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BUILDING A WORLD: THE POLITICAL NATURE OF PUBLIC ART

by

MARIE GEE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
New York

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2/14/96
Date

Leanne G. Rivlin
Chair of Examining Committee

2-14-96
Date

Ray Deaux
Executive Officer

Professor Leanne Rivlin

Professor Maxine Wolfe

Professor David Chapin
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

BUILDING A WORLD: THE POLITICAL NATURE OF PUBLIC ART

by

MARIE GEE

Adviser: Professor Leanne Rivlin

In this research nineteen influential public art professionals were interviewed in order to develop a picture of current cultural sensibilities about public art in terms of the relationship between these public art professionals and the audience they serve. Found was a deep-seated paradox in which the aesthetic values and beliefs of the art world and the need to maintain them were in conflict with a concern for the everyday lives and experience of a pluralistic and non art-educated public. It was argued that public art professionals, who must satisfy both the art world and the public world, resolve this paradox by opening a political arena in which both sides can speak and act.

Although some public art professionals encourage the audience to understand public art through education and public relations, more seem to allow people without such an art education to be involved in the public art process in a way that is political, that is, coming together in public to

speak and act about matters of public interest.

The manifestations of this political nature of public art are varied: from responding to the artwork itself, to sitting on committees, attending public meetings, or working with the artist, people, or the "constituents" as they are often called, are being given a position in a political process. Although for the most part decision-making is still reserved for art world professionals, the very involvement of the public, the attention to its concerns, the attempt at inclusion, all point to a challenge of the strictly bounded aesthetic world.

Public art professionals, embedded in the aesthetic habitus, continue to speak that language, believe in the power of art and artists, and see the public as people who respond to art. But when they bring that art into an everyday context, exposing it to people without a background in art and even involving those people in the process--expecting themselves, artists, and the artwork to change with the context--they are undermining the authority which art and artists have maintained for hundreds of years.

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Dedicated to
Ray

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CHAPTER 1

THE EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC ART

Introduction

Like many other things in this century and especially in this postmodern age, art is being redefined, being released from a fixed position and allowed to float free. Yet, I will suggest, that release is tentative and incomplete at best and the authority of art and the artist is often retained even while what is permitted in the name of art fluctuates. Those who are the audience for art are usually still expected to come to it with some understanding in place even as the arts vie for a less art-knowledgeable population's attention and support.

In the field of public art, however, the audience cannot be expected to come to the art with knowledge in place. For this audience the art is part of their everyday lives and experience in ways other art forms never are. The concern for this different audience and its potential experience of the artwork, as well as concern for the artwork itself, I will argue, affects the practices and beliefs of those people who place it. This research has concentrated on those professionals who place public art or who are deeply concerned about it and their practices and beliefs concerning that everyday audience.

The need to be concerned with the everyday lives of the audience and their eventual experience of the artwork, coupled with the need to somehow maintain the authority of art and the artist, I will argue, has emerged from this research as a paradox and the single most significant problem public art professionals face. I will argue as well that there is an attempt to resolve this problem in a way contradictory to the understanding of art which valorizes the work of art and the artist. That is, a political arena is opened in which the audience takes and is given the opportunity to speak and act in the public art process to make their own concerns and desires known. This political nature that public art takes on affects the way the audience is talked about and treated and it affects the changing definition and experience of public art.

What follows will be a literature review laying out and defining the issues through which this analysis was developed.

The Experience of Art

Although it may be presumed that experience, such as that with artwork, is personal, interior, and singular, Charles Taylor (1991) points out that the idea of the "self" and the tendency to examine our own subjective experience is a modern phenomenon. At work, he says, is a disengagement from our bodies and from our social embeddedness in the world brought on by scientific thinking. Opposed to this,

Taylor and many other thinkers are insistent on the social or dialogic nature of the self.

Tamsin E. Lorraine, for example, in Gender, Identity and the Production of Meaning (1990), explains that the self is a product of the social world in which it acts. In addition, this produced self also navigates that world on the basis of idiosyncratic embodied experience. We continually constitute a self and a world simultaneously, through language, she says, and are always pushing against the edges of our culture's constraints. For Lorraine, experience presupposes gender, race, class and the other positions one has been compelled to assume from the available social order. A person is born into a social order which includes the language he or she speaks and the cultural sensibilities available at any particular moment that both constrain and allow the individual to understand his or her world. The individual has a personal history and background which makes him or her a unique embodied being with gender, class, race, sexuality and ethnicity. This person operates from a position within the constraints of the social order. Each individual also experiences the world in an immediate way, which is often non-verbal, and includes emotional and sensual responses, though these too may be socially constructed (Butler & Scott, 1992). This concept is different than that which has been the basis of beliefs about aesthetic experience.

Kant, in 1790, laid out aesthetic experience and the

aesthetic object explicitly. Kant considered aesthetic experience to be a direct experience which was not subjective pleasure or desire, nor was it conceptual thinking. The aesthetic object was to be evaluated without reference to anything beyond the object itself. The belief was that the enjoyment and cultivation of the aesthetic sensibility for fine art was one of the ultimate values in human life. To attain the aesthetic sensibility, no usefulness was permitted in the aesthetic object. No subjective desire, reason or conceptual thinking was permitted in the attitude with which one approached art. No morality nor political activity was permitted in the making of the aesthetic object. These things belonged in other realms.

In the 20th century, on the one hand, the separations already formed in the 18th and 19th centuries between various realms of thought and experience became even more pronounced. For example, the artist took up a position outside society, criticizing and trying to shock the bourgeois mentality. The institutions of art became the only places one could find art, and the spectator was completely disenfranchised, according to Rosenberg (1971), needing a professional interpreter to explain the works of art.

On the other hand, artists became aware of what they called the separation of art from life and began an attempt to break through the boundary between art and life.

However, once the aesthetic realm had been defined and art had been considered an entity complete unto itself it was no longer possible to join art and life. Simply by calling something art or someone an artist removed them from the everyday world into a rarified atmosphere that life supposedly couldn't touch.

The aesthetic experience is considered one of the most separated of all and yet, according to Bourdieu (1987), it is dependent on the cultural sensibilities in which one is trained. According to Bourdieu (1987), the autonomy of the artistic field remains firmly in place even today, held there by its institutions and its history. It is a cultural "habitus," a "structured structuring structure" (note, p.209) which continually produces and reproduces itself. Its issues and concerns are historical cultural products. In the field, "art" is that which is made by an "artist." An "artist," Bourdieu says, is created by the art field which is itself the product of a long historical, cultural process. It is founded on the belief in the quasi-magical powers of the artist. Its locus of faith, he says, is in the value of art and artists, and it includes the set of institutions which are its necessary conditions--places of exhibit, schools, agents, an artistic language. The aesthetic disposition which is necessary to approach art is also a cultural historical product of long exposure to artworks, museums, and schooling, according to Bourdieu.

Thus, from this perspective, the experiences we have in

our lives, including with art, are not the pure personal responses we may believe them to be but have very much to do with the culture in which we live.

The concept of an aesthetic disposition and a separate, autonomous, domain for art contributes to the paradox of public art: art--which to exist must remain separated from the rest of life--is placed into a world which can't allow it an existence separate from what is around it. Public art cannot command the kind of attention and distancing from the world which is the "quiet and reflective state of mind" (Matisse, paraphrased in Wetenhall, 1992, p.13) necessary for the Kantian concept of art appreciation and aesthetic experience. Public art is right in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the everyday life of the world, its context cannot be removed. Indeed, it is defined by its context.

The Experience of Public Art

The experience of people who came into contact with public art was studied in two Ph.D. dissertations in Environmental Psychology, and this is the only empirical literature that directly addresses the experiencing of art in the public realm.

Degnore (1987) looked at people's response to public art in New York City. She found that people's experience of artworks varied in intensity and meaning as a function of the interwoven relationships among the qualities of the work, the setting, and the person. The understanding of

aesthetic experience, she urged, must not be based on perceptual qualities alone, but must be seen to include viewer imputations, interpretations and personal meanings as well as features of the artwork and its context (Degnore, 1987).

Israel (1988) also examined public art, specifically, murals in England. She discovered that people appreciate being able to extract personal meaning from the murals, but that they did not want them to be imposed without consultation, especially in residential areas. At that time and in that place, people did not necessarily prefer murals done by community participation, nor did the art necessarily impact positively on one's sense of place. Similar to Degnore's results, Israel found that the experience of the murals was personal and different for each work of art, depending on the person, the art and the setting.

Degnore's and Israel's work is helpful to understanding the experience of public art, but it leaves out a number of components. The context is not just the physical setting of a piece but must include the social and cultural milieu as well. The person is not just a demographic statistic but also has a personal history of experiencing art and giving meaning to his or her world. The art work is not just a physical presence but comes out of a long history of ideas and values.

The social order has defined "art" as a separate realm of objects and experience and has defined the objects and

experiences that belong in that realm. In an effort to comprehend the constraints which place the experiencing of public art in a social-cultural context, this dissertation will focus on attempting to understand some of the fluctuating current cultural sensibilities about the relationship of the audience to public art.

A Short History of Public Art in the United States

Because it must always exist in public, public art has always had to concern itself with audience in a way no other art has had to, because the audience for public art must be presumed to be everyone, not only those self-selected and trained in art. This short history concentrates on the beliefs about that audience and its relationship to public art.

From 1783 to the last quarter of the 19th Century, the government and private patrons were erecting or commissioning public art, not only monuments to heros but also to enhance city utilities for the health and enjoyment of people (Bach, 1992). The City Beautiful Movement in the Progressive Era of the late 19th century embodied the belief that people could be taught civic values through their surroundings. At the end of the 19th century, when industrialization, depressions, and immigration were accelerating social changes, upper middle-class, white Americans felt their values threatened and decided public art had an important role to play in reinforcing their own

civic values. The public sculpture erected then was meant to inspire the beholder with high ideals and to represent order, unity, and progress (Bach, 1992; Bogart, 1989). It was believed that sculpture would be a force in civilizing the public in the same way it was believed that parks could (Crantz, 1980).

After World War I, due in part to a proliferation of "ready-made" war monuments after the Civil War and in part to a change in aesthetic values which included the demonumentalizing of the hero, it was suggested that war reminders should be bridges, plazas and tree plantings (Bach, 1992), or walls, parks, and playgrounds (Bogart, 1989). Active recreation became valued over passive contemplation of allegorical sculpture as a way to generate uplift and social control, particularly of the immigrant population (Bach, 1992; Bogart, 1989).

During the Depression of the 1930s many artists began to think of themselves as unemployed workers and believed that they could influence the public for its own good and bring about the aesthetic self-fulfillment of the masses. The Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Program from 1935-1943 employed them (O'Connor, 1973; Rosenberg, 1971, Melosh, 1991) and much public art was produced under its auspices. Many of the unionized artists were left-wing. Congress, nervous of Communism in the late thirties, began criticizing the WPA and limiting its function. After the WPA ended in "disillusion and despair" (O'Connor, 1973,

p.28), there was little public art commissioned until the coming of the 1960s and "percent for art" laws.

