers and board members into researchers for their own organizations and communities.

### 2. What does the arts world look like through the eyes of the consumer?

We have no idea, really. Even with all the great policy research we've seen over the past 10 years or so, we still don't have a handle on how real people, in all their diversity, "fit" art into their lives. The arts industry is built around art form definitions that are less and less important to consumers. For example, NEA data suggests substantial ambiguity and overlap between consumers' definitions of musical theater, dance and classical music.<sup>4</sup> The more recent *Reggae to Rachmaninoff* study finds much higher levels of participation when broader definitions of the art forms are used.<sup>5</sup>

A profound shift has occurred in how individuals define their cultural space (i.e., the place where they do most of their cultural activities), driven by mobility patterns, geopolitics and socialization patterns afforded by Internet technology. A 2002 survey of Santa Clara County adults commissioned by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley found that 16% of Caucasians defined their cultural community (i.e., the geographic area where you do most of your cultural activities) as "the neighborhood or city where you live" compared to 63% of Hispanic/Latino respondents.<sup>6</sup>

Large institutions, with their well-established programs, powerful boards and political influence, are the locus of power in the arts industry. But new studies suggest a labyrinth of arts activity off the radar map – the "Informal Arts."<sup>7</sup> Advances in technology have radically changed the distribution system for art. The proliferation of art and arts programs means that consumers have more choice. Don't want to brave the elements to see a live orchestra concert? Download Mozart on KaZaa.com, or click on AOL Radio and select the "Classical 101" channel.

The diversification and fragmentation of cultural tastes, fuelled by cultural integration and facilitated by technology, is a major trend. More people enjoy more different kinds of cultural activities, because they can.

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<sup>4</sup> Referring to responses to open-ended questions from the 1997 NEA Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA).

<sup>5</sup> *Reggae to Rachmaninoff – How and Why People Participate in the Arts and Culture*, by Chris Walker and Stephanie Scott-Melnyck with Kay Sherwood, The Urban Institute, funded through the Wallace Fund's Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation (CPCP) program.

<sup>6</sup> *Creative Community Index, Measuring Progress Toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley*, a report published by Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley, 2002

<sup>7</sup> Wali, Alaka and Severson, Rebecca, *Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places*, Chicago Center for Arts Policy, Columbia College, Chicago, June 2002. Also see Fillicko, Therese and Lafferty, Sue Anne, "Defining the Arts and Cultural Universe: Lessons from the Profiles Project," *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, Fall 2002, Vol. 32, No. 3.



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What does this mean to arts organizations? How can our organizations and programs evolve to reflect these fundamental shifts in the ways that consumers experience the arts?

Let's find out.

### 3. Looking for answers in qualitative data

Qualitative research is the frontier of new perspective on why consumers act the way they do. A great deal of innovative work is being done in this area by Gerald Zaltman, Professor of Marketing at Harvard Business School. Zaltman's latest book, *How Consumers Think: Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market* (2003, Harvard Business School Press) is a blueprint for the future of qualitative consumer research.

Unlike quantitative research, which requires some level of statistical prowess to fulfill, qualitative research can be conducted by non-researchers with some level of training and support. Most arts managers and board members conduct informal research by talking to visitors and audience members and observing their behaviors. What we propose to do with this study is to add an element of research discipline and a new level of synthesis to the conversations that happen every day in theaters, museums and other arts facilities.

One could argue that interviewing skills – the art of listening and actually hearing something – are essential for anyone who works in the arts world. Our project aspires to turn arts leaders into researchers for themselves and their organizations. In the process, we hope that many people will acquire new and improved interviewing skills.

The future of arts participation research lies in qualitative research that begins by asking consumers to tell us, in their own words, how they express themselves creatively and how they experience the arts.

### 4. The whole "arts" person has a portfolio of art form relationships that is constantly changing

The RAND Corporation's behavioral model of cultural participation offers a conceptual framework for thinking about the background, perceptions and experiences of the people we are trying to reach. In order to broaden, deepen and diversify arts participation in Connecticut, we need to understand more about why people participate in our programs. If we can learn more about the "why" of arts participation, we'll gain perspective on the relevance of our programs and hopefully get some new ideas for how to overcome some of the challenges that we face every day.





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One of the key ideas from the Knight Foundation study of classical music consumers is that people have different connections with the various artistic disciplines and music genres.<sup>8</sup> The same person may be highly knowledgeable about ethnic dance, for example, but may have no background at all in classical music or theater, except for a general affinity. Consumers' backgrounds with the various art forms and genres have much to do with how and why they participate, and what values they construct around the different experiences.

This suggests that further research on meaning and value should disaggregate the "arts individual" into a portfolio of art form relationships that is constantly evolving.

So, one of the goals of the Connecticut study is to understand some of the interactions between the relationships that consumers have with the various art forms, and to build a more dimensional model of the arts citizen.

### 5. Focus on value

Compared to other industries, we know very little about the meanings, benefits, values, satisfactions and utilities that consumers derive from our products, although several studies shed some light on the subject.

Thorn and McDaniel suggest that meaning happens on two levels: "Every experience, idea or opportunity is viewed and evaluated through the filters of each person's personal and cultural meaning, which are closely connected yet separate." Meaning is inherently personal and intrinsic to the art. Value, though, is a larger construct.

The *Reggae to Rachmaninoff* study produced four overarching reasons why people participate in arts programs: to celebrate heritage, to support community, to express cultural interest, and to reflect social and religious commitment. Zaltman, however, suggests that 95% of meaning happens at the subconscious level. His metaphor elicitation technique (ZMET) is designed to unravel the conscious and unconscious meanings that consumers ascribe to various products and services.<sup>9</sup>

Research conducted by Audience Insight suggests that some of the values that people seek from arts participation are discipline-specific and do not always relate directly to the art, but derive from it or surround it. In focus groups, consumers talk about the healing value, spiritual value, ritual value, social interaction value and relationship enhancement value of attending concerts – any

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<sup>8</sup> *Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study: How Consumers Relate to Classical Music and Their Local Orchestras*, Audience Insight LLC, published in 2002 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

<sup>9</sup> Zaltman used this technique to uncover how consumers feel about the arts. Results of the study were published by the Heinz Endowments in August 1998, "Understanding Thoughts and Feelings About the Arts" by Gerald Zaltman, Mind of the Market Laboratory, Harvard Business School



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one of which may trigger purchase. Another study, for Milwaukee Repertory Theater, suggests that values surrounding theatrical attendance include a desire to connect with familiar stories, and an interest in the intimate details of other peoples lives. These values are unique to theater. My point is that generalizing about the meanings and values of arts participation is of limited use when the values that surround the various art forms are quite different.

How do you compare the meaning derived from visiting an exhibition of contemporary art with the meaning that results from seeing a favorite piece of contemporary art on the kitchen wall, day after day for twenty years? What is the value to the consumer of listening to a live concert vs. listening to a recording of the same piece over and over again at home in a private setting? Who's to say which experience is more meaningful, more valuable to the consumer? We need better constructs for comparing and contrasting these different experiences if we ever hope to make more rational decisions about programs and funding.

We tend to define our institutions around specific modes of consumption that serve our artistic ends. If it is reasonable to assume, however, that different modes of consumption make possible different meanings and values, then perhaps we should reassess the value judgments that we make about these different modes of consumption and ask consumers how they feel.

Ben Cameron, Executive Director of Theater Communications Guild, sees a seismic shift in the arts industry from quality to value. He asks several provocative questions:

“What is the value of your theater, or in your case, what is the value of your dance company?” Number two is harder – “What is the value that your dance company alone offers or offers better than anyone else?” – because duplicative or second-rate value in this economy will not stand. The hardest is “How will your community be damaged if your dance company closes its doors and goes away tomorrow?” If you can't answer those three questions, the only supporters you have are the people who are in your seats.”

If we theorize that some combination of meaning, relevance and the promise of value drives attendance, then we ought to set out on a pathway of discovery that leads us to an enhanced understanding of these attributes. At minimum, the results of this line of inquiry should help us learn how to better communicate the value of what we do, making us better advocates for the art we exhibit, produce and present. The more hopeful outcome is a larger perspective on how our work does and does not resonate with the public, and how and why the public uses our programs. Combined with our own experience and knowledge of creative possibilities, this insight might lead us down pathways we've never seen.

6. Sewing the seeds of innovation



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In her 1994 book *Peripheral Visions*, anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson wrote, “Whether in social life or any ecology, the impulse to improve without first understanding is dangerous.” The seeds of innovation are new insights into our customers and our art, and how they interact.