By the end of World War II, modern aesthetic ideals, which looked for "pure" art--non-utilitarian and non-allegorical--had finally overtaken public art. By the time of a 1953 public art competition described by Wetenhall (1988), modern artists were commissioned for public art. As Rosenberg (1971) said, a professional interpreter was needed to explain "modern" works of art to the non-art audience.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government was involved in a debate about the government's role in funding art and culture. Wetenhall (1988) describes the Federal Government fighting over whether art was a needless frill on overburdened taxpayers or whether culture should be democratized and what that might mean. In the atmosphere of McCarthyism, there was a great fear on the government's part of funding left-wing artists and their ideas. Although a few politicians stressed the need for the U.S. to represent itself abroad as culturally sophisticated and not just "materialistic barbarians" as compared to the Soviets and Europeans, the idea of a left-wing or Communist threat offered by artists and intellectuals prevailed in Congress. In addition, a dilemma was seen between elitist standards of quality and appreciation which during this time required training, versus quantity and the least common denominator of public taste and liking, if the government was to fund art.

Percent for Art

In 1934, an executive order set up a federal percent for art program. The Treasury Section of Fine Art commissioned 1% of Public Buildings Administration construction funds for building embellishments (Melosh, 1991). The Section operated until 1943. The goal of the Section's administration was to educate the public, that is, to initiate more people into the privileged discourse of art. The Section's commissions often involved many of the same issues important today such as talking to locals before the project, working out the artist's plans with administrators beforehand, and letting people know about the art that was coming. According to Melosh, the percent for art program of the Treasury Section of Fine Art is often forgotten in discussions of the public art that occurred during the Depression's WPA.

In post-World War II reconstruction in Europe, a percent for art was part of many budgets. Bach (1992) tells the story of a Philadelphia artist, Joseph Greenberg, who had studied in Europe and had seen percent for art programs working. He came home and began encouraging local politicians and artists' groups to endorse this idea. In 1958, Michael von Moschzisker of the Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia made a speech (Von Moschzisker, 1958) which is credited with the start of the percent for art requirements. In it he deplored America's new buildings, called for the banishment of sterility, and hoped for the

return of the artist to the American scene instead of "his works being hoarded in museums and galleries" (Von Moschzisker, 1958). He suggested that the ensuing beauty as well as livability would cause staggering public appreciation as well as profits for the owners. Such thinking was a long way from teaching civic virtues to the populace.

In 1959, von Moschzisker's Redevelopment Authority (RDA) in Philadelphia passed a board resolution that no less than one percent of the cost of construction must be spent on fine art, and later that same year the City of Philadelphia (a different government body) passed an ordinance declaring no more than one percent of new city construction must be spent on art.

By the 1960s, with the coming of the Kennedy White House, culture began to be considered a vital part of our history as a great civilization. In addition, there was a call to democratize the arts and make art available to everyone. In 1963 the General Services Administration instituted a percent for art for Federal buildings which lasted 3 years and was reinstated in 1972. In 1965, the National Federation on Arts and Humanities was created and with it the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). It was committed to make arts more widely available, preserve the cultural heritage, strengthen cultural organizations and encourage the creative level of talented individuals

(Larson, 1983; Netzer, 1978). It precluded government interference--which had always been an argument against government funding--by determining that no employee of the U.S. shall have control over policy.

The approach of the NEA is to foster the arts and make them available and appreciated without imposing aesthetic standards or directing artistic contents (National Endowment for the Arts, 1995). The percent for art laws, likewise, see their role as acquiring art, encouraging artists, and enhancing the environment for the benefit of the public. In other words, art became a means to cure the post-war built environment of its sterility and also uplift the populace by its very presence on the streets.

At this point modern art was being officially commissioned and being placed in front of new buildings across the country in the name of beautification, humanizing the environment, and uplifting the populace. Meanwhile, the 1960s and 1970s saw other kinds of public art on the streets and in the landscape that was not necessarily officially commissioned and that had a different concern for the audience. There was a mural movement that came up from the grassroots, focused on the local communities in which they were made. Community history, politics, and actual participation both in design and fabrication were all elements inherent in this "people's art" (Cockcroft, Weber, & Cockcroft, 1977). Another group of artists took to the landscape and began making work that dealt with the context

of the place where art would be made, often called site-specific sculpture (Irwin, 1985). Others began making sculpture that dealt very directly with the audience and its phenomenological relationship to the work of art, how the body of the person perceived, felt, and was directed by, the artwork (Beardsley, 1984; Lucie-Smith, 1980).

All of these artists were trying to break out of the isolation of the studio and to bring art back to the people, not as a commodity, but as part of life. These artworks were not funded or were funded by private patrons or the artists themselves. Most were temporary and many have disappeared. Even the murals, made to be more permanent, have declined in number. Today, many of these artists have gone on to make permanent public art under official auspices. Directly or indirectly all three strains of 60s and 70s public art--art objects placed outdoors, murals and political or community-based work, and site specific work--have had a major influence on the work being placed in the 1990s by the percent for art laws and other funded public art resources.

Concerns for the Social

It began to become clear in the 70s that there was a problem with official public art. Intended to beautify and humanize, it was often thought to detract. In 1976 the city of Seattle passed a percent for art ordinance which was intended not just to beautify the city, but rather, to integrate art into its social fabric. In their first

project they tried the new "design team" approach in which the artists worked in the planning stages with the architect and other designers. Because of the artists' concerns, the community was directly involved in discussions about a proposed electrical substation and a park was eventually built. No longer were artists expected to drop autonomous artworks into previously built spaces. Instead they became thinkers and co-designers of the public environment.

In 1982, Penny Bach, working with the Fairmount Park Art Association, held the show "Form and Function" in Philadelphia. She and her colleagues asked the invited artists to propose public art projects that were utilitarian, site-specific and integral to community life. Many of the proposals have since become permanent public artworks, bringing the concept of "use" to public art. Also in 1980, the NEA changed its guidelines to involve the community in selecting public art projects by putting local representatives on all juries.

In 1985, because of public outcry against a piece of officially commissioned public art, three days of public hearings were held in New York City concerning Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc" and the community's desire to have it removed versus the art world's insistence that it remain. Finally all appeals were denied and the GSA removed the piece to a warehouse in 1989. This event placed the separation between the art world and the audience into the spotlight. And, in part because of this event, the focus

for some of the people with power in the field of public art has drifted away from the "art" of public art to the "public" of public art.

The Public of Public Art

When the literature addresses the public of public art it is not just referring to some generalized audience. In many cases "public" is conceived in the art world as it is in the literature of political science, in terms of democracy, the public realm, the public sphere, public life, and public space (Deutsche, 1992; 1991; 1988; Phillips, 1994; 1992a; 1992b; 1988; Yngvason, 1993). For example, Eleanor Heartney (1992) suggests that artists are trying to explore and reinvent the public realm and encourage a more active notion of public life. In the same article, which is a dialogue, Robert Storr suggests that art is a sounding board for debate about our evolving self-definition as a country. These kinds of ideas directly refute the notion of art as an aesthetic object separate and distinct from other realms of discourse.

Hannah Arendt has written at length about the concept of the public realm that is now finding its way into the art world. To Arendt (1958), to be public means to be seen and heard by others, to see and hear others. We insert ourselves into the human world where we can see and be seen, hear and be heard. Speaking and acting is itself the important thing. For Arendt, speech actualizes the human

condition of what she calls *plurality*, that is, we are all the same in that we are each different with a different location in the world. Because the fact of our differences makes us the same, we theoretically come into the public realm as equals. Action actualizes the human condition of what Arendt calls *natality*, that is, something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before, like a "second birth" (Arendt, 1958).

The political realm, she says, rises directly out of acting together, the sharing of words and deeds. But, she says, action is unpredictable, irreversible, and anonymous. That haphazardness is inherent in plurality. This, she says, is "manifest in the whole body of argument against democracy," which, "the more consistently and better reasoned it is, will turn into an argument against the essentials of politics" (Arendt, 1958, p.220). But any attempt to do away with plurality, she says, is "tantamount to the abolition of the public realm itself" (Arendt, 1958, p.220).

The public realm which Arendt describes--where single individuals come together as equals under the conditions of plurality and natality and speak and act to disclose reality, establish relations, and change reality--is part of the common world. According to Arendt, the common world includes both the fabrications of humans and the web of human relationships. Human life, according to Arendt, is not possible without a fabricated world which testifies to

the presence of other humans and in which everything said or done falls into the always already existing web of human relationships (Arendt, 1958).

Jurgen Habermas (1991) also discusses the public realm of democracy, calling it the public sphere. Public art authors have brought Habermas' discussion of the public sphere into the conversation (Aquilino, 1991; Sherlock, 1992). Karen Giusti (1994), invoking Habermas' public sphere, thinks of it as an immense grey matter, where ideas flow in a phantasmagoric parade, as an adventure in channel surfing. The editor of Public Art Review (Wright, 1994) talks about the public sphere as a neutral zone, neither influenced by government nor by the privatized, in which there is a free flow of ideas in an ongoing debate.

According to Habermas (1991), there was consistent critical public debate in what he calls the public sphere of early democracy in the 18th and 19th centuries. Reason--the power of the better argument--was the method of debate, and the result was consensus, not compromise, he says. This reasonably formed public opinion was then used to influence the state which could not ignore it. Publicity, mainly through the press, was a basic tool of such democracy, according to Habermas.

Supposedly, this public sphere was constituted out of individuals without regard to preexisting social or political rank. In fact however, it was accessible only to educated white men who owned property. The fiction,

Habermas says, was that justice was inherent in the free commerce of the marketplace and anyone could gain property and education and thus be admitted to the public sphere (Habermas, 1991). In the bourgeois public sphere of the 18th century of which Habermas speaks, the solutions arrived at by debating people produced a "we" of democratic consensus. But that "we" was false, speaking only for the interests of educated men with property. The false "we" of the bourgeois public sphere hid actual inequalities and silenced minorities, according to Fraser (1992) and Nicholson (1986).

Habermas described how the democratic public sphere changed to become an arena of competing interests rather than debating individuals. Compromise rather than consensus became the rule (Habermas, 1991). Today, according to Habermas, rather than publicity and reasoned critique influencing the state, the state attempts to manipulate public opinion and addresses its citizens as consumers.

The bourgeois public sphere Habermas describes was flawed because the condition of plurality to which Arendt refers was not respected as it must be in the public realm. The notion of the possibility of people coming together to make public the realities they know and to change those realities remains an ideal to be grasped. Yet the concept of a diverse pluralistic group of people--not the state--having access to the public realm is a basic tenet of a commitment to democracy. Those concerned with public art

are attempting to bring such issues of democracy and public life into the spotlight as they attempt to redefine public art with weight on the public. They are concerned as well with the concept, often identified with the public realm, of public space.

Public Space

As the public realm changed under democracy from a homogeneous group of educated white male property owners to a democratic mass of every class, race, ethnic group, religion, gender, sexuality, etc., so too did the concepts of public space change.

A Short History of Public Space in the United States

In the 1700s the commons and public squares worked for the homogeneous citizens as places to form a public realm of discourse. Such public spaces were not truly democratic because the citizens with greatest access were homogeneous groups of educated men with property (Jackson, 1984). Yet it remains as an ideal image: a public space where citizens can come together for discourse, a space for identity formation and community building (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992).

In the 1800s public space began to be seen as places for individuals to experience things--scenery, nature, other people. This occurred at the time that cultivating aesthetic experience was considered of ultimate value. This

ideal has been criticized as a form of elitist social control because park-makers were trying to teach the lower classes the behavior of the upper classes (Crantz, 1980).

By the 1900s, public spaces became available for organized group activities, later again public spaces became associated with recreational activities such as shopping, sports or other activities (Carr, et al, 1992; Crantz, 1980; Heckscher, 1977; Jackson, 1984). Some authors today (Whyte, 1988) seem to praise public space when they observe a diverse group in parallel play, that is, many people seemingly engaged in similar activities, playing and enjoying themselves and not in conflict.