In his cultural facilitation work, Jerry Yoshitomi is likely to quote Albert Einstein, who said: “The significant problems that we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.” If we take this to heart, then elevating our level of thinking about arts participation is the first step towards unlocking the possibilities of the arts for more people. This means leaving our comfort zone and learning something new – a new framework for deconstructing our challenges (such as Michael Moore’s Strategic Framework for Arts Participation),<sup>10</sup> and new insight – learned through the experience of conducting personal interviews – into why people participate in the arts – the goal of this study.

But research is only one step in the innovation process, according to Tom Kelley, author of *The Art of Innovation* and General Manager of IDEO, the award winning design firm. Kelley warns that relying on consumers to define the future of our products and services is fallacious. “The truth is that customers often ask you to do wrong things, not because they’re difficult to deal with, but because they just don’t know better.” His point is that research – observing how people use our programs – is a necessary first step in a larger process of innovation. “Observations get turned into ideas that can lead to innovations at brainstorming sessions,” says Kelley. In other words, true program innovation in the arts world is most likely to spring from a change in perception of the emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs of audiences.

It is this basic process of innovation that we seek to initiate with this study. Representatives of Connecticut arts groups will observe patterns of arts participation by interviewing real people who are using (or not using) their programs. After the interviews, CCA will convene a series of brainstorming sessions with the goal of leading to fundable projects.

Envisioning the future of our institutions begins with observation. Consumers cannot tell us the future, but we cannot invent the future without listening to consumers. Innovation results from an enlarged perspective on how consumers use our programs, and a deep knowledge of artistic possibilities.

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<sup>10</sup> Moore, Michael, “Rethinking Cultural Participation,” *Inside Arts*, published by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, July/August 2001.



## **Part 2: Recruitment – General Parameters**

Each team should interview a minimum of five individuals representing a spectrum of involvement with the art form in question (e.g., theater, dance, classical music, visual art, etc.). The Recruiter's task is to identify and recruit five individuals to interview, who fit into the following three rough categories:

1. Very involved with the art form and your institution (2 interviewees)
2. Moderately involved with the art form and your institution (1 interviewee)
3. Moderately involved with the art form but not very involved (or not at all involved) with your institution (2 interviewees). Given the limited time commitment and other resources, there is no point to interviewing people who have no interest in the art form and no history with your organization.

There is one important rule when it comes to recruitment: Do not recruit anyone who you know (i.e., anyone you've met casually more than once or twice), or anyone who knows the Interviewer or the Recorder. This is essential to avoiding bias in your interviews.

Although it is not possible to generalize from the results of just five interviews, the process of interviewing five individuals with different connections to the art form and your organization should generate some new perspective on some of the reasons why people participate in arts programs, generally, and how they relate to your organization.

The Recruiters job is essential to your team's success. The following pages contain instructions for the recruitment process and language that may be used to recruit interviewees.

### Recruitment Procedures

The first step in the recruitment process is to get at least 20 people (more is better) to complete the recruitment survey that appears over the following pages. This is a comprehensive "arts involvement" survey that will help you understand each individual's connections to the various art forms. Your team may refer to these surveys in advance of the interviews and during the interviews, to prompt people about their arts participation.

The recruitment survey is available as a Microsoft Word document that you can email to people to print out and mail or fax back to you. Or, you can mail out hard



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copies of the questionnaire to a random sample of people on your mailing list and ask them to mail or fax back their completed forms.

The survey results will also be used by the project consultant at the end of the project to analyze patterns of arts involvement. Please make sure to save copies of all completed surveys.

*For the 15 organizations selected to receive support throughout The Values Study, the survey will be customized for your organization and will be available online. You will be contacted individually and provided with a hyperlink, which you may then email out with an invitation to take the survey online. Once enough surveys are completed online, the project consultant will select five individuals for you to interview, based on the survey responses. You will then follow-up with these individuals to schedule interviews.*

Hopefully, you won't have too much difficulty finding people to take the survey. Generally, people who are supportive of your organization will be happy to help out if you explain to them what the study is about.

It will be somewhat more difficult, however, finding people to interview who are not involved with your organization, but who have some connection to the art form. A few ideas for finding these people:

- Ask staff and board members if they know anyone who fits the description (i.e., a friend, neighbor or business colleague), and contact them personally and ask them to take the recruitment survey
- Ask people who you see at business meetings, social and cultural events
- Talk to people at health clubs and other local businesses, and see if you can find people who have some interest in the art form but little or no history with your organization

Once you have approximately 20 completed surveys, you may select five respondents to be interviewed based on their answers to the questions in Part 1 of the survey. An invitation to participate appears on the following page, along a template for a follow-up confirmation letter.

If possible, the Recruiter should be present for the interviews, if only to greet the respondents and introduce them to the Interviewer and Recorder.

If you have any questions about recruitment, contact the Study Coordinator.



## The Values Study

Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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### Scheduling the Interviews

The total timeframe for recruitment and interviewing should last approximately five weeks: three weeks for recruiting and scheduling, and two weeks for interviewing and writing the summary profiles.

Week 1	Recruitment survey – get as many responses as possible
Week 2	Recruitment survey – get as many responses as possible
Week 3	Select respondents, schedule interviews for weeks 4-5
Week 4	Conduct interviews and write profiles as you go
Week 5	Finish conducting interviews and writing profiles

Due to the intensive nature of the interviews and the synthesis process that follows each interview, do not schedule more than one interview per day. In fact, you might want to leave two days between the first two or three interviews, to allow plenty of time to complete the written profiles and discuss the interviews (i.e., how can we improve the process?).

Before the Recruiter schedules the interviews, the team should meet to generate a list of eight to ten potential interview times based on the availability of Interviewer and Recorder. Then, the Recruiter can contact the five selected respondents and know what time slots are available. Here's a sample interview schedule for weeks 4-5:

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Monday	4-5 p.m. Interview 5-6 p.m. Debrief				
Tuesday	Profile #1 drafted				
Wednesday	Profile #1 edited				
Thursday		9-10 a.m. Interview 10-11 a.m. Debrief			
Friday		Profile #2 drafted			
Saturday		Profile #2 edited	1-2 p.m. Interview 2-3 p.m. Debrief		
Sunday			Profile #3 drafted		
Monday			Profile #3 edited	8-9 a.m. Interview 9-10 a.m. Debrief	
Tuesday				Profile #4 drafted	
Wednesday				Profile #4 edited	
Thursday					5-6 p.m. Interview 6-7 p.m. Debrief
Friday					Profile #5 drafted
Saturday					Profile #5 edited
Sunday					



## **The Values Study**

Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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### Invitation to Participate

You will have contact information (from the surveys) for each individual. Since they will already have expressed an interest in participating in the study, securing their participation should be relatively easy. You may contact them by email or telephone (or both). Here is some sample language for the invitation to participate:

*Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from [organization name] calling to follow up on a survey that you completed for the Connecticut Commission on the Arts. Do you recall completing the survey? Thanks again for your cooperation with the survey.*

*We're inviting just a few select people for a follow-up in-person interview, as part of an important study of cultural participation in Connecticut. We'd like to ask you some general questions about how art fits into your life and some specific questions about how you feel about [our organization]. The interview would last 60 minutes.*

*Would you be willing to help us with this study by scheduling an interview at a later date? In exchange for your cooperation, we'd like to offer you \_\_\_\_\_\**

[\*We suggest offering a pair of tickets or a free one-year basic membership, etc. For the 15 organizations selected to receive support, a subsidized \$50 cash incentive will be available to each of the five interviewees.]

[Negotiate a scheduled time for an interview, and confirm date, time and location.]

*Great! I'll mail you a confirmation letter with the details. We'll also ask you to sign a consent release form that permits us to use the information from your interview in a report at the end of the study.*

*Thanks again for your cooperation.*

It is not necessary to divulge who will be conducting the interview, or who will be taking notes.



## **The Values Study**

Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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### Confirmation Letter

Once you have scheduled an interview, immediately send a confirmation memo (on your letterhead) and consent release form, by U.S. Mail, to the respondent.

TO: [Respondent's name]  
FROM: [Recruiter's name]  
DATE: [Today's date]  
RE: Confirming Your Interview for "The Values Study"

Further to our conversation, this will confirm the details of your interview in connection with a statewide study of arts participation commissioned by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

Date: Date of Interview  
Time: Time (allow at least 60 minutes)  
Location: Where to go  
Parking Instructions: Where to park, etc.

We would like to photograph you as part of the interview, and possibly use information from your interview in a final report. In order to do so, we'll need you to sign a consent release form, which is enclosed. Please bring this form with you to the interview, and we'll be happy to answer any questions.

If you need to reach me for any reason prior to the interview, my contact information is as follows:

[Recruiter's contact info.]