Public space is defined in environmental psychology in terms of its physicality as a relatively fixed framework or common ground within which public activities are carried out (Carr, et al, 1992; Sampson, 1990). It is seen as a stable physical reminder--of activities, of people, of history, one's own and the larger group's, fostering connections (Carr, et al, 1992), as a place to experience strangers and their differences without the compulsion to be like them or as a place to be entertained, or to learn (Brill, 1989).

There is an extensive literature which debates public space in terms of location, access, use, control, and meaning. None presume public space exists without people yet there is a sense, and statements, of public space as the potential *setting* for people's activities. Public space as setting is criticized as assuming "absolute space" or space

as container which in turn, according to Smith and Katz (1993) presumes private property and a homogenous culture.

The term public space is used in a non-physical sense, to mean democratic speech and action, by theorists as well as writers on public art (Benhabib, 1992; Lefort, 1988). Eleanor Heartney (1992) for example, defines public space as a place where people with diverse interests and needs can come together and work together toward the accommodation of their differences, but feels that it hardly exists because most people have no sense that democracy requires active participation.

Rosalyn Deutsche (1992) is trying to get away from the concept that public space and the public exist as localized physical sites or determinate groups of people. What are called "public spaces," she says, are often redeveloped private property or state-controlled areas which exclude those members of "the public" such as the homeless, who don't conform to the "proper" uses of the space. This is a critique often repeated in the environmental psychology literature (Carr, et al, 1992) and by itself would be nothing new. But Deutsche goes on to define public space as a "relational space where identities, including the identity of politics, are constituted and modified." (Deutsche, 1992, p.44). Public space, she says, is the space where human beings speak to each other, construct society, and form political identities through the declaration of rights. Such public space is a space of discourse, what Arendt calls

the space of appearance which is the public realm.

Public space is neither simply an empty setting to be filled with social relations, nor a non-physical space of only discourse and thought. Rather, as Arendt (1958) says, the two are completely interdependent, the web of human relationships arising out of the material world which binds and separates us all. Art, in its many manifestations, is an example both of the physical nature of the world and the relational nature of discourse which is also that world.

Public art is embedded in our notions of public space as it is embedded within our notions of art. I will argue that the contradictions between notions of art as separate and special and notions of public as democratic and inclusive permeates the practices of those who have power in the field of public art.

The next section of this chapter describes the research itself.

Exploring Public Art: Methods

Originally, this research was conceived as being a study of the experiences of the audience and their relationship with public art. It was to be in three phases, beginning with interviews and suggestions of public art professionals, then go on from there to research specific public artworks and speak to the artists, and finally, speak to people at the site of the researched artwork in order to understand the experience of public art.

I believed that the audience's relationship to and experience of public art emerges from the social order by which we are constrained regarding it. The first phase of the research was to be a way into an understanding of that social order, beginning where the power resides in public art, that is, amid public art professionals. I theorized that their beliefs and practices would have an effect on the cultural sensibilities regarding public art and thus would affect people's eventual experience of the artworks. They have the power of placing public art and the credibility to speak about it in the professional venues that get disseminated finally to the more general audience in the everyday world. Although they can't control the constraints of the social order, and cultural sensibilities grow as well from resistance to those constraints by those without power, these people who are immersed in the field can offer an entry into the concerns of today and how they are being dealt with.

This research used a "grounded theory" approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) to the gathering and analysis of data in which theory is developed from the gathered data rather than the other way around. This approach involves a continuous process of rigorous analysis which organizes the data already gathered and informs the collection of new data. At the same time it continuously questions itself in a hermeneutic of ever increased understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

One systematically obtains and analyzes empirical data as well as published material that applies to the phenomenon under study. One does theoretical sampling by which it is decided on analytic grounds what data to collect and where. One goes beyond describing data to analysis via a system of coding, categorizing and comparisons along with theory-writing, meanwhile re-examining the data for verification or negation and collecting more data via theoretical sampling.

The first phase of the research was begun, and public art professionals were interviewed in New York, Philadelphia, and Miami. However, in the tradition of grounded theory, these interviews, as they were being analyzed, brought forth new questions, and raised new issues which it seemed urgent to address. I believed these issues to be very important to understanding the position of these public art professionals. Central among them were the concepts of public and art which have been laid out here. I felt it necessary to probe for a deeper understanding of the specific constraints placed on the individual experience of public art by the social, cultural, and historical context. That context includes both the world of art in which public art is formed and from which it comes to appear, and the social, cultural, and historical context of the public world.

It was decided to develop phase one and do further interviews with different public art professionals as well as to return to some who had already been interviewed,

asking more questions and probing further on questions already asked. New interviews were done in New Mexico. The present study constitutes the first phase of the originally conceived research. Nineteen interviews are the basis of this research, a non-representative sample of administrators, critics and others centrally involved in the field of public art (see Appendix A).

I work from the transactional belief (Dewey & Bentley, 1949) that the researcher is always a fundamental part of the research. As researcher, I must clearly state that I am firmly embedded in the aesthetic habitus as Bourdieu (1987) defines it, having had six years of art school and 20 years making and exhibiting art, including public art. This immediately puts into question any "objective" analysis of the practices and sensibilities of the culture relating to public art. Yet objectivity itself has been put into question in the recent past (Harding, 1986). Nevertheless a person deep inside a sensibility such as the aesthetic habitus is less likely to see contradictions and presuppositions that may be obvious to a newcomer or an outsider. Because of being firmly embedded in this world, I have spoken to and worked with public artists and have gone to conferences on public art, which colored my understanding and ability to interpret the interviews in this research, as I said, objectively. This will remain a basic and necessary condition in this research even as I struggle to step back

and uncover presuppositions and contradictions and speak with seeming authority about what emerges.

In addition, the administrators to whom I spoke represent government or private organizations which have ideologies and belief systems which they must present to the world, including, at different times and in different ways, one another, their local governments, local media, individual artists they work with, the local art world including other artists, the national and international art world, the world of artists, the political constituency they represent, the general public, and in this case, me. So they were used to presenting their views. The critics and other public art professionals were also used to thinking about and defending their version of public art. They were eagerly informative; each person seemingly had a great investment in their organization and their role of placing public art, or in their commitment to the position from which they view public art. Thus, what they had to say was often what they are used to presenting to the world--in a sense, public relations.

In spite of these two conditions--the public relations nature of the interviews, and my embeddedness in the sensibility--I believe some new information has emerged, and is of value as a snapshot of current practices in the field.

How the Research Was Done

At the time the research began I was living in Philadelphia

and commuting to New York City; because of that the decision was made to limit interviews to those two cities. I knew people in Philadelphia from my earlier artwork there, or knew of organizations that seemed important and made those contacts. In New York, I had an introduction to one person and contacted other organizations which seemed important to my concerns. Some public art professionals were also contacted on the recommendation of other public art professionals. I had read articles or books by the critics I found of interest to my project and so contacted them. I also made a short trip to Miami and was able to interview one person there. The interviews in New Mexico were done in a similar way to New York. I was living there at the time and I had an introduction to one or two people and used their recommendations to find the others.

The people who were interviewed are listed in Appendix A along with comparative information about their organizations. There are five people heading organizations which place public art because of city government percent for art laws. There are four running organizations which place public art under the auspices of state governments. There are four who direct non-governmental, non-profit organizations which place public art. There are six people who do not place public art but rather write about it, inventory it, or approve it.

The cities in which people were interviewed predetermined the diversity of this group of public art

professionals. Because of that I ended up with only one African American and one Hispano¹ public art professional, 12 women and 7 men. [I do not know the specific diversity of public art professionals across the country.]

All interviews were done in person, tape recorded, and transcribed. Most interviews lasted one and a half to two hours. The updates were done over the phone and notes were taken. The interviews were edited in the following manner: Excess words were chopped; repetitions and unfinished thoughts were dropped; any words added for clarity are in brackets. Two-thirds of the interviews were done in 1991, one-third in 1994. The updates, in 1994, were general information seeking, done to see if practices and attitudes had changed drastically. In three updates, because of the earlier interviews, Bach, Clark, and Finkelpearl were asked to delve more deeply into some issues.

The questions I asked in the interviews (see Appendix B) of course influenced the kinds of answers I would receive. They were determined by reading current literature about public art. Probes in later interviews were created from questions arising from previous interviews. The analysis was done following grounded theory guidelines of collecting data, analyzing, reading, analyzing, collecting data, analyzing, all the while categorizing, writing and developing a scheme from which to understand the data.

¹In New Mexico, Hispanics have rejected the Anglicized version of the word and refer to themselves as Hispanos/as.

Grounded theory analysis (Strauss, 1987) has the researcher define the basic problem which the people interviewed are trying to solve. As I said, I will argue that what has emerged as the basic problem is the paradox faced by all of these people, that is, placing "art," with all that implies, in public with all that implies. I will argue that what has emerged as their solution to this paradox is a political solution which attempts to bring the public into the art world and the art world into the public realm. By political I intend to mean it in Arendt's sense of speaking and acting together in public, not in the sense of partisan politics or the calculated manipulation of others for personal gain.

I do not claim to be comprehensive but merely to represent in some way current practices and attitudes in public art. Much more information has been left out of the findings than that which has been written here. The chapters that follow focus on those parts of the interviews related to the eventual relationship between audience and artwork. After having people who were interviewed define the artwork and the audience (Chapters 2 and 3), I try to uncover basic presuppositions held by these public art professionals (Chapter 4). Then I go on to their picture of the audience's view of public art and controversy (Chapter 5), to their view of the artist/audience relationship (Chapter 7), and their own relationship to the audience (Chapters 6 and 8) and to the state (Chapter 9). I will

argue, as I said, that they are trying to bring a political solution to a paradox where what had been seen as separate and completely different realms intersect.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINING PUBLIC ART: CONTEXT AND CONTENT

When interviewed in 1991, Tom Finkelpearl had recently begun his job as director of New York City's Percent for Art Program. Previously he had been a curator of contemporary art at alternative art spaces such as P.S.1 and the Clocktower. "By public art," he said, "I mean art that is based on the idea of engaging some public in some sort of discourse." He spoke about a show at the Clocktower he had curated a few years earlier as an example: Krzysztof Wodiczko's "Homeless Vehicle Project," a proposal for a push vehicle which could be used by certain homeless men who refuse the shelter system and subsist by recycling aluminum cans.

To me, that was public art for two reasons. First of all, he actually put the vehicle out on the streets and had it in a public context.

The vehicle was on the street for a few days during the show.

But also because the process of developing the vehicle was a process of interacting with homeless people, finding out what their real issues were.

For Finkelpearl, engaging the public in some sort of discourse was not only this interaction with homeless men, but also an attempt to "redefine somewhat how to talk about the homeless." The show of the proposed vehicle generated

an entire issue of October, an art journal which Finkelpearl called "an elitist leftist magazine." In the issue there were numerous articles valorizing the "Homeless Vehicle Project." Also in the issue, according to Finkelpearl,

Oscar and Victor, homeless men, talk about both being homeless and working on the vehicle. So it's giving them a voice within this magazine.

Finkelpearl described the opening of the show at the Clocktower.

By the way, we did not invite homeless people to the opening to see the show. That wasn't the point, because then they're sort of on display and with this sort of middle class, upper middle class environment where they feel uncomfortable and it doesn't solve any of their problems. They have to go out on the street afterwards and go to sleep.

The purpose of the project, according to October, which Finkelpearl pointed to as being part of the discourse and thus part of the public art of this piece, was to imagine the homeless becoming visible because of the vehicles (Deutsche, 1988). This was a critique of the beautifying of New York City during Mayor Koch's tenure (1978-1990), saying that it was the government, holding hands with developers, which made the men homeless in the first place by closing down SROs and forcing them out of the area.

The discourse which made it public art in Finkelpearl's definition happened inside the walls of the art world, the elite speaking to the educated: Oscar and Victor, who don't get last names, were not invited to the opening, not even asked if they would like to be invited. Nor do they get a homeless vehicle of their own. A seeming paternalism was

shown by deciding for the men that they would not be comfortable at the opening. And although their suggestions were elicited for design, it was never meant to be something real they could own but only an imaginary "what if" image that would embarrass the powers-that-be. In the long run no vehicles were manufactured and given out, no homes were found for these men, and the redevelopment went on as planned.

How can this be called public art? To call something public art which is kept within the confines of the art world, which addresses the art world, and interacts with one very small segment of the public seems confusing. However, in light of Finkelpearl's definition, it was discourse and it spoke to some public. In addition, as he said, it was on the street, and the artist did design the vehicle from the suggestions of the homeless men it was proposed to serve. For Finkelpearl, this was an excellent example of his definition of public art. Finkelpearl's definition and example of good public art can be compared to that of Brown.

Cee Scott Brown had been working at Creative Time for 5 years when interviewed in 1991. He too had worked many years in the art world: for the Museum of Modern Art and Holly Solomon Gallery among others. "Public art is art of the people, where the people are," he said.

In 1990 Creative Time installed a temporary piece by performance artist Karen Finley in a small park. Brown explained that they do a lot of ground work before

installing anything.

Karen and I both spent a lot of time with the Community Boards and in the park itself talking to the people--I mean there are people that live in this godforsaken little park at the corner of First and 1st--to find out if they would mind having this piece come in.

He described the piece.

We decided to take her words, which are her performance, and make them visual somehow. So it was cast in two bronze plaques, and then mounted on this visually huge concrete stone.

Brown goes on, "It was no great shakes visually." The piece was called "Black Sheep" and was talking about marginalizations of one sort or another,

whether it's gay and lesbian, or its AIDS, or its black, or it's a woman, or it's a black woman with AIDS, or any of the marginalizations that can happen in this country.

They too had an opening. "It was like a party in a living room," Brown said.

We set up a card table and had all these kinds of juices and we just kind of hung out there and served juices to the people who lived there.

Brown went on:

For me that was the ultimate experience. Serving that punch and watching the people stand shoulder to shoulder. There was a woman with a child, a woman with blue hair--and I mean an older woman, and a woman with pink hair--and I mean someone dressed in black, and someone with no shoes on that was wearing very dirty clothes that probably lived in the park, standing shoulder to shoulder reading this poem.

"The fact was, the piece spoke to them," Brown explained.

Afterwards, when it rained, for the entire year that it was there, they covered it. And brought fresh flowers to it. And they cleaned the graffiti off it. And on opening night I was

looking around and tucked under the ledge was a little [toy] black sheep.

Such a story stands in stark contrast to the earlier one. In this case, the public art was alongside the people it was about, and included them. It was the art world speaking with the public in a way that seems to have resonated with their own experience instead of being removed from them and talking about them in the high sites of the art world.

Because I did not speak to the inhabitants of the park, I don't know why they felt a responsibility toward the piece, to maintain it and treat it with care. Was it because of the content of the piece, as Brown hypothesized, that they felt understood in their own marginalization? Perhaps it was because they were shown respect and offered a stake in the world. They were involved in the building of a very small part of the world and they took onto themselves the responsibility to help. The content of the piece, by speaking to them in public about something they could recognize in themselves, had the effect of focusing them momentarily onto the public environment beyond their own physical survival.

This work of art probably made no significant changes in the lives of most of the people who lived in the park, any more than the "Homeless Vehicle Project" did. At the end of the opening, homeless people were still on the street. At the end of the year when the piece was moved to another location, homeless people were still in the park.

But public art is not expected to solve social problems, only in some cases to point them out.

Asking people if they would they mind something intruding is quite different from asking them what they would like to have. The first, like "Black Sheep," is being polite and solicitous in light of something the artist and organization want to do. The second, like "Homeless Vehicle Project," is respecting people's ability to define for themselves what they want, which may not be what someone wants to give them. Both are similar in that there is interaction with and respect for people.

The concerns expressed in these two stories are not the only things that were defined as public art. First of all, the definitions of public art I was given by these public art professionals are distinguished by the word "public" from other kinds of art. To the people I interviewed, public can mean public location; it can mean the audience of the public; or it can mean public issues.

Location: "Where" Makes It Public

Accessibility

The simplest definition given is the physical location of the work itself. Harriet Senie, a critic and historian of public art who has written and edited a number of books and articles on public art said:

I mean art to which the public has access. I define it by where it is rather than by what it is. It's public art if it's in a public place and

everybody has access to it. Even a piece in this building [the New York Public Library] has a limited audience because you have to choose to go into the building. So it's the works that are outside.

Senie is the only public art professional I spoke to with such an unqualified definition of public art: outdoors and accessible to an unlimited audience. Other public art professionals said such accessibility is not what makes art public. In fact for them, simply taking art and placing it outdoors is not "public art" at all, but merely "art in a public place" (Moss) or "outdoor art" (Phillips). This distinction, that is, public art versus art in a public place points, they say, to the change that has occurred from the days when people would take pieces of sculpture and "plop" or "plunk" them down in a public place with no regard to physical or social context. With no regard, they say, for the community or for people who may not understand. Senie resolves this problem in another part of the interview (see Chapter 6, p.138) by suggesting that the audience should educate itself about the art in its public environment. But there are many public art professionals who say expecting self-education does not increase public accessibility. It differs from the stories at the beginning which point to much more concern with people in the public realm than a physically accessible work of art.

Senie's other point, that it is not public art if you have to make a choice to go inside, brings into question the nature of accessibility. She believes that by excluding

people according to a time schedule, the public nature of the environment is restricted and becomes public only at certain times of day and then often only when a guard is present. To some of these public art professionals I interviewed, as long as people are not excluded during open hours, this does not limit the publicness of the art, but to others and some researchers (Deutsche, 1992; Carr, et al, 1992) it would, their argument being that excluding any part of the public at any time privatizes the space and therefore what's in it.

Cee Scott Brown considered an admission fee to be an exclusion: even if you're a member of "the public," the art is not public. Thus, a museum would not be a site of public art for him. Yet for Finkelpearl and others, such places can indeed house public art. Not all work in such a place would be public, only that which concerns itself about public issues, they said. Brown included television as a non-admission-fee site and his organization has funded television Public Service Announcements. A particular spot funded in part by Creative Time was for MTV, an admission-fee site because it is cable TV, which contradicts Brown's earlier limitation. On the other hand, the young teenage girls at whom the pro-choice PSA was aimed probably didn't pay that fee.

Another piece Creative Time sponsored under Brown has the same contradiction. An artist designed a series of milk carton panels about domestic violence meant to be purchased

and go into private homes in the hopes of alerting women or people who were being abused to the possibility of help. The admission fee was the purchase of the milk and the site of the public art was private homes. Yet Brown considered it public art. However, they could also be seen in stores without buying.

One can choose to go where access is limited, but one has no choice when the public art is in one's everyday environment. Penny Balkin Bach is executive director of the Fairmount Park Art Association, a non-profit organization in Philadelphia that places permanent public art. For Bach, in a museum, for example, people have the choice whether or not to ignore work. While out of doors:

That stuff is there. They don't really feel free to ignore it altogether, and that's where you get these nagging debates about whether people like it or not. Once it's out there, all of a sudden that freedom to ignore it doesn't click in.

But the freedom to ignore is much more complicated outside. Another stimulating object in an over-stimulated environment can perhaps, depending on the object itself, be blocked out, or, as Bach would prefer, tolerated. On the other hand, as many of these public art professionals pointed out about Serra's "Tilted Arc," what is in the environment often cannot easily be ignored or tolerated.

When a work is accessible by choice--when you have to go inside, or if it is unlocked only at certain times of day and you choose to go there then, some of those interviewed believe (Senie, for example), its public nature is

compromised. On the other hand, when you have no choice but are confronted with a work of art as you just try to go about your business any time of day or night, then you may feel imposed upon.

Site-Specific Work

James Clark, the executive director of The Public Art Fund, Inc., a New York City non-profit organization that places temporary public art, is not concerned with accessibility as much as with the meaning of the work in relation to its site. He believes that art created for a public context would no longer be public art if moved.

This piece, "Liberty Pavilion" is by David Shea, an artist, and Jeffery Cole, an architect. Basically it's a deconstructed American flag on the outside, and inside, is pages from a fifth grade textbook on the constitution. It will sit in front of City Hall, and it's all about the commercialization of patriotism. Well, it could be moved quite easily, and still have meaning. But when it's in City Hall Park, there's an issue of how this place is all about the civic duties of the publicus, and how much do you know about the constitution? And how much do you know about what's going on in these buildings? It becomes richer and has greater meaning in front of a public building.

Clearly for Clark the meaning of such a work of public art comes to life in the correct site. Penny Bach, on the other hand, believes that work is public art if it was once created for a public context even if it is moved later.

To me the "Diana," which sits at the top of the art museum steps is public art because it once was on top of Madison Square Garden as a weather vane. It isn't now, but for me, it's public art even though it's sitting in a museum.

Such a definition of public art would include all the

archeological artifacts that once existed in public spaces but now sit inside museums. Yes, they retain a publicness, but only in imagination, and only if the viewer knows the original context. But Clark's example would retain an obvious public nature even in a museum because of its content. However, sited in a museum, the piece would lose some of its public nature because the focus would be on its art nature, Clark is saying.

Clark and Bach both had more than one definition for public art and were willing to include art made for a studio and placed in public as public art though others were not. Bach, although she disagrees with Clark that a piece can be moved and retain its public nature also believes there is a kind of public art that is created with:

an agreement from beginning to end with both the organization and the artist or whatever that the terms of the creation of the piece will be for the public good. And that's where the public becomes a piece of all of this.

So for Bach, although many things can be "public art" including "Plunk" art, the public of public art comes into play in terms of the public good.

Functional Sites

Works can be created for a specific site and works can be created as a specific site. Marsha Moss of Philadelphia, who places temporary public art and also works as a consultant on permanent projects, believes that public art is not so much an object or a structure but a place which:

adheres to a high aesthetic level and celebrates

the identity of the place in harmony with or responding to the architecture. It must also function for the existing audience.

In this kind of work, thought has gone mainly into the physical context of the site, and perhaps its physical history. It is sometimes called functional because in many cases it has been designed to have a utilitarian nature.

Jody Pinto's "Fingerspan," a covered bridge for walking over a gorge along the Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, is made of open-grating Corten steel and is, visually, a finger, using Pinto's personal vocabulary of the human body. This work was placed by the Fairmount Park Art Association and Penny Bach. Bach described reasons people may dislike it:

Why does it look like a finger, and where's the finger anyway, and oh, I don't like Corten steel, and why did you bring this in here, oh, you broke a tree, and we don't need any things here, it's wild.

Yet, she said, there are also any number of reasons that it's "not so bad after all."

Before there was this really ugly thing there, and this is better. And before we used to be dropped into the gully and it was wet and mucky and horrible, and this takes us over there and it's really nice, and there's this view.

The function of the piece, Bach believes, increases the layers of meaning, allows people to find something of interest to them, and offers an experience in common with other people.