## The Values Study

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### Consent Release Form for Interviewees

Thank you for your interest in participating in The Values Study, a research project commissioned by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts (CCA).\* The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of why Connecticut citizens participate in various arts activities. To accomplish this goal, staff and board members of various Connecticut arts organizations will be interviewing people like you in communities across the state. In order to use your interview results, we require that you read and sign this form.

Your interview is neither confidential nor anonymous. A one-page written summary of your interview will be authored by the people who interview you, and may be reproduced in the final study report. This written summary will characterize your feelings about the arts and your various arts experiences, and will refer to your comments throughout the interview. Specific quotes (i.e., the exact words that you say) may be used.

We would also like a photograph of you to appear with your written profile. By signing this form, you further agree to be photographed (or to provide a photograph of yourself) and to allow this photograph to be used in the study report which is likely to be disseminated in print and electronically to a wide audience of arts organizations and policy makers.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I am a willing participant in this study, and agree to allow a written summary of my interview, which identifies me by name, to appear in the study report, in paper or electronic format, as well as a photograph of me.

*I release the State of Connecticut, its agencies, subcontractors and arts organizations participating in The Values Study and their successors from any and all liability resulting from my participation in the Study and use of my photograph or interview data in the Study.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address, City State and ZIP

\*When the Values Study began, the state arts agency was named the Connecticut Commission on the Arts. During the study, the agency was merged into the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism.



## **Recruitment Survey**

Connecticut Commission on the Arts

The Values Study

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WELCOME

On behalf of the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey.

Your answers will assist us in selecting a limited number of people for follow-up interviews, as part of a statewide arts participation study.

Your responses to this survey will only be used for this purpose, and your personal information will be held in strict confidence.

If you are not interested in the possibility of being interviewed in-person at a later date, please DO NOT fill out this survey.

If you are interested in the possibility of a follow-up interview, please complete the survey at your earliest convenience and return it to the person who contacted you about participating.

We will be in contact with you shortly if you are eligible for a follow-up interview.

Once again, thanks so much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Douglas Evans, Director  
Connecticut Commission on the Arts



## Recruitment Survey

### Connecticut Commission on the Arts The Values Study

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START HERE

So that we may contact you about the possibility of a follow-up interview, please let us know how to get in touch:

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to get in touch: \_\_\_\_\_

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PART 1 – INSTITUTION RELATIONSHIP

The following questions pertain to your level of involvement with our organization.

1. For how many years have you known about our organization's programs and events? (check one)

I am not familiar with your programs and events

Less than one year

3 to 5 years

11 to 20 years

1 or 2 years

6 to 10 years

More than 20 years

2. In total, approximately how many of our organization's programs and events did you attend in the past two years? (a rough estimate is OK)

\_\_\_\_\_ write in number

3. How would you characterize your current level of involvement with our organization? (check one)

very involved

somewhat involved

not very involved

not at all involved

4. Check any that reflect your current relationship with our organization. (check all that apply)

Donor

Single ticket buyer

Board member or volunteer

Subscriber

Friend or relative of staff or board member



# The Values Study

## Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

### PART 2 – TELL US ABOUT YOUR ARTS ACTIVITIES

This set of questions pertains to your overall involvement with the arts.

1. Do you consider yourself to be an artist in any way?

- Yes                       No

2. What kind of art do you make? (e.g., "I am a vocalist." "I am a dancer." "I paint." "I write poetry.")

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Approximately what portion of your income comes from producing art of any kind? (select one)

- none                       20%                       40%                       60%                       80%                       100%
- 10%                       30%                       50%                       70%                       90%

4. How active are you in the following reading and writing activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Write original fiction or nonfiction -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Write and/or perform poetry -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Write essays -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Write scripts, screenplays, etc. -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Read fiction or nonfiction for pleasure -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Read poetry -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Read essays -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Read scripts, screenplays, etc. -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Meet with a book club on a regular basis -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Attend poetry readings -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How active are you in the following theater activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Acting (performing for other people) -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Theatrical design (costumes, lighting, sets) -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Stage direction, stage management -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Attend live stage plays -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Attend live musical theater -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Attend dinner theater -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## The Values Study

### Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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6. How active are you in the following dance activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Choreography -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Take ballet or modern dance lessons -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Attend ballet performances -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Attend modern dance performances -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Attend ethnic or folk dance performances -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Take lessons for social dancing -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Participate in organized dance competitions -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Social dancing at clubs, parties, etc. -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How active are you in the following music activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Composing or arranging music -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Recording original music -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Taking music lessons -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Attend live classical music concerts -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Attend live opera concerts -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Attend live other music performances -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Listen to music on the radio -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Listen to/collect music records, tapes or CDs -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Listen to/download music on the Internet -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Play in a community orchestra or band -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Sing in a community or church choir -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. What instrument(s) do you play, or have you studied at any point in your life? (e.g., violin, piano, French horn, voice)

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9. How active are you in the following media arts activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Filmmaking -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Produce radio or TV arts programming -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Making home videos, for personal use -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Watching films (rent videos, DVDs) -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Watching films (go to the movies) -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Watching TV – for artistic value -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# The Values Study

## Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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10. How active are you in the following visual arts and crafts activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Painting, drawing -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Printmaking -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Graphic design -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Illustration -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Calligraphy -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Graffiti art -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Photography – with artistic intent -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Photography – for personal/family use -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Sculpture -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Ceramics (pottery, etc.) -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Metalwork -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Jewelry making -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Woodworking -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Textile arts* -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*weaving, sewing, knitting, needlepoint, quilting, rug hooking				
M. Studying art – individual instruction -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Taking art classes – with groups -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Collecting art for my home -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. What kinds of art do you collect for yourself or your family? (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How active are you in the following other artistic activities? (select one answer for each line)

	<u>A Vital Interest</u>	<u>I Enjoy It Occasionally</u>	<u>Used To, But Not Anymore</u>	<u>Generally Not Something I Do</u>
A. Architecture or interior design -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Fashion design -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Body decorating -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Gardening or floral design -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Culinary arts -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Is there any other artistic outlet, not mentioned above, that is meaningful to you? (If so, please describe.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continued on Next Page



# The Values Study

## Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

### PART 3 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tell us a few things about yourself. This information is confidential, and will not be used for any other purpose.

A. Your gender?

- Male
- Female

B. In what year were you born?

\_\_\_\_\_

C. For how many years have you lived in your current neighborhood or town? (use "0" for less than one year)

# of Years: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Your marital status?

- Married
- Partnered/Not Married
- Single/Never Married
- Divorced or Separated
- Widowed

E. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?

- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- White/Anglo
- Native American
- Other

G. How many people live in your household in each of the following age groups, including yourself? (write in a # for each)

- \_\_\_\_\_ # of children age 5 and under
- \_\_\_\_\_ # of children ages 6 to 12
- \_\_\_\_\_ # of teens ages 13 to 17
- \_\_\_\_\_ # of adults (ages 18+)

H. What is the last level of school you completed?

- Attended Grade School only
- Attended High School but not complete it
- Completed High School
- Attended Some College
- Received a College Degree
- Post College Course Work

I. Please indicate your employment status.

- Working full-time (for pay)
- Working part-time (for pay)
- Self-employed
- In school full-time
- Not employed, but looking
- Fulltime Family Caregiver
- Retired

J. Your annual household income? (include employment and other sources of income for all members of your household.)

- Under \$35,000
- \$35,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$124,999
- \$125,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$174,999
- \$175,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more

K. Your household ZIP Code:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Recruitment Checklist

## Respondent Information

Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Home  Mobile  Business

## Interview Details & Role Players

Location of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## Respondent Interactions

Recruitment survey completed

First call or email to schedule an Interview:

Called by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Result: \_\_\_\_\_

Second call to schedule an Interview:

Called by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Result: \_\_\_\_\_

Third call to schedule an Interview:

Called by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Result: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation memo sent Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: email / U.S. mail

Reminder call (day before interview) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Consent release form signed/obtained

Respondent photograph taken/obtained

Thank you letter sent



## **Part 3: Conducting the Interviews**

### Background & Methodology

A great deal can be learned about why people participate in arts and cultural activities – if you just ask them. It sounds simple enough. But conducting structured interviews is a highly disciplined type of research. The more forethought and preparation that you bring to the interviews, the more you'll get out of them. This section discusses interviewing techniques and provides guidelines for conducting your interviews. Both the Interviewer and the Recorder should read this section.

Interviewing is, by definition, a dynamic, unpredictable participatory activity. The process of interviewing people yourself is much different than the process of hiring a researcher to conduct interviews and write a report for you. In interviews, a great deal of data is communicated non-verbally, through body language, hesitation, gestures and intonation. No matter how good the researcher, it's just not the same as experiencing the interview in person.