The whole site often becomes the work of art, or the work is so totally integrated into the site, that the art

nature of it is sometimes totally obscured, and the artist/designer often becomes anonymous. South Cove in Battery Park City, New York is such a work of public art, as are railings at the Automatic Fare Collection Program of New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority. Critics (Kramer, 1992) contest defining this work as art because it is not obviously an art object with art concerns. Yet these very pieces were cited as good public art by some of these public art professionals.

Location is just one aspect of the defining properties of public art. Another is who the work is for, about, or with.

Audience: "Who" Makes It Public

As the story about "Black Sheep" told by Brown showed, besides being in a public location, some people define art as public art when it is concerned for the people who will be impacted by it. It is more and more a requirement in the public art arena to consider not only the educated spectator of the museum but also the person with little or no art background who will be the one most intimately involved in the final work of public art. Public art professionals show their concern by getting the public's support as "Black Sheep" did; getting input from them as "Homeless Vehicle Project" did; collaborating with them; or even, rarely, allowing people full participation and decision-making in the public art process, as Chapter 8 will show. All of

these are forms of interaction with the public. In addition, the public art program can interact with people, the artist or the art can interact with people, or people can interact with one another.

Populist Public Art

Gordon Church, the director of Albuquerque, New Mexico's percent for art program, was also instrumental in setting up the state and various county percent for art programs in New Mexico. He defined New Mexico's public art programs as being "populist," and distinguished his beliefs from those of other public art programs.

They don't have a strong basis in a broad part of the population. Many of them, including the NEA, are often concerned just with the artist responding to a site. And usually that's a physical site and does not require the artist to respond to the social, cultural, and historical context of what the site is about.

For Church, the basic purpose of public art is "to begin a dialogue that we plan to continue on a long term," that is, to find mutual ground between the people and the public art program and grow from there. His definition of public art hinges on that political activity. In this search for common ground in New Mexico, the audience or community is given more importance than the artist or art work. What the community wants as public art is determined by the people who have to live with the art.

Church believes, as do other public art administrators working in New Mexico, that such a commitment to what people want and like will, in a natural organic process, eventually

encourage more experimentation as people become comfortable with the art already in their public environment. This is especially so since much of that art valorizes the strong ethnic and cultural traditions in New Mexico.

This commitment to audience is just an extreme of what is going on in public art organizations across the country. Every organization has developed political strategies not only to deal with, but also to listen to and collaborate with, the local communities they serve.

Grass-Roots Public Art

There is another kind of people-concerned work that is not placed by official public art organizations. Lucy Lippard, writer and activist, said:

I liked what Charles Simmonds used to do when he was going out to the Lower East Side and doing these pieces daily.

He would build tiny archeological sites in the broken spaces of abandoned buildings, interacting with the people who stopped to watch.

That seems to me still an ideal situation for public artists, where the artist's life and the people's lives, if not merge in an ecstatic union, they cross a lot.

Artists known to the art world do such work, as do artists anonymous to the art world. Dorothy Desir-Davis, an independent curator, with Studio Museum in Harlem at the time of the interview, said:

You can walk down some of the little dangerous streets around here and you can see huge murals that have been painted "Rest in Peace, so-and-so" or anti-drug messages. It may have a more

community, or if you will, folk base, but it is art and it is in public. You might call this graffiti but I see it as being more in the social realist style, Mexican muralists for instance. I thought it was important in terms of artists being responsive to their communities, and acting in a socially responsible way.

Such work is by, for, and about the local community, fulfilling the who of public. It may be considered graffiti as she said, and is often quickly painted out by the property owners, but for Desir-Davis it fit well within her definition of public art--concern for public. In addition, artists acting in a socially responsible way is a theme echoed by other public art professionals and becomes a facet of the definition of public art.

Interaction among the Public

Audience members can interact among themselves. James Clark described a piece where the artist had installed cement markers with text of Supreme Court interpretations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. A writer was standing looking at the piece when other people came along.

And then everybody started talking about it. "Well, what does it mean? Where does this come from?" So the writer said this is the best of an urban experience.

The artwork became a focus of discussion. Much activist art (below) is public art speaking to the people in the hopes of encouraging just such discussions in the public sphere.

It is not just the people themselves in their daily lives who comprise the public of public art. It is the very meaning of the nature of existing as what Patricia Phillips

calls "a public being."

Ideas: "What" Makes It Public

Activist Public Artwork

Both "Homeless Vehicle Project" and "Black Sheep" had concern with public issues; the former, homelessness, the latter, marginalization. Public art which is concerned first about social responsibility, which addresses a social, cultural or political problem in some way, is considered activist public art. As Finkelpearl said, it engages some public in discourse in the public realm.

Lucy Lippard talks about a piece made by William Smith, a Vietnam veteran, called the African Cultural Heritage Center. "It's about slavery and Vietnam; everything in African American politics generally," Lippard said.

And that's real public art. He's made it himself in his yard and he brings school children through and he lectures them about black history and what this figure is and why and so forth.

According to Lippard, this is public art, not just a history museum, because an artist made everything himself, and shares it with the public.

Activist work can be a form of public preaching, that is, speaking in public to people, communicating what they should do, and expecting action, like anti-drug murals. It can be educational, that is, giving information to people in public so they can make their own decisions about action, like "Homeless Vehicle Project." It can bring out

solidarity, that is, speaking in public to like-minded people who will feel less alone and together may seek action, like "Black Sheep." Or it can be comforting, offering public refuge from psychic pain, like the "Rest-In-Peace" murals. In all cases it has a political nature, speaking in the public realm, defining political issues.

Is all political work public art? To some of these professionals, yes. But its public nature is compromised when it is in a museum which focuses on its art nature.

For Patricia Phillips, a critic, however, location is not what makes the art public.

Public art has less to do with whether it's outdoors, what particular site it might occupy. It really has to do with issues that raise questions about what our contemporary public life is, what it means to be a citizen, what it means to be a public being.

She wants artists and public art to ask about this public dimension in each of us, "if it in fact exists." And to struggle to try to identify and create what our public realm is going to be in the future.

What is the idea of public in our day and age? Do we still need it? Is it still a meaningful concept?

Phillips, in her desire for artists to think about the public nature of each of us, goes head to head with the aesthetic thinking which separated the artist and the art world from the everyday world. And in spite of the art world's deepened concern for "the public of public art," Phillips is the only one to couch that concern in terms of

the political nature of the person as citizen.

It implies a concern for the future of the world as it will come to be, and a sense of one's own stake in that public environment. Do we all have a stake, or does no one? Phillips asks. An artist who exemplifies her concerns is Merle Ukeles, now artist-in-residence for New York City's Department of Sanitation.

Part of Merle's ongoing philosophy is that circulation and maintenance are indispensable to the vitality of contemporary cities and we should, rather than just looking the other way about these kind of vital activities, we should understand them better as citizens, as public beings.

Phillips believes public art can point out the necessity of us all becoming more responsible public citizens. Although perhaps Phillips is not the norm in her definition of public art, her desire to see more public responsibility overlaps with Gordon Church's of Albuquerque. However, their methods of reaching that responsibility differ dramatically.

Phillips is looking for artists to speak and act in the public realm about these issues. Church is hoping that by nurturing a community's personal stake in the world that they will develop that responsibility.

Art v Public Art

Many people defined "public art" by contrasting it to sculptural objects placed out of doors, something they called "art in public places." Work being placed today is much less likely to be simply aesthetic objects, or art, outdoors and more likely to show concern for the public of

public art. Harriet Senie is concerned that we are going too far in that direction.

We're in danger now of looking only at the public elements. And I always hate to have that art factor lost, because I do think public art has an aesthetic function that operates in conjunction with social function, and I would hate to see that aspect of it lost as we swing in our emphasis from the art to the public.

Senie was the only public art professional I interviewed who had this concern that the art elements of public art were in danger of being lost. In fact, the others were much more concerned about integrating the various facets of public into art. This contextualization of art changes the very nature of art, which was to be separated from context.

Discussion

Rather than simplifying things, trying to define public art has complicated them. It appears that any kind of art can be public art, depending on where it is. Can public art be anywhere? Almost, according to them, depending on what it's about. Art made for the context of the art world, and not the context of the public world, only becomes public art if it is located in public and only while it is there. Art made for the context of the public world, and not the context of the art world, is public art if it is accessible to the public in some way; but it loses some of its public nature when it is sited in an art context.

Issues of context and content must be evaluated for each single piece. Public is the important ingredient: in

public, the public, or the public realm of political discussion. This attention to public which makes it public art creates a paradox for public art professionals as they try to solve their basic problem: how to place art, with all that that implies, in public, with all that that implies. It is the contradictory implications of these two things, art and public, they are saying, that must constantly be weighed.

If, from their perspective, any art can be public and public art can be almost anywhere, then how is public art not the same as art? Artists and professionals think about and interact with the audience differently when they make and place what they call public art, as will be shown in future chapters. The concern for context, the concern for public, and the concern for the everyday world are different. Even the commodity status of public art is different. Most art is made for the market, and bought and sold, or collected in ways other unique market items are. Public art, on the other hand, is often commissioned for its initial, and usually only, purchase. It is not made as an object to be bought and sold, it is not made as an object to be consumed. Sometimes, however, because of the nature of the commodity-oriented society in which it exists, it becomes a consumable experience (a tourist attraction), or it ends up existing as an amenity for the buying and selling of other things, like nearby property. But it is not made for consumption, it is meant to be part of the ongoing world

of everyday life. If not its siting, then its content and its interaction with the public ground it in that world. That contextual grounding, and the fact that it is not a commodity, make it different from other art; while its art nature makes it different from other things in the everyday world. Although the general population might suggest that public art is at best peripheral to their everyday lives, for public art professionals and others in the field it is central.

These definitions show that there is a commitment among most of these public art professionals to weight in the direction of public. They want a non-art educated public to find something of interest in the public artwork, whether its an idea, a place, or an interaction. There is a commitment to wanting the work to be not just an object but part of people's everyday lives in a way that respects the fact that it is not their love of art which will draw them to the work. In these definitions what has come to light is the focus on the public nature of public art, that more weight has been given by many of these public art professionals to that public nature, rather than the art nature of public art. Their examples and the way they must redefine art to fit it into a public context point to the political in Arendt's sense of the term--speaking and acting together in public. There is a spoken desire by some for interaction with and respect for the public. There is attention to issues of public concern, there is interest in

disclosing reality as a spur to attempting to change it. All these point to a political nature. This political nature of public art will become more coherent in later chapters.

The next chapter will also deal with definitions, this time defining just who is the public according to these public art professionals.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINING THE PUBLIC: AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY

This research is focused not on the public art itself but rather the relationship, as seen through the eyes of public art professionals, of people to that art. When these public art professionals talk about people, who are they talking about? The questions they were asked in the interview distinguished audience from community--a generalized public from a specific or localized one--but did not ask them to define either. This distinction was accepted and elaborated by some and challenged by others.

Passersby or Everyday Residents

James Clark of The Public Art Fund, Inc., for example, accepted the distinction. He distinguished audience from community in this way, the "passerby" from "people that have to live with the piece day in and day out." The approach of the Public Art Fund, he said:

is to understand the construction of the public at each site. We identify the stakeholders, and we don't take for granted that the elected officials are it. We try to identify and discover who has strong feelings about the site, about contemporary art, about public art in general. We try to unearth that.

Some people, Clark is saying, have a stake in the public environment, they care more than others about what happens

there. But it is not simple to discover who they are. The belief that it is not easy to discover who they are is something repeated by many other of these public art professionals. The definition of the public, Clark said, is contextual, that is, related to the context in which the public art is to be placed. So one can't define the public without defining the context. For example, he said, at Doris Freedman Plaza at 60th St. and 5th Ave. in New York City, "visitors at four-star hotels" are the public. It's an "anonymous" public, a "generalized" public, he said.

Public Art Fund installed a temporary piece there which was a circle of 12 chairs, each with a different symbol--for example, a house, or stairs--by a French Canadian sculptor, Michel Dulet. Clark said, "It had to be the most loved piece we've ever put there." They videotaped the artwork during the time it was installed and found:

people saying, "This is my favorite chair and I will only sit in this chair." Like one woman came every day from Queens to sit in one particular chair.

If she came from Queens she was not a "visitor at a four-star hotel" nor was she someone who lived nearby. This points to another audience for public art, neither passer-by nor resident, but one who deliberately seeks it out. Clark showed the videotape to artists and other art world people who were in "total amazement" that people were "so smart."

It's like they never thought that the common man walking by could make such statements on the power of the circle and other issues they thought were left to the art-schooled. Yet here were these

people getting it.

This story points out the gap between the public and the art world's view of what Clark calls the common man and how that person relates to art. That is, they seem to expect a more limited response than what, in fact, occurs. It also points out that the generalized public at this site is, for him, an art public, defined in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the art.

On the other hand, at Columbus Park in Brooklyn, according to Clark, homeowners in Brooklyn Heights, people in the Supreme Court Building, and all those involved in neighboring schools, are the public. In this case it is assumed that these everyday residents, this localized group of people, having lost the anonymity of a generalized art public, will relate to the art differently, and not necessarily on its own terms. In each case the context defines the public, the first as passerby, the second as everyday resident.

Lucy Lippard, writer and activist, distinguished, as Clark did, between passersby and those who live with the work.

If it's just people walking by things--in that Central Park Plaza there's an audience there, they're viewers, but there's no real public. No community anyway, and it really doesn't finally make any difference to anybody what those people think.

A place like that is perfect, she said:

to drop a Louise Nevelson or whatever and let people walk by it. And some people will get some

pleasure, some people won't, but it won't do this engaging thing that I see real public art do.

Lippard wanted "real" public art to be part of the community in a flexible and ongoing way and not just a piece of artwork placed somewhere for the viewer. For Lippard:

The audience usually is the community. Community is a misused and oddly used word, usually it seems to mean poor people.

This observation that "community" seems to mean poor people will be elaborated later by Finkelpearl. She went on to define the community:

Anybody who sees the thing every day is the community basically, if they also see each other and if there's some interaction.

In other words, the community is those people who have the artwork in their daily lives. They must be involved, not only with the artwork, but also with each other in order to be a community for Lippard. Lippard is the only one to point out that interaction with one another is part of her definition of community. In other definitions it very well may be implied but often it appears as if the community is somehow a non-social group of people. For example, Clark pointed to a difference between passersby and those who live, work, or go to school in the area of the public art site. But individuals who live, work, and go to school can be relatively solitary and do not necessarily have anything to do with the other people doing the same thing. Yet according to Lippard, the interaction among community members is the very thing that makes any group into a

community.

Richard Hooker, the coordinator of Save Outdoor Sculpture! in New Mexico, defined the community in a number of ways, one of which is the internally interactive way Lippard spells out. He began by explaining:

When I use the word community, I generally start with everybody and then I speak about more specific communities within the larger community.

For example, he said:

As a gay activist, it became apparent to me that these are communities, so I started to use the words gay and lesbian community.

An activist community implies one whose members relate in an interactive way with one another even though he doesn't say it. He also said:

I think you can talk about community on a bigger level too. For example, a community that values and appreciates art and supports what's going on in response to Jesse Helms¹ in Washington.

A supportive community also implies members relating to one another. In these ways Hooker shows that, like Lippard, interpersonal interaction is part of his definition of community. It also reveals that for Hooker, community has a political nature.

But Hooker also defined community in ways that imply a group of solitary individuals with something in common who relate outward. For example, he spoke about the community of artists in America. Or he described a local neighborhood

¹Helms is a U.S. Senator who has tried to decrease or stop funding for the NEA because of artwork it has supported.

that gets a work of public art; or again, an ethnic community which may exist in that neighborhood but also exists in the rest of the city. So for Hooker, sometimes the thing people have in common creates the circumstances of their interacting with one another in a public and political way. At other times, his description of community implies a monolithic undifferentiated group.

Many of these public art professionals seem to describe communities in this undifferentiated way, while others are more careful about lumping everyone together and expecting that they agree. The commonalities which define community for Hooker disappeared when he defined audience.

The Art Audience

The audience is the people, Hooker said, who "bump into the work, or see it, or even read about it" and therefore know about it. Such people seemingly do not have a commonality except for the public art itself. He thought, "there are different levels of participating as audience and some of it is more active."

In other words, people may participate through active physical involvement with the artwork, touch or see, or without direct physicality but rather mental involvement, by reading or knowing about it. Again, as with Clark and Lippard, they become passersby or viewers, a generalized and anonymous art audience. Hooker believed that there is no non-art public, meaning that everyone has some relationship

to art. Everyone is a member of the art audience.

That anonymous art audience, the viewers or passersby, was more specifically detailed by Sidney Druckman of Battery Park City Authority, who defined the audience strictly in terms of people's art background.

I think there is probably a rather small audience of truly knowledgeable people, a slightly larger audience of semi-informed people, and then the people who actually use it and see it on a daily basis.

Many of the definitions of audience presuppose an art audience but Druckman is the only one to define that generalized public so literally and narrowly from the point of view of what they know about art. But even in terms of art knowledge, Druckman also points to the everyday involvement of some of the audience when she said people who actually use it and see it on an daily basis.

Gordon Church, when he called his program "populist," was removing it from the aesthetic habitus and placing it squarely in the everyday world. He is centrally concerned with the local community being served with each project, for example, the neighborhood in a neighborhood project, Hispana community leaders in a project called "La Curandera" about the role of Hispanas in Northern New Mexico, at risk kids in a particular school as well as the area of the city around them, the African American community in a Martin Luther King memorial project. Church spoke about the projects, saying, "So I think each of these, as they begin to emerge, has their constituency."

Later he defined the public in a broader way, seemingly in the more generalized sense of audience:

I think there is a series of publics that you're addressing simultaneously in every project and one of those is the art public. The second is a general public and that may be reflected in the local neighborhood or whatever. Three is the bureaucracy, the politicians, the city administration.

Here he is acknowledging that besides a carefully defined and specific community directly concerned with the public art, there is a generalized audience which also will be concerned about the public art. That audience, as he said, includes politicians, something also mentioned by Anne Green, the coordinator of the state of New Mexico's percent program, but not specifically pointed to by others as an audience about whom to be concerned. In fact, Clark said elected officials are not to be assumed as the stakeholders. Yet Church would accept and welcome them as such. So for Church politicians can be both audience and community.

Church's definition also specifically included the art world itself as an audience for public art. This is also mentioned by the critic Harriet Senie, who said, "The art community is part of the public, too." And Hooker spoke about the community of artists. It seems that Church is saying that the public art must simultaneously address not only specified constituencies but also the art world, the political world, and the public in general.

The Inclusive Public

On the other hand, Sandy Gross Bressler, the director of the Philadelphia Art Commission, did not seem to consider the art world in her explanation. She talked about the audience and the community in terms of their similar problematic nature.

Who is the audience for the Swann Fountain? How are you to determine who that audience is? You've got people in the city who travel up and down the Parkway, residents who live in that neighborhood, kids who come to bathe in the fountain, homeless people who do their laundry in the fountain, office workers who can look down on it.

"You've got to be as inclusive as possible," she said, but "you're never going to get every concern." She was more inclusive herself in her definition than just passersby, and defined some as audience that others had listed as community, that is, those with daily contact, residents and office workers. Bressler worried about addressing everyone's concerns while being all-inclusive. This inclusivity she desired points away from specific groups or communities and toward the larger, overall, generalized public. Her sense of the impossibility of defining audience holds as well for community. She said:

When I started becoming involved in public art, a number of years ago in the Office of Arts and Culture, I had ideas about community involvement and developing consensus within the community, and that I think is very, extremely, important.

This development of consensus implies an internally interacting group of people, but more than just interacting, it implies public debate. She went on:

But it's a very nebulous term, community--what is

the community and who is the community. And often times people who are the community leaders aren't representative of the full spectrum of what community opinion is, so, I don't know.

The longer she's been involved in it, she said, the trickier it's become. In other words, it is tricky to find consensus and yet be inclusive. It is tricky to define a community and all of their concerns. Both Bressler and Clark mentioned elected officials, community leaders, as not always being representative of community opinion, while Church and Green accept that they are. This will come up again in Chapter 8.

Penny Balkin Bach of the Fairmount Park Art Association (FPAA) in Philadelphia, which places public art, is much more specific about the nature of the public, but nevertheless is very inclusive. She defines the public as contextual, as Clark did. There isn't "a" public she said, "The public is very tied to time and over time it is inevitable the public will change."

She explained that percent programs, where art is tied to a building and the program has a hold over that specific site, must pay more attention to the specific public which exists at that moment in that place. But because her organization, which is not a percent program, believes the enduring work they do will have to transcend a variety of publics, they are concerned about the "multiple meanings and many publics" with any given piece. So, she said, their projects are more collaborative than percent projects. She

said, as Church did, they must figure out who is the "constituency for each particular project." In the end, according to Bach, the FPAA seeks out all of those publics who may be interested, at the many different levels that may interest them, not just the single level of constituency Church described.

For example, a work by Martin Puryear completed in 1994 by FPAA, "Pavilion in the Trees," was located in the Horticultural Center of Fairmount Park, which is near an African American neighborhood in West Philadelphia. According to Bach, people who go to the Horticultural Center itself are the primary audience, but, she said, another audience is the local neighborhood. In addition, she said, the entire Black community in the city is part of the constituency for that artwork, as Puryear is an African American artist. This is the same point Hooker made about a local ethnic neighborhood as community and then that same ethnic group all over the city being another community. So both locality and ethnicity were addressed in this project as Bach sought out the "many publics." The locality was both the generalized locality of a destination in a public park, and the specific locality of a neighborhood. For her passersby and local people are both part of the search for the contextual, changing yet specific, nature of the public.

Her belief is that, while a percent program can concentrate on a time- and space-limited audience or community, her organization must transcend those limitations

and appeal to broader, multiple, constituencies. It must discover and offer different levels of meaning to the various individuals to be found in the city.

As Bach challenged the limitations imposed by focusing simply on a single community within a specified time frame, so Phillips challenged the focusing on a specific localized group.

Patricia Phillips, a critic, spoke about what public might be if it doesn't have to do with location by describing New Year's Eve in Times Square in which a "centralized visible throng" of people allow it to be described as a public event, but yet millions of people also watch the same event on TV.

That's a kind of public that's very fragmented and that's scattered, that's kind of immaterial in the sense they you can't visually encounter it. But we understand it as something that we share in common.

The "location of that commonality", she said:

can be the plaza or the streets, but I think it can also be more abstract; we know that other people are doing the same thing at the same time but we're dispersed.

Hooker had also pointed to a media-related public, that is, those who read about public art. Both were saying they are no less an audience than people at the site.

It's more a question, Phillips said, of what do we mean by a "common or shared culture." In trying to get away from a specific site, a single locality for the sharing in common done by a culture, Phillips seems to want to negate the idea

of specific commonalities tied to location. She said that drawing concentric rings around a public project and giving more say to those inside the ring is "somewhat disingenuous."

It's simplifying a much more complicated thing. I think public has to be a kind of ownership and possession that we all have about our environment in a kind of inclusive way.