Knowledge is power only if you absorb it, understand it and believe it. With the researcher out of the way, the "filter" between you and your interviewees is gone. Rather, your own experience and perspective on arts participation becomes the filter through which you absorb data. You can decide whether or not to believe what you hear, but you've heard it with your own ears. Hence, the value of the study lays not so much in the outcome as in the process itself.

There are several different types of interviews, including oral histories, evaluation interviews and focus group interviews. For the Values Study, we have chosen to use a *structured topical interview* as the primary means of gathering qualitative data. The topic of the interview is the respondent's arts participation. The interview is structured because it is not an open conversation – by the end of the interview, you need to have answers to specific questions.

An interview, no matter how structured or unstructured, is really just a conversation between two unique individuals. The outcome of the interview is influenced by both of your personalities. The setting of the interview is also important. With a little practice, anyone with good conversation skills can become a good interviewer.

But good interviewing also requires a substantial amount of preparation. First, you must decide whom to interview. Interviewing people who have little or no interest in the subject matter can be a painful experience. Sometimes, however, these interviews can be very productive. Insight on why people are not participating is often more precious than insight on why they are participating.

## **The Values Study**

### Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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Interviewing people who are devoted fans of your organization is much easier, but how will you learn anything if all you get are glowing comments from devoted fans? In order to learn something new, we have to leave our comfort zones and talk to people who are not already participating as much as we'd like them to. This is why the recruitment process is so important.

Good interviewing also requires a good set of questions. Garbage in, garbage out. Asking the wrong questions (or avoiding the hard questions) is a waste of time. You may feel good by the end of the interview, but nothing is gained. Asking the right questions the right way, however, can unleash a torrent of helpful information. We've designed a standard interview protocol that draws the respondent into a general conversation about arts participation, first, and then focuses in on their feelings about the specific art form and your organization. The subject matter is very personal, even intimate. For a productive interview, you'll need to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

Which brings us to the hardest part of interviewing – listening. A good interviewer is a good listener. Listening requires a great deal of concentration. A good listener understands what the respondent is saying, and also thinks about what the respondent is *not saying, or trying to say*. Good listening is *hearing between the lines*, and gently coaxing the respondent to elaborate on a point (i.e., probing) until you have a satisfactory response. A good listener hears when the respondent is having difficulty answering a question, and re-phrases the question or illustrates a response drawing from his own experience. "Maybe I can help you with this question by telling you how I would answer it for myself..." Good listening also requires the interviewer to be familiar enough with the protocol, so that you can listen to what the respondent is saying, and not always be fumbling through protocol to see what is the next question. In other words, you always need to know where the interview is going.

Some questions are direct, while other questions involve asking people to tell personal stories. Storytelling can be extremely useful in getting people to explain important events in their lives and to open up about difficult issues. While some people might have difficulty answering a question directly, they may be able to illustrate how they feel about something by telling a story. We use storytelling several times in the protocol. In the first section of protocol, the respondent is asked to make up a story – What one piece of art would you take with you if you were exiled to a cabin in Vermont? This is a difficult mental exercise, because it requires people to jump from the real to the hypothetical and pick one piece of art out of their lifetimes and explain its meaning.

In the second section of protocol, we ask people to recount the story of how they got involved with the art form. The objective of this question is to understand more about pathways to involvement – how do people get interested in the arts? It's amazing how some people will tell you about experiences that happened 20 or 30 years ago, as if it were yesterday.

## **The Values Study**

### Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation

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At the end of the second and third sections of protocol are questions about the meanings and values that the respondent attaches to the art form and to your programs, specifically. These are the "payoff questions" for the whole study. Correspondingly, they will be most difficult for respondents to answer.

We know that a great deal of the meanings and values that people derive from arts activities happen at the subconscious level. For example, at the conscious level someone might recognize the face value of an arts activity as "something to do with my wife." At the subconscious level, however, the operative value may be "investing in my relationship with my wife, so we can be happy together." It's the difference between utility and value. Whereas the price of a ticket is \$50, a happy relationship is priceless.

Many people don't think about some of the higher-order values associated with arts participation (e.g., spiritual nourishment). But this doesn't mean that they don't recognize these values subconsciously. Unfortunately, we can't hypnotize people and get an open connection to the subconscious, although there are more involved research techniques using symbolism and metaphors that effectively elicit people's subconscious thoughts. These innovative methods are too involved and not practical for a group effort like The Values Study.

The most difficult thing The Values Study requires of you is to infer some of the deeper meanings and values associated with arts participation from what people tell you (and don't tell you) in a 60-minute interview. You have five opportunities to uncover some of the real reasons why people participate in your programs.

#### The Interview Setting

A comfortable, intimate setting can contribute a great deal to a productive interview. The overall goal is to make the respondent feel respected and comfortable, both physically and emotionally.

You may conduct the interviews in a variety of locations. The respondent's home would be ideal, although this may be impractical from a logistics standpoint. If you conduct the interviews in your offices, use a room with a small seating area, or set up chairs in a conference room, rehearsal hall or even on stage. A setting that relates to the art is preferable.

The Interviewer should sit directly opposite the respondent, without a table in between, if possible. The general idea is a direct visual connection, so that you can observe body language. If you meet around a conference table, the Interviewer should sit just around the corner of the table from the respondent, but not too close.

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The Recorder may sit anywhere else in the room, preferably with a clear view of the respondent. Remember that during the interview, the Recorder is a silent observer and not a discussion participant. As the interview progresses, the respondent should forget that there is anyone else in the room. At the end of the interview, however, the Interviewer may ask the Recorder if he or she has any further questions or clarification points.

#### Role of the Interviewer

The Interviewer (typically the staff director or Board President) is the person who leads the discussion and assumes primary responsibility for the outcome. Prior to launching the recruitment process, the Interviewer should convene a team meeting. The agenda for this meeting should include:

- Review recruitment procedures, and potential avenues for recruiting "non-users" to interview
- Discuss the availability of team members and identify up to 10 different time slots for interviews during weeks 4-5 (five will eventually be filled)
- Decide where the interviews will be held, and what logistics need to be managed
- Divide up roles and responsibilities, especially for writing and editing the profiles of each respondent
- Schedule a practice interview

During the recruitment period, the Interviewer should monitor progress with recruiting and take any necessary measures to ensure that enough people complete the recruitment survey.

In preparation for the interviews, it is the Interviewer's job to review the protocol and make any customizations to reflect the organization (the protocol will be provided on diskette, and can be edited).

The Interviewer actually conducts the interview. Afterwards, either the Interviewer or the Recorder may draft the written profile, for the other to edit.

The Interviewer and the Recorder may swap roles.

#### Role of the Recorder

The Recorder's job is to capture the conversation in as much detail as possible, including some verbatim quotes. Notes may be taken by hand, or by typing into a computer. The preferred method of note taking is for the Recorder to type notes directly into an electronic copy of the interview protocol, using the "Track Changes" function in Microsoft Word. Only try this if you are a fast typist! Otherwise, handwritten notes are fine.

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*To setup a Word document for note taking, open a copy of the interview protocol (provided by email or on diskette) in Microsoft Word. From the main menu, select "Tools," then "Track Changes," then "Highlight Changes." Check all three boxes in the "Highlight Changes" box. Save the document using a different file name. Now, everything you type will be highlighted, and you can type your notes directly into the protocol, moving from question to question.*

Some hints on note taking:

- Use the letter "R" to refer to the respondent
- If the respondent says something emphatically or repeatedly, underline the comment or idea in your notes, to suggest emphasis
- Circle comments or ideas that YOU think are important
- Don't worry about spelling mistakes in your notes; getting the ideas down is more important

During the interview, capture any particularly interesting or representative comments that the respondent offers, for use in the written profiles. You'll have to write (or type) fast. Use quotation marks to delineate verbatim comments such as:

*"My mother did not encourage my piano playing, which actually caused me to enjoy it more, because I was, like, rebelling."*

You should also write down some of your own observations as you go, such as:

"R. is uncomfortable with this question."  
"R. experiences art through her children, but not independently."  
"R is frustrated for lack of a creative outlet."

These observations will help you remember some of the key themes of the interview when you have the debriefing session afterwards, which the Recorder should facilitate. Afterwards, either the Interviewer or the Recorder may draft the written profile, for the other to edit.

The role of the Recorder is essential. Absent an audiotape, the Recorder's notes represent the best record of what transpired during the interview.