She went on to say:

It's not just something that community possesses. If it's public we all have a kind of ownership in it. I think you have to distinguish between this idea of location and the larger abstraction of the audience that encounters it, maybe not as frequently as you do, or on a daily basis like you do, but certainly constitute an important audience for the work.

Phillips is still distinguishing between local community and audience, making a plea for that community to be aware they are not the only ones for whom the art will exist. It doesn't, she said, belong to only them. It belongs to us all. Phillips is criticizing the very attitude found in Church's program in New Mexico that the local community is the one whose work it is.

Phillips spoke about "Automotive Votive" by the Kunst Brothers (Alison Saar and collaborators) which took an advertising formula--a truck with a glass vitrine--and put an ambiguous figure in it and then took the figure throughout the five boroughs of New York City, leaving it and asking people to pin things onto it:

Mementos, or found objects, or little trinkets, or whatever. So by the end of the summer you had this figure that had become absolutely encrusted

with a skin of objects.

Although Phillips felt that the piece was "flawed" formally, she believed that public art in the future, like "Automotive Votive":

may be dealing with a particular site, but be much more interested in that outward look and how that particular site connects with a much larger urban condition or urban environment.

This, then, points to her real interest which is to back off from what she called a "myopic gaze," that self-centered focus, and turn outward to make a connection between that single location and the rest of the environment.

Rather than specify and thus limit the public, Phillips prefers to pay attention to artists who:

are interested in questions of what brings people together in light of our various differences and our diversities.

Although it sounds as though Phillips is trying to have people step away from their differences by coming together, she said:

it's wonderful that public art is trying not to deal with the public in this kind of monolithic way any more and understand that it is very variegated and differentiated groups of communities.

But, she said, there's this other danger of "an ever-narrowing definition of collective identity" that gets to the point where it's "ludicrous and divisive." So, she said, an artist has to understand the issues of distinctions and diversity but also has to transcend them.

She wants neither a monolithic look at public nor

divisive identities, but rather something that can take account of differences and yet go beyond them. What she is looking for flies in the face of the thinking about community to which many of these public art professionals subscribed. Gordon Church and others, it will be shown, seem to want very specifically to allow the community to retain their separate group identities and to have the public art reflect those identities even to the exclusion of the rest of the people. But Phillips pointed to Saar's piece as one which tried to make those connections across diversity, neither ignoring it nor constrained by it. It did this by having a single object serve as a site for mementos for people all across the city.

The issues of locality and commonality versus a more generalized audience which Phillips and others addressed are not the only ones that came up when these public art professionals spoke about the public.

Class and the Political

Not everyone defined the public, the audience, or the community during the interview, or else they had very similar concepts as the ones already elaborated, but other issues were addressed. Earlier Lippard said "community" seems to mean poor people. This is in line with what Tom Finkelpearl, director of New York City's percent program, said about the meaning of public:

The word public is a code word for class. The

public is the lower middle class. Community is also the lower middle class. That's how the word is used: public university, public housing, public defender, public school.

Public art, he said, is with "public sector money." Race and class, he said, are always confounded, and it is a myth that class doesn't exist in this country. He went on to say:

While public is the lower middle class, private is the upper middle class and since art is associated with the upper middle class "public" art is a problem.

This problem, he said, is resolved in controversy. This points back to the essential paradox of public art: the problem of how to put art, with all that it implies, in public, with all that the word implies. Finkelpearl defines this problem as one of class.

Finkelpearl was also trying to point out that public art, by taking on that lower middle class association, is then disinherited by the art world. "We're always trying to reach an art audience," he said, whereas they always reach a non-art audience. "It's frustrating," he said, that there is so little attention to public art on the part of the art world. So even though some public art professionals saw the art public as one of their audiences, it is not considered by others to be a very attentive one. Other public art professionals besides Finkelpearl criticized the lack of attention to public art from the art world, especially the writers, and it will be addressed further in Chapter 6.

Cee Scott Brown of Creative Time was not so much

concerned about lack of attention from the art world as he was about lack of active participation from the public. In defining the public, the audience, the community, he looked for political speech from them:

"I am the public" is a real interesting phrase that we came up with for the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression (NCFE). It's important--I am the public. But, you know, there are a lot of people out there in the public that really aren't the public. They don't feel like they're part of the public. They don't vote, their voice doesn't count cause they don't vote. They feel disenfranchised.

The NCFE is an organization he helped found in response to the NEA/censorship controversies of the late 80s and early 90s to which Hooker alluded earlier and which will be discussed in Chapter 9.

The public, for Brown, are those who vote, who speak up, who are not disenfranchised. That is, the public is not the lower middle class or the residents of a location. They are specifically defined by their political activity. Thus he is saying those who don't speak create their own disenfranchisement. Speaking up is what he also expects when he talks about the audience.

I think if the audience isn't at some level with this work, meaning cognizant of it, or involved to the point where they went to the community board meeting: "I think this poem is shit. I don't think we should put it in bronze, and put it in our park." Or, "I think this is great I want my kids to see it too." If there isn't something there then they're not part of the game.

His point is that there is a problem if the public, the audience, the community does not speak up, and is

disenfranchised in some way. The problem, in this case, he went on to say, is due to the public art organization itself. For Creative Time, he said, the audience is only 49% of the concern, while the artist is 50%, and the organization itself 1%.

We're not helping the audience to come to public art, so the focus is on the artist and we're 1% in there.

But if the audience doesn't speak up, then, he said, "There's a problem on the 1%'s part because we haven't done our job." So Brown is not expecting that the audience speak up on its own, but that the organization must find the ways to allow for it. Nevertheless, the artist comes first.

Discussion

My attempt to divide the public into two groups, one generalized and non-specific, and one specific and local, although accepted on the surface, has been problematized by these interviews. It still seems as if people are talking about two simple ways of thinking about the public, general or local, but actually it is more complex.

One definition of the public is a way of thinking in which the art exists and people are positioned in relationship to it--that is, as an audience, coming after the art. The other is a way of thinking in which the people exist and the art is positioned in relationship to them--that is, as a community that was there before the art.

The first may be passersby, visitors, they may have

physical contact or be a media audience. They may be informed and knowledgeable about art or have their own non-art educated understanding about art. In most cases however, they are considered an art audience, and are seen, each one separately, only in relationship to the art, even if that relationship is not to art per se but to the public art as something else, one of the many definitions from the last chapter. Seeing people in terms of their art background and seeing them as non-specific makes them into viewers, spectators for the art. By being anonymous, such a public requires less attention and can be expected to enjoy (or not) the art for the sake of itself.

The second definition is much more complex than those who live where the work is, although that is part of it. These people are specified, not necessarily as particular individuals, but as people with a commonality. That commonality may be location but it can as easily be any number of things such as ethnicity, sexuality, or beliefs. Some definitions seem to describe the community as if they are of one mind, as if they stand inside the group focusing outward. In other definitions the community has a gaze focused inward on themselves. In both definitions the group becomes a single undifferentiated entity. Otherwise, community has been defined as people with a commonality interacting with one another. All three definitions seem to contend somehow that the similarities outweigh the differences, and define the whole by its commonality

regardless of individual differences. This could be problematic if the assumption was made that people in these specific communities relate in the same way to the outside world, which is how it seems some people think about them.

The question of who is being described by public art professionals as they speak about the public is important because it will have an effect on how they approach the people with whom they must concern themselves. If they are working for an anonymous passerby their concerns, and ultimately the work they place, will be different than if they are working for a specific group of everyday residents in a specific locale.

Some public art professionals contend that any investigation which limits people to their location or any other single commonality is faulty because art must transcend such limited differences. It cannot exist just for that first case of a member of an unspecified art audience, art as a universal event for a universal aesthetic experience. Nor can it simply zoom in on a specified and particular, but undifferentiated, group. As art, they say, it belongs to us all.

These public art professionals have very elaborate, thoughtful definitions of public art, but definitions of the public itself are less distinguished. Perhaps this is simply because these professionals were not asked to define the public. But more likely it reflects a social or cultural sensibility held in the society at large where the

public becomes anonymous and generalized, distinguished only by whatever one thing is being addressed, for instance, public opinion polls, or public art. Or else people are divided into special-interest groups in which they become categorized, yet continue to remain anonymous and generalized, even if they interact inside that group and act in concert with that group. So it seems that neither the audience nor the community consists of identified people, and yet artists are continually identified. Rarely in the interviews were community members named and then only because they were well-known leaders.

Having to think about public art for more than just an art audience is complex. When people are not simply going to come to the art to experience it, but rather come to it with a social, cultural, and historical background, the contextual nature of that background must be investigated anew for each project. This difficult investigation can't be done by counting on elected leaders to represent everyone. The public can't be defined without the help of the public itself. In each case only if the people themselves speak in public to disclose their own reality can anyone come to know who they are and what public art would work best for them, if any.

Because this dissertation is about the audience as seen through the eyes of public art professionals, this chapter is a start toward understanding that relationship. The next six chapters will elaborate on it.

As professionals who think about and/or place public art, these people not only have definitions of what it is and who is its public. They have presuppositions about its importance in the world. The next chapter will show that even the most populist of these public art professionals believes in the power of art.

CHAPTER 4

BUILDING A WORLD WITH ART: PUBLIC ART PROFESSIONALS

Patricia Phillips, cited in the last chapter, asked, do we all have a stake in the public environment, or does no one? Those who take upon themselves the responsibility of the public environment are those who feel they have a stake in the world. They have a sense that it belongs to them and will, whether for good or ill, be the ones to consciously build it. Among these are public art professionals.

Public art professionals, in the work they do, care for and build a world with art. Their basic problem in building a world lies in putting art, with all that implies, in public, with all that implies. But why would they want to build a world with art in the first place?

Public art professionals, like all people, are directed by certain presuppositions. Many, but not all, of the people I interviewed have thought about these theoretical positions and can articulate them. Others are less conscious about their beliefs but they can be found. Based on my research, the positions from which these 19 people approach their work can be divided into three basic stances: focus on the city, focus on the artist, and focus on the community.

Within these three categories, one person's

explanations will be used to identify the category. Other people in the category will present additional thoughts or subcategories. Within each category they have in common a general approach but there are minor differences.

Building a World for the Solitary Individual:

Focus on the City

Humanize the City

Penny Balkin Bach is the executive director of the non-profit Fairmount Park Art Association in Philadelphia. The organization is not a percent program and has no mandate to provide public art. Rather they have a 120 year old tradition, Bach stated, to "humanize the environment" of the whole city. This tradition grows out of "a general faith that artists are able to do that."

Humanize is a word used over and over by people in this category to defend putting art in the public environment. It can be interpreted to mean that these people believe art is something more human than the built environment and will counteract its inhumanity.

Bach described the intentions of the FPAA:

In a way it's difficult. We're trying to be free-wheeling on the one hand but also leave a permanent legacy of what artists are really thinking about right now.

Leaving a legacy is of great concern for Bach and the venerable Fairmount Park Art Association. What artists are really thinking about, however, is complicated because so

many artists are thinking about so many things. Bach can sift through that because she sees herself as "very good at analyzing certain trends and conditions that need work and that interest me." Taking a historic view, she identifies problems in the public art field that need work and suggests solutions, concentrating on those artists whose thinking she finds important. Basically she and her organization are:

looking for all the cracks (laughs). And looking also to provide models to mediate against the kinds of problems [other public art] programs by their very nature construct.

She points to the difference between her organization and others where problems occur by just plunking many art objects into public spaces, "after which the artist takes the heat."

I really don't believe that more is better. I don't think that what we need is more public art.