### Preparing for the Interviews

Both the Interviewer and the Recorder should carefully review the protocol prior to conducting the first interview. We strongly recommend that each team conduct a practice interview with someone who has some connection to your organization (but not a board or staff member). This might be a friend of a board member, or a visitor or attendee who you intercept at the ticket office or in your facility. Try to

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conduct the practice interview as if it were the real thing. Afterwards, discuss the high points and low points of the interview. How much time did you spend on each section of protocol? Were there any major digressions? What questions were difficult for the respondent? In retrospect, might you have probed further on some of the questions? The Recorder should feel free to offer constructive criticism and helpful comments to the Interviewer.

Also review the Recorder's notes. Were the important thoughts of the interview captured? Were you able to jot down some of the respondents verbatim comments? Are your notes legible?

Each time you do it, both the Interviewer and the Recorder will get a little more comfortable with the process, and achieve a better "flow" of conversation – and better notes, as well.

#### Using the Interview Protocol

The interview protocol is a road map for your conversation with the respondent. But there are many pathways to a successful, productive interview. Ultimately, each interview will have a unique flow. The protocol should be used as a *guide to your conversation*. The final authority on how you manage the conversation belongs to you. You may decide to linger on a question or probe repeatedly, if the interviewee responds particularly well or if you think the respondent has more to say that isn't getting out. You may choose to indulge a digression or interrupt the respondent and get back to the topic. Sometimes, for example, a respondent will jump beyond a question early in the protocol and try to answer a question that comes later in the protocol. It's your choice how to manage that circumstance.

Don't be afraid to manage the conversation proactively, if you can do so without offending the respondent. As you get into the protocol, try to do a minimum of talking, and avoid offering your own personal opinions on a subject. If a respondent has difficulty answering a question, you may illustrate how you would answer. This can spark some ideas in the respondent's mind, but use it sparingly.

If you need to take "corrective action" to get the interview back on track, try to do so while at the same time acknowledging the respondent's enthusiasm and valuing the respondent's opinions:

Interviewer: *"That's a really great point, and I wish that we had more time to explore more about that. In order to finish on time, however, I need to get back to the question, which is..."*

Don't forget, you're in the drivers seat. If you allow the respondent commandeer the interview, most likely they will.

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### Photographing Each Respondent

We would like to embed a digital photograph of each respondent in the text of the written profile (see examples in the next section). It helps the reader a great deal to be able to visualize the respondent, while reading about him or her. If you have access to a digital camera, please take several head shots of the respondent immediately after the interview, preferably against a backdrop that relates to your programs. For example, if you are a theater company, photograph the respondent sitting in a seat in your theater, or on stage. If you are a visual arts organization, photograph the respondent in front of a work of art that he or she likes. Or, photograph the respondent in front of a promotional poster for one of your programs. Be creative!

Email the images, along with your written profiles, to the study coordinator.

If you do not have access to a digital camera, take several photographs using a regular camera, and have them developed to digital files (either on a diskette or using one of the online services such as the one offered by Konica.com)

If none of that works, ask the respondent to email you a digital photograph with permission to use it without restriction.

## **Interview Protocol: Sample**

### Section 1 – Artistic Self-Expression (about 20 minutes)

Welcome. Before we start, I just want to encourage you to be as candid as possible with your answers. This interview is part of a statewide effort to learn more about why people participate in all types of arts activities. The Bushnell is part of a team of arts organizations interviewing people like you in cities and towns across Connecticut. Our goal is to gain perspective on the values that people seek from arts activities and the reasons why they participate, or don't.

The interview is organized in three parts: the first part is about how you express yourself creatively, in general. The second part is about your various connections to theatre, and the third part is how you feel about The Bushnell, specifically. We only have an hour with you, so I apologize in advance if I have to move the discussion along.

Just one clarification before we start. For the purposes of this discussion I'd like to define "art" as any object, composition or activity in which you find some aesthetic or creative value, such as music, dance, theater, visual arts, film, etc. In other words, we're talking about "art" in the broadest sense, as defined by YOU.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Q1. My first question relates to how you express yourself creatively. What are your creative outlets? We're going to talk about theater in detail a little later, but first I'd like to get a big picture of your creative activities.

Probe: [for each artistic activity] When did you first get active in this area? Was it a long time ago, or just recently?

[NOTE: Here you are trying to get a sense of how different artistic activities come and go in people's lives]

Probe: Are there any other ways that you express yourself artistically?

Probe: What about \_\_\_\_\_? Is this a channel of artistic expression for you? [refer to survey profile and probe any areas of artistic activity that were indicated on the survey but not mentioned by the respondent.]

Q2. [If it's not obvious:] Do you consider yourself to be an artist in any way?

[NOTE: This question does not relate to professional vs. amateur activity, but rather artistic expression at any level of proficiency.]



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Q3. Is anyone else in your immediate family an artist of any kind?

Probe: [If applicable] Are your children involved in any arts activities? Do you attend any of their programs?

Q4. Aside from the art that you personally create, how does art fit into your life? Now, I'm asking about all the different ways that you experience art, such as going to concerts, taking dance lesson or reading poetry. How does art fit into your life?

[NOTE: Here we are asking respondents to enumerate the various ways that they participate in the arts, passively or actively, inside the home and outside the home. We want to learn to what extent people are conscious of and value the art that surrounds them vs. specific arts activities like social dancing or going to concerts. What's important here is that we let people define "art" in their own way.]

Q5. [KEY QUESTION] Is there art in or around your home? What kind of art? Tell me about the art in and around your home.

Probe: What about your place of work?

Probe: What about outdoors – where do you experience art outdoors?

Q6. If you were marooned in a Vermont cabin for several months and could only have one type of art with you, what would you take with you? It could be anything from a book to a musical recording, an art object or materials to make your own art.

Probe: Why is that? What value would that work of art bring to you, while you were alone in the woods?

[NOTE: This is an opportunity for people to talk about a specific work of art that has great personal meaning. Assume there would be electricity.]

### Section 2 – Discipline Focus: Theater (about 20 minutes)

OK, now let's talk a little more specifically about your connection to theater, in general.

Q1. How do you experience theater? Tell me about all the ways that theater fits into your life.

Probe: Do you attend live performances of stage plays or musicals? Where? Who goes with you?

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Probe: Do you watch drama on TV? Does an interest in film translate into theater participation?

Q2. How would you describe your own knowledge level about theater?

Q3. Within the area of theater, what are your interests? Are you more or less interested in any particular type of theater?

Probe: What types of plays and musicals do you like the most? The least?

Probe: Do you have a favorite playwright, composer or librettist?

[NOTE: This is an opportunity for people to talk about any preferences within the discipline of theater.]

Q4. When did you get interested in theater? As a child or as an adult?

[NOTE: The goal here is to understand pathways to involvement, and how involvement ebbs and flows throughout adults' lives.]

Q5. Can you remember a specific experience in your life when you realized that you like theater? Please tell me about that experience.

[NOTE: This is a story-telling exercise to elicit "transformation moments" associated with the art form.]

Q6. Has your participation in theater activities increased or decreased over the past few years? Why?

Probe: How much time do you spend doing these activities now?

Q7. [KEY QUESTION] What do you like most about theater as an art form? Generally, what value do you think people get from participating in theater activities?

Probe: What about you? Why do you participate in theater? What does it do for you?

Probe: What does theater do for you that other art forms don't? Do you like theater more or less than other art forms like dance or music? Why is that?

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### Section 3 – Feelings about The Bushnell – Users Only [Non-Users Skip to Section 4]

Q1. Now I'm going to ask you what you like and dislike about attending theatre productions at The Bushnell. First, what do you like the most about attending our productions?

Q2. What do you like the least about our productions? It's really important here that you give me your candid opinions, so please don't be bashful about speaking your mind.

Q3. [KEY QUESTION] What are the main reasons why you attend our productions?

Probe: Do you come to see specific plays, or is your attendance motivated by something else? What else?

Probe: What other factors contribute to your decision to attend? How important is that? Any other factors?

Q4. I know this is a hard question, but how do you judge if your investment of time and money to see one of our production is successful? In other words, what makes your attendance at one of our programs worthwhile?

[NOTE: How high is the threshold for satisfaction? What is the relationship between knowledge of the art form and enjoyment?]

Q5. [KEY QUESTION] How does a good performance at The Bushnell make you feel?

Probe: Can you recall an experience here that you found especially meaningful? Please tell me about it.

Q6. Do you have to be knowledgeable about theatre in order to have a successful experience at one of our shows?

Q7. How are you different at the end of a performance than you were at the beginning? It might sound like a ridiculous question, but I'd like you to give it a try.

[NOTE: On what levels does this person understand the values surrounding your programs?]

Q8. Can you remember the last time that a work of art – any work of art – moved you to tears? Tell me about it.

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### Section 4 – Non-Users Only (about 20 minutes)

Q1. One of the reasons we're interested in talking with you today is because you're not a frequent attendee of The Bushnell.

Q2. Do you feel welcome at our shows?

Probe: Why or why not?

Q3. If you attended one of our shows, do you think you'd see people like yourself there?

Probe: What kind of people would you see there?

Q4. Why do you suppose that you haven't attended our programs more often? Please be as candid as possible.

Probe: If a friend of yours called you up and invited you to one of our shows, would you go? What information would you need before deciding?

Q5. If you were in charge, what types of programs would you have The Bushnell offer?

Probe: How could we make it more convenient for you to attend?

Q6. What increased value could we offer you, so that you might consider attending more often?

Probe: Any final suggestions?

## **Part 4: Synthesis**

### Post-Interview Debriefing Session

After each interview, you will be filled with ideas and impressions about the respondent. If no audio tape of the interview is available, the record of the interview lies in the Recorder's notes and in the short-term memory of the Interviewer and the Recorder. If you are like most people, the details of the discussion will quickly fade out of memory. So, it's important to capture the important thoughts and ideas from the interview immediately afterwards.

For this purpose, the following discussion outline is provided. Your discussions need not be limited to this list of questions, but at the end of each discussion, you should have written answers to most of these questions. These notes, along with the Recorder's notes from the interview and your memory of the conversation, will serve as the basis for your written summary profile of that respondent.

#### DEBRIEFING SESSION – DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Working sequentially through the protocol, the Interviewer and the Recorder should develop answers to some of the following questions.

##### Section 1: Overall Arts Participation

1. How would you characterize the respondent's overall level of arts participation? Make some generalizations. How central are the arts to the respondent's life? Is the respondent's participation in arts activities more active (e.g., making things) or passive (i.e., observing others)? More personally driven, or socially driven?
2. Is the respondent aware of the artistic value of everyday sights and sounds?
3. Is the respondent aware of artistic avenues that he or she has not yet explored, but might?
4. Are the respondent's artistic interests narrow or broad? How so? Compare and contrast the respondent's relationships with the different art forms. Would you say that the respondent has a sophisticated or particularly well-developed affinity for any of the art forms? Which ones?
5. What drives this person's arts participation? Does the respondent embody any overriding aesthetic ideal or social, cultural or political construct that accounts for his or her arts participation (e.g., the outdoors/natural beauty, radical politics, ethnic-focused or culturally-specific)? Does the respondent prefer art that is comfortable and safe, or new and challenging?
6. How has the respondent's lifelong experience with the arts evolved? Did interest in the arts develop as a child or as an adult (or not at all)?
7. Did the respondent have a particularly good answer to the "marooned in a cabin" question? What meaning or value of the arts was implied in the answer?

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#### Section 2: Discipline of Interest

8. How would you characterize the respondent's relationship with the discipline? Is it involved or distant? Complex or simple? How does the respondent experience the art form?
9. Overall, would you say the respondent is passionate about the art form? Is the art form central or tangential to the respondent's cultural identity?
10. How much background knowledge does the respondent have about the art form? Where did he or she get this knowledge? Is he or she emotionally attached to certain artists, pieces or repertoire? Which ones and why?
11. Did the respondent have a particularly interesting story about how he or she got interested in the discipline? Outline the basic of the story.
12. How has the respondent's relationship with the art form evolved?
13. Could the respondent articulate any values associated with art form participation? What values?

#### Section 3: Feelings About the Organization (Users)

14. What relationship does the respondent have with your organization? Is it a loyal relationship, or one of mutual convenience? Is the respondent's relationship with your organization one of trust or suspicion? What sustains the relationship, the respondent's love for the art form or the respondent's love (loyalty) for your organization, or both?
15. Generally, how does the respondent feel about your organization? Does your organization play a central or tangential role in the respondent's life? Does the respondent experience the art form in other venues or through other programs besides yours?
16. What factors contribute to this respondent's decision to attend or not attend your programs? Who else, if anyone, is involved in the decision? Are the decision factors primarily logistical, social, cultural or artistic in nature?
17. Is the respondent easily satisfied in terms of program content, or finicky about what programs to go to?
18. What are some of the values that the respondent attaches to your programs? Did the respondent articulate any higher-level values such as intellectual engagement, spiritual nourishment, etc.? Was this respondent conversant in the language of value and meaning (i.e., self-aware), or was this a difficult topic?
19. Could the respondent remember a particularly meaningful experience at one of your programs? What was it, and why was it meaningful?

#### Section 4: Feelings About the Organization (Non-Users)

20. Given that the respondent is a non-user of your programs, how does the respondent feel about your organization? Are there any pre-conceptions?

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21. Is there a disconnect between the respondent's involvement with the art form and his or her involvement with your organization? If so, what do you think accounts for the disconnect?
22. What types of programs and activities would make your organization more relevant to the respondent (either expressly stated or implied)?
23. How could your organization bring more value to the respondent, so that he or she might attend your programs more frequently? Is there anything that your organization could do, whether feasible or not, that would help the respondent better fit the art that you make (or could make) into his or her life?

### Written Summary Profile – Instructions & Outline

The most important outcome of your interviews is your own: an enhanced perspective on your work, hopefully, and an understanding of the thoughts and feelings of your respondents. This insight might lead you to consider new or different programs, or new approaches to doing business. To the rest of the world, the value of each interview lies in a one-page written summary, a draft of which must be authored within 24 hours of the interview.

Either the Interviewer or the Recorder may produce the first draft, which should then be sent immediately to the other for editing. Following the first volley, put the draft away and revisit it a few days later. Have you included all the important ideas from the interview?

The final report for The Values Study will include a selected number of written profiles (i.e., "Profiles in Arts Participation"), depending on the quality and quantity available by the end of the study. Your challenge is to capture the spirit of each of your interviewees in a one-page summary (anywhere from 500 to 1000 words) that is both entertaining to read and revealing about the respondent. The reader should come away from each profile with a good sense of the respondent's overall arts participation and their specific feelings about your organization and the discipline of interest. Three examples of written profiles, the product of three pilot test interviews conducted in June 2003, are included at the end of this section.

Use your own knowledge and experience to make some observations and generalizations about the respondent, and then spice it up with some verbatim quotes from the interview. Don't be afraid to editorialize. Just because this is a research study doesn't mean that the profiles have to be dry and tedious to read! As long as you remain true to the spirit of what was said, the interpretive value and flair that you bring to the profiles will be appreciated by the reader.

What must be emphasized here is that the Interviewer and Recorder are equal partners in the whole process, including the profile writing. Pride of authorship must be taken along with an openness to constructive criticism and a willingness

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to accept feedback and keep improving the draft until you are both satisfied with it. Board members should be sensitized to the fact that some staff members will be reluctant to offer candid feedback on their work, because of the power differential. Similarly, staff members should be sensitive to board members who are hesitant to play a strong hand in the project, for fear of offending the staff member. Candid feedback should be invited from both sides.

Producing the written profiles is envisioned as a collaborative endeavor for good reason. Since two people will have different ideas about what was communicated during the interview, having both the Interviewer and the Recorder contribute to the written profile increases the likelihood that the profile will be accurate and balanced. Also, one team member's writing skills may be better than another's, or one may be able to devote more time to the profiles than the other. The team approach allows for flexibility in terms of who carries responsibility for the first drafts. If both agree that one individual, for one reason or another, should draft all the profiles, that's fine. The best writer, however, should not necessarily author the first draft of all five profiles. In the spirit of the study, both the Interviewer and the Responder should have a crack at each other's work.

As a rule, please don't write anything that you wouldn't show to the respondent. Your profile may be used in a public document, a copy of which will be sent to all respondents. The Connecticut Commission on the Arts, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to edit any or all profiles, and may select any or all profiles for inclusion in the final report.

An outline/template for the written profiles follows.

#### WRITTEN PROFILES – OUTLINE/TEMPLATE

In drafting the profiles, refer to the Recorder's notes and notes from the post-interview debriefing. Also refer to the sample profiles for examples of three different profiles. Don't worry about length. It's more important to say what needs to be said.

#### Section 1 – Introduction

- The first sentence should generalize about the respondent's overall level of involvement in the arts. This is the sound byte from the interview. If people only read one sentence about the respondent, this is it.
- Then introduce the respondent by giving some key information – age, marital status, town of residence, etc. Include a sentence or two about the respondent's family (parents, siblings, children) and their connections to the arts.
- Briefly discuss the respondent's relationship(s) with the various art forms, and make any interesting or unusual observations about them as an "arts citizen."



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- Finish with a general statement or two about the respondent's awareness of art in everyday life, and sense of artistic possibilities (for self or immediate family members).
- If there was an interesting response to the "marooned in the Vermont cabin" question, write about what piece of art the respondent would take with on a long journey into the woods, and what meaning that piece of art represents to the respondent.

#### Section 2 – Discipline Focus

- Here you can go into some detail in characterizing the respondent's history and current relationship with the discipline of interest. Discuss how the respondent experiences the art form in as much dimension as possible.
- Describe the respondent's level of knowledge of the art form, and the relationship between knowledge and enjoyment. How well does the respondent know the vocabulary of the art form (i.e., artists, genres, repertoire, etc.)?
- Explain how the respondent came to be interested in the art form, and recount the transformational moment, if there was one. Discuss how the respondent's relationship with the art form has changed over time.
- Discuss what values the respondent associates with the art form. What does it do for them? This is important to address. Were any higher-level values discussed or implied?

#### Section 3 – Organization

- Describe the respondent's relationship with the organization – what programs are used, and how frequently. Characterize the respondent's feelings about your organization, however weak or strong.
- Describe the respondent's decision factors – what motivates participation, who is involved, etc. Discuss whether the primary factors are logistical, social, cultural, political or artistic.
- Close by reflecting on the underlying meaning and values that the respondent finds in your programs, and make any observations you can about whether these values happen at the conscious or subconscious levels. What drives their participation in your programs?
- For non-users, discuss why they don't attend your programs more often, and what might increase the relevancy of your programs to the respondent.

Completed profiles should be emailed (in one document, preferably), along with digital photographs of your respondents, to Alan Brown at:  
alan@alansbrown.com

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### Team Synthesis Meeting – Summarizing and Articulating What You Learned

After all of your interviews are done and profiles submitted, schedule a final team meeting to debrief the overall interviewing process. This meeting should happen with a week of the last interview, and you should have all five profiles at your fingertips, for easy reference.

The purpose of the Team Synthesis Meeting is to reflect back on all five interviews and make a list of overarching themes and ideas that you would like to bring forward to the final two project meetings.

Again, you are not being asked to generalize from just five interviews, but rather to advance any number of "grounded theories" that you think are worthy of further discussion, and to compile ideas across the five interviews.

By the end of the Team Synthesis Meeting, you need to produce two lists: 1) a list of "grounded theories" organized in three sections corresponding to the interview protocol (i.e., general arts participation, discipline-specific, and organization-specific); and 2) a list of meanings and values that people associate with the art form and your programs, specifically. This is where it all comes together. Copies of your lists will be distributed to all participating organizations, and will form the basis for the final group meetings. At the first group meeting (organized by discipline), a member of each team will review and discuss their lists.

For each of the three sections of the protocol, make a list of "grounded theories" that arose from your interviews, and that you think merit further discussion by the group. "Grounded theories" are not just hypotheses, but have a basis in your interview data. They are part conjecture (based on your own experience and perspective) and part fact. These may be simple or radical ideas, intuitive or counterintuitive. Be prepared to justify your "grounded theories" by pointing to specific themes and even quotations from your interview data.

A sample lists of "grounded theories" and "meanings and values" follows.

#### SAMPLE LIST OF GROUNDED THEORIES

##### General Arts Participation

- Very few people are true "arts samplers." Most people tend to focus on one discipline.
- People who are actively involved in making art tend to be more passionate about art, generally
- Not many people are aware of the artistic value of everyday objects, although people express themselves artistically every day without knowing it
- Some adults get involved in the arts through their children, even if they weren't exposed to the arts as children themselves

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- Even some of the most conservative people believe in public funding for arts education programs
- As ticket prices go up, the willingness of audiences to take risks goes down

### Discipline-Specific

- It seems that some people love either plays or musicals, but not both (theater).
- People tend to identify with specific dance companies, but their interest doesn't always translate to other, similar companies.
- Some people are comforted a great deal by hearing familiar repertoire over and over (classical music)

### Organization-Specific

- There is a perception that our programs are serious, not entertaining and difficult to understand
- People send their children to our programs so they don't have to pay for child care.
- Safety concerns around our facility are keeping more people from attending our programs

### SAMPLE LIST OF MEANINGS AND VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR DISCIPLINE

- Some people go to dance performances to experience the sexual tension between dancers (dance)
- Some people like stage plays because it connects them with their childhood (theatre)
- Some people won't go to an art exhibition unless someone who knows about art goes with them.
- Some people don't like choral or vocal music components during orchestra concerts because it interrupts the abstract musical experience and forces them to pay attention to the words (classical music)

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### Sample Profiles: Virginia

*Virginia is a long-time participant in art classes offered by the Silvermine Guild Arts Center in New Canaan. She was interviewed by Cindy Clair, with assistance from David Pressler, on June 3, 2003.*

Virginia describes herself as a lifelong student of art. Although other arts activities play a small role in her life, she is passionate about art – with a deep focus on expressing herself through painting.

Among her core values are arts education opportunities for children, a reflection of the encouragement and support she received from her parents (both writers) to develop a creative outlet as a child.

Virginia is aware of the artistic nature of everyday objects and activities, and is particularly sensitive to color. Hanging on the walls at home are many of her own paintings and selected works of art by other family members and artists. The art in her home is a carefully constructed reflection of her own, highly developed sensibility for art. She wonders, half jokingly, how other people can leave the task of selecting works of art for their home... to decorators!



Beyond her participation in art activities, Virginia enjoys the occasional classical music concert. In contrast, her sister is an actress and author of poetry – a case in point of how siblings can develop very different artistic sensibilities.

#### Discipline Focus: Visual Art

Virginia vividly recalls going to museums with her parents, and taking art classes from a young age. She recalls with startling clarity marveling – at the age of three or four – at a drawing of stick figures made by her mother. “That started me on the road to an interest in art.”

The recognition she got from participating in after school art classes gave her a sense of pride, and she remembers the motivational effect, as a young adult, of winning an award for her art and being selected to exhibit in a local art exhibition that later traveled nationally.

Her participation in the visual arts is active and highly personal. She describes art as “an activity I enjoy doing.” She paints in watercolor and values the mental stimulation. “The act of painting makes you think out of the box...”

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Virginia attends art exhibits in New York and locally. Online, she visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website, and has curated her own online album of favorite works of art from the Met's collection.

She takes a particular interest in following the work of other artists over time, to see how it develops and changes. "I see their growth and this inspires my own work," says Virginia, underscoring her core value of lifelong learning through art.

With her children grown and career responsibilities in the background, Virginia's involvement in art has increased. She usually paints three to four times per week for several hours, preferring realistic subjects. "I like to paint the outdoors. I like to paint still life. I like to paint faces, too."

Describing her experience, she says, "Art is a way to be creative. It's satisfying... Sometimes you paint a lot of terrible paintings and then you get that breakthrough... Painting is inspirational, like a vacation without leaving home. There's always more to learn."

"If I were isolated for months in a cabin in Vermont, I'd choose to bring my art materials. They allow me the tools to express what I see and feel."

#### Silvermine Guild Arts Center

At SGAC, Virginia has taken a variety of art classes for years, and occasionally attends exhibitions of the work of artists in which she takes an interest. She's not much interested in Silvermine's chamber music series.

Through experience, she has acquired a savvy taste for art instructors – preferring those who are trained as teachers, not just accomplished artists. Her bond with a specific teacher is a large part of the reason why she continues to take classes at Silvermine.

"I've taken many classes over the years, and sometimes you'll get an artist who can't teach... I object that some people will take your paintbrush and make changes to your painting... Let me change my own painting!" Her comment belies a strong sense of ownership, individualism and pride that she takes in her work. A good art teacher, according to Virginia, "...helps you express what you want to express [without doing it for you]."

Virginia believes a successful visit to Silvermine allows her to accomplish something. She draws energy from other students in her classes and describes the sense of camaraderie and common purpose. "We're all interested in creating something."

When pressed, Virginia admits that she might find classes in other mediums rewarding as well. "I haven't studied jewelry-making, but I might."

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Art is an essential aspect of Virginia's life. She derives a great deal of personal meaning from her art-making activities. Silvermine opens up the possibilities for Virginia's continuous development and self-actualization as a creative being.

## Sample Profiles: Lew

*Lew is a member of the Amistad Foundation in Hartford, and frequently attends Amistad's exhibitions and education events. He was interviewed by Deirdre Bibby, with assistance from Joyce Willis, on June 9, 2003.*

Lew Robinson, a retired lawyer and Hartford native, credits his parents with instilling in him a love of art – a legacy that has transcended his own family, and one that enriches his life continually in many ways. He is a vitally engaged arts citizen with broad interests and a well-developed sensibility for line, shape and composition.

“My mother, particularly, encouraged us to look at our surroundings, to see beauty in the most ordinary things,” he says. “We would be walking down the street or riding in the car and she’d point out something to us that she thought was particularly beautiful or interesting.”

Lew described his father as a no-nonsense, macho type of guy who also had an artistic eye. “He was really fascinating in terms of aesthetics. I remember when he painted our house an ordinary color – except for the back door, which he painted a kind of iridescent purple.”



Growing up in an environment where creativity was encouraged and where aesthetics were valued allowed Lew to develop an appreciation for form, color and texture.

Much like his parents, Lew and his wife took a similar approach to raising their own children (two sons, now grown). Both are pursuing careers in the arts. Lew jokes that he and his wife had other career ideas for their sons: “So, instead of a brain surgeon and a lawyer, this is what we got,” a budding actor/painter and a budding TV producer and rap artist. In reality, they are proud and supportive of their children's creative endeavors.

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Art is a vital, even essential part of Lew's life. He is awake to the intrinsic value of art, and has a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to his surroundings. All of his senses are involved. This is evidenced by his enduring interest in a range of arts activities – music, theatre, dance, the visual arts – and even cooking.

#### Discipline Focus: Visual Art

"My world is enriched by the visual arts. I like everything, from landscapes and seascapes to abstract paintings."

Lew's artistic sensibilities emerged early in his life. He recalls, as a youngster, carving wooden tie slides shaped like rockets for his Boy Scout neckerchiefs. Later, he met some German Scouts who made neckerchief slides reminiscent of Native American symbols. As if it were yesterday, Lew recounted how the German Scouts immersed themselves in Native American culture and appropriated those images in their craftwork.

As a young adult, Lew developed a keen interest in photography, a hobby he picked up as a young serviceman in Germany. "My friend had a single lens reflex camera. [Photography] seemed interesting – and it was cheap, which is very important when you're young, married and in the military." His travels through Europe are recorded in his photographs.

Why photography? "The aesthetics. The real fun was looking at something and trying to capture it." During his two-year stint in Europe, he captured landscapes, people – "and anything else that intrigued me." He continues to pursue photography when time allows.

While his interest is grounded in photography and the visual arts, Lew says that if he were to live on a deserted island (French St. Martin, while not exactly deserted, would be his choice) and could take only one piece of art, it would be a sculpture, which would awaken his aesthetic sensibilities. A sculpture is "Something visual, that would remind me of something or inspire me," he says. "Something that would make me feel good when I looked at it or walked by it. Maybe it would encourage me to make music."

His comments belie a sophisticated value system around artistic expression.

#### The Amistad Foundation

Lew and his wife, Amy, are members of The Amistad Foundation and are frequent visitors to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. They actively seek out information about cultural programs of interest. "If we don't get the notice in the mail, we will see the listing in The Advocate. We try to get to as many exhibits as our schedules allow."

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"The main reason we are members of The Amistad Foundation is because Amistad encourages an appreciation of African American art. Amistad is one of the few places between New York and Boston where we can experience African-American art." His support of Amistad's programs, however, goes well beyond a desire to socialize and see interesting art. Rather, it is rooted in a belief system that values culture as an essential ingredient in community health and civic pride: "We believe you must support African-American art, whether or not it's the best in the world."

Lew's feedback on The Amistad Foundation's programs was very supportive. He enjoys meeting friends and acquaintances at Amistad events, and making new ones. "We are always running into friends and acquaintances at the museum and at local galleries," people who share our appreciation for the arts. In other words, Amistad Foundation plays a continuing role in Lew and Amy's acculturation.

A museum visit is successful, according to Lew, when he learns something. "It's also the aesthetic experience. It's the 'wow.' It's the, 'What an interesting painting (or photograph or sculpture), I'm glad we didn't miss it.' "

Lew believes strongly that interpretive programs that enhance exhibitions are essential. "I may see an exhibit and really enjoy it. Then I'll hear a lecture and I'll see the exhibit again with different, more informed eyes." Lectures and other related programs, he says, deepen his appreciation.

When he's not pursuing his various creative interests, Lew does pro bono legal work and serves on a number of local boards, including the United Way, Capital Community College, Community Renewal Team and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

What distinguishes Lew is his commitment to lifelong learning, and a certain gregariousness of spirit and sense of adventure that allow him to explore a wide range of creative and intellectual endeavors. "I've taken art-related courses ranging from painting to flower arranging," he quips. Recently he joined a book club that meets at Hartford Seminary. The group discusses books, mostly non-fiction, revolving around ethics issues.

## **Sample Profiles: Anthony**

*Anthony has attended Long Wharf Theater only once. He was interviewed by Randy Voit, with assistance from Robin Sauerteig, on June 12, 2003 in New Haven.*

Anthony is a 32-year old, college-educated New Haven native who works full-time as an MIS director at a local assisted living facility. A former Republican alderman and self-professed "workaholic," Anthony's primary interest in the arts is



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musical theater. He regularly attends theatrical events with his sports-loving girlfriend, and pursues an interest in digital photography. Occasionally, Anthony likes to buy paintings by artists that he discovers, particularly realistic canvases with pleasing colors and a story to tell. He's animated, opinionated, and knows what he likes.

It is Anthony's nature to carefully select the art in his life based on criteria that are consistent with his self-image. This approach affords him a great deal of

satisfaction in terms of pursuing specific interests, but also rules out large swaths of artistic territories that don't make the cut.



Perhaps the most poignant manifestation of Anthony's creative focus is his nearly-fanatic following of the work of Broadway diva Linda Eder. "...I'm beyond the fan club; my girlfriend says it's stalking..." His interview was peppered with animated stories of seeing and meeting Eder, and a few near misses. Anthony's devotion to Eder is such that he purchased a \$250 subscription to a series

of musicals at Goodspeed Opera House just in order to get tickets for Eder's performance in Frank Wildhorn's new musical *Camille Claudel*.

Although he considers his family to be artistically disinclined and expresses puzzlement as to the origins of his "lifelong" interest in the performing arts, his parents were, until this year, devoted Shubert subscribers. As a child he would ask to accompany them when a particular production piqued his interest, fostering his status as "the black sheep" of his traditional Italian family.

He found little satisfaction in grammar school flute lessons and played a brief stint in the school band. Although he fondly reminisced about an engaging English teacher at his private high school, he does not attribute his affinity for theater to her, or to any other academic influence.

Anthony's secondary school art classes were more stimulating for their political banter with the instructor than the "militaristic" papier-mâché turtle he was able to create, and he did not elect any arts-related classes in college.

Within the past few years digital photography has emerged as the principal art form in which he actively participates, encouraged by the "instant gratification" aspect of electronic photography as well as its relation to technology and, therefore, to his work.

Time is Anthony's most prized and scarce resource, and in this regard he is perhaps typical of the generation of young professionals who are married to their jobs. Nevertheless, he has subscribed to the Shubert Theater in New Haven, and generally considers himself to be an "Initiator" when it comes to arts participation,

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especially with respect to his girlfriend (who prefers sports events) and his niece, whose interest in dance he nurtures.

Anthony is somewhat aware of art in his surroundings, as in sculpture in public places or even some forms of graffiti. Art also fits into his life as a means of social interaction with his girlfriend. If forced to select just one piece of “art” to accompany him on a solitary desert island, he was quick to conclude that it would be a work of literature, as one can “...go back and find new things in a work of literature” whereas a painting or piece of sculpture would provide only limited long-term stimulation. (He had a much more difficult time deciding upon the actual book; ultimately, “The Complete Works of Shakespeare” triumphed over “The Complete Works of Tom Clancy” for this man’s island fantasy.)

### Discipline Focus: Theater

Anthony's principal involvement with theater is passive, as an audience member. He describes himself as feeling “passionate about theater,” with a knowledge level of “average, maybe a little more.”

Within theater, his interest lies mainly in musicals. His seminal experience or “transformational moment” with the art form – recalled without hesitation – occurred at a performance of *Les Miserables* when he was 13.

The primary value he finds in theater as an art form is entertainment - “Bottom line is do you get some enjoyment out of it?” Generally, intellectual stimulation is not something that he seeks out although, curiously, he is a fan of Shakespeare’s works.

### Long Wharf Theater

Anthony was selected for this interview because of his lack of history with Long Wharf Theater. He had attended a production of *As You Like It* during the 99/00 season, but has not been back since because “...it’s a matter of priorities. Nothing that you’ve offered jumps out at me.”

Although he felt welcome when he did visit, and saw a wide range of theatergoers at the performance, he doesn’t have any friends who subscribe to Long Wharf.

Given the lack of social stimulus to attend Long Wharf, the focused interest in musical theater -- particularly that involving Linda Eder – and his need for a high level of comfort with the program offering – Anthony is most likely to attend Long Wharf for productions of familiar works or works featuring well-known actors.

*These profiles were edited by Alan Brown.*

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