Other public art professionals in this category and the next are also concerned about a proliferation of art objects "polluting" the public environment. Bach goes on:

I think we need perfect public art. We need things that so perfectly respond to some of our needs out there, that everybody can get it in their own way.

Each individual can experience the work differently.

In the search for perfect public art, FPAA becomes involved in very few projects of their own, "maybe one a year, or one in two years."

Lots of projects are pushed to fruition because people don't want to spend a lot of time on them; I think that's a problem.

Because they place so few works, Bach has the luxury other public art professionals do not to carefully consider what they do.

The FPAA doesn't just place art work. They also negotiate opportunities by encouraging other people to use artists to approach things in a more creative way. "There's lots of ways that artists could be getting involved but they're not." Bach looks to artists because they provide the city's legacy of public art. She applies the same values she finds at the Parthenon in Greece to public art. "It points out where you fit in that juncture of humankind and nature." Bach, who is looking for artists to supply, not necessarily a "beautiful thing," but "something we don't quite know of yet" is trying to build a world for individuals focused on the legacy of the city.

The City as Museum

Sandy Gross Bressler is the executive director of the Philadelphia Art Commission, a government commission appointed by the mayor whose charge is to approve the aesthetics of much of the building that occurs in the city. For Bressler, public art humanizes public experience and she believes there is a responsibility to provide this for the public.

I feel extremely strongly that one of the unique aspects of Philadelphia is this collection of public sculpture that we have that really makes the city kind of an open air museum for everybody to enjoy.

By speaking metaphorically about the city as museum, and the

art as a collection, it appears that Bressler is suggesting that the entire city and all its people, processes, and problems, its everyday life, somehow must fall away and become, as a museum does, background to the art.

One of Bressler's main concerns at the time of the interview was that the maintenance of the works in the city's collection of public art had not been systematically dealt with. The Art Commission was trying to develop a program to restore and then maintain all of the public art in the city, just as a museum would. Artwork exists in the museum for the contemplation of solitary individuals, as does public art in a city as museum.

Art Is Important

Seeing the whole city as a museum was meant to make up for the belief that ordinary people are uncomfortable going to museums and art galleries, something mentioned by people in all three categories. Harriet F. Senie, historian, critic, educator, agreed.

I think art is important for as large an audience as is feasible because it does have a message and people relate to it and it's very powerful. I think to restrict art only to museums is to make it an elitist phenomenon, and as a democratic society we can't afford to do that.

According to many of these public art professionals the experience of art is considered important to one's life, and people should have that opportunity whether or not they seek it out. This belief is an underlying assumption, a guiding factor, in all of the approaches public art professionals

take to building a world.

Harriet Senie is interested, she said, in where art and public intersect, and what makes that communication difficult. She believes in the necessity of communication in the public art process, where communities may say what they want, and professionals must listen and, as experts, decide what best fits the community's needs. Yet as I will discuss later it is this very attitude of expertise belonging to the few that can lead to difficult communication when art and public intersect.

Somebody Out There Cares

Wendy Feuer is the director of Arts for Transit, the percent program for the New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority which describes itself in a brochure as humanizing a hectic environment. Feuer said you can never know when you're touching people.

We all believe art is real important. We know that it has an effect on the world, and we must put it out there. Especially in these times we have to put it out there. It makes a difference.

The difference it makes in the case of the New York subway, she said, is that if it were not there, it would be missed, there'd be an absence of something. What the work does is speak to people, "saying somebody out there cares," she said.

I believe that I'm a public servant in sort of a noble way; that I serve people and that there's an audience that I'm getting that never would have been gotten to if it wasn't for this program.

Feuer is describing herself like a missionary for art: if

art is used to fix the environment of the subway, in the process some of the captive audience may be converted to art.

Urban Renewal

Mary A. Kilroy was the director of the Fine Arts Program for the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA) which is a state agency to redevelop government owned properties. It can declare land urban renewal sites and sell parcels to private developers. The RDA considers itself the first organization in the country to have a percent for art program. Kilroy was involved in the RDA's percent program from the beginning. Although it is not a law like other percent programs are, it has been strongly enforced and written into all contracts.

Art, Kilroy believes, "changes the spirit, it changes the vision."

There's a lot we could do. Why I do it, I love it. I love being part of the whole urban renewal process too, and I think this is a unique job. I'm not just part of the art world, but I'm part of a different process that's part of rebuilding the city. It's part of affecting our city and what's happening with the city.

Others also mentioned their pleasure and interest in being part of more than the art world. This points to the fact that no public art professional is simply part of the art world but also must function in the technical world of building and the political world of the general public. This crossing of worlds allows these public art professionals to see their role, as many said, as the

facilitator who will enable art to find a place in the public environment.

Artwork as a part of a redevelopment program such as Kilroy's is sometimes used as a way to minimize attention to the social upheaval that goes along with such projects, and to maximize benefits to the owners and developers. This was pointed to in the last chapter by "Homeless Vehicle Project." Kilroy spoke about a part of Philadelphia being redeveloped:

Franklintown is now well on its way, and we feel that when Athena Tacha's park [a public artwork] is built that it will be extremely positive in helping us to market the rest of the land up there. Right now it constitutes urban blight.

Thus Kilroy believes that a work of public art can become an amenity to sell land. A contradiction emerges here between the artist's intent and the developer's: the artist is trying to make a nice place for people, the developer to sell land. Kilroy, in the middle, is doing both; and the service of giving the gift of art to people who wouldn't seek it out gives way occasionally to the much more mundane function of selling property.

Serendipity

Sidney Druckman is in charge of special projects at Battery Park City Authority where, like the RDA of Philadelphia, developers pay the percent for art.

One of the reasons public art is so wonderful is that there's something serendipitous about it. You come upon it and suddenly you look at everything a little differently.

Serendipity is mentioned by others also as one of the magical experiences and surprises, and even unexpected opportunities to interact with others, to be found only in a city. Such fortuitous accidental experiences, however, can happen only once, and cannot be built in. So that serendipity somehow implies a constantly changing audience or constantly changing artwork neither of which is the usual condition of most public art.

Druckman also said that although organizations should consult with the local community, they shouldn't give people "what they think they'd like. It's showing them something they may never have considered before."

This idea, not giving people what they think they'd like, implies they don't know what they'd like, they aren't knowledgeable, or their tastes are not sophisticated enough. This attitude, echoed by others in this category, reflects one perspective on public art in which experts build a world for people, not with them.

It's Not An Issue of Democracy

Cesar Trasobares, former director of Miami-Dade percent for art, has "argued for artists becoming involved as planners, as creative thinkers to resolve physical problems," something echoed by others in this and other categories. The myth of artist as genius, the creative thinker who can resolve all problems, lingers in the presuppositions of some of these public art professionals.

Trasobares believed that it is the responsibility of

those who fund what gets built not to "pollute the cultural environment," saying that there needed to be a lot of thinking about what constitutes appropriate and intelligent public art. Other professionals also said this and it shows a concern for the whole city. On the other hand public art must be seen by the people as a "possibility for creative awareness," not just something to be taken at face value. He was very committed to education (see Chapter 6). "The public has to learn to shift" from the "taste" issue, or "I know what I like," to more serious, thoughtful art-educated responses. Referring to a magazine article in which a waitress, a construction worker, and a child said what they thought about a work of public art, he said:

We need to get beyond that idea that public art is yet one more evidence for exercising our right to speak, for fantasizing about issues of democracy. It has nothing to do with that.

This statement echoes hundreds of years of art's separated existence, where art must be approached only in certain ways. His desire to see people go beyond like and dislike in their judgments about public art is an example of the contradictions inherent in trying to place art in everyday life while expecting it to remain "art" for all people.

Making a Difference for Generations to Come

Rita K. Roosevelt was brought into the Philadelphia Percent for Art program in order to centrally administer the program

which, although the oldest percent ordinance in the country¹, had always been done ad hoc, that is, there was a new system for each new artwork. She is really an administrator's administrator, having developed public art programs in Boston and Texas, and was co-director of the Public Art Institute, a clearinghouse for information on public art projects around the country especially tuned to the needs of public art administrators.

You realize how, in the field of public art, you can really make a difference not only for a few people but for generations to come. And that's kind of an exciting prospect, and I think that's what carries most of us through to the next thing.

What she is saying here points to the desire to build a world; to leave a legacy of art for the future.

In the long run for this group the city is a museum filled with art experiences for people's enlightenment. The individual is the unit of experience as he or she contemplates and becomes enriched or uplifted by the surrounding work. This approach stays well within the confines of the aesthetic habitus as it has been handed down, challenging it only in the sense that this art is in the context of its surroundings, whereas a real museum subtracts context. The world that gets built is the physical world with concern for site, artwork, and individual response taking precedence over other things.

¹ The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority's percent for art was a board resolution, not an ordinance.

Building a World for the Interacting Individual:

Focus on the Artist

The Exchange of Ideas

James M. Clark is the executive director of the Public Art Fund, Inc., a non-profit organization that places temporary public art. The central philosophy of the organization is that:

artists can make a difference in an urban environment and artists have something to contribute.

Although this statement sounds like Bach, PAF's purpose is to help artists do what they want to do, not leave the city a legacy. They're drawn to artists who experiment, he said:

Public Art Fund is more about the laboratory of public art. We're willing to take on the work piece by piece in order for an artist to think through exactly what it is than they wanted to do and to create it the way that they wanted to. So we try and allow that freedom to exist.

Others in this category and the previous one valorize artists, too, as the makers of this important thing, art. Although these professionals say it is the artist who is important, they themselves are the ones who encourage, find, and support the artists. Not all artists get to do what they want; some are included, while others are excluded. Public art professionals give artists a stage, a chance to speak, but they do that only when it jibes with what the organization, or they themselves, think should be done.

Clark described the city as "a place for the exchange of ideas." The focus on artists meshes with this belief. A

communication is intended to occur between artist and public, an exchange of ideas. The artist must want a dialogue, not just through the work, but a personal dialogue with the community, Clark affirmed:

[It] gets artists to think about things in a different way and encourages the public to look at how artists relate in society differently.

Nowadays, he said, artists want to put work outside of museums, for non-art audiences. The exchange of ideas that takes place artists call an "intervention," Clark said, and he was intrigued by the use of the social science term. This means the communication is instigated by the public art, creating interaction (action and reaction) between the art and the individual. This is different from an equal dialogue, although an equal dialogue may occur between people at the site of public art, which is something toward which Clark strives.

Serendipity is a bizarre word, but I think that's what makes an urban environment a good urban environment. Encountering things without planning, and reaffirming your ties to that community through that serendipitous moment.

Here Clark uses serendipity in a different way than in the last section, a social sense rather than a physical sense, a serendipitous social interaction started by a public artwork.

Thus for Clark, individuals are tied to one another through the art. The work Clark places is temporary public art and that is one of the reasons it can be talked about in terms of a conversation rather than a legacy. It may seem

contradictory to talk about building a world with temporary public art like that which PAF or some other organizations in this category place. Temporary artwork is sometimes seen by these public art professionals as practice, the laboratory or experiment for the permanent building of a world. But public art seen as communication, as dialogue, according to some, is also building a world, by trying to change individuals' thinking in the social world, even if only momentarily.

Only Art Can Save the Culture

Tom Finkelpearl, director of New York City's percent for art program places permanent artworks and yet has the same strong commitment to and belief in the artist as do temporary organizations.

For Finkelpearl one could say that the whole purpose of public art is to enable the artist to do what they do best. Artists, he believes, influence the sensibility of the culture, and public art, by getting artists out of the studio into the culture, can help them "understand the needs of the culture they're going to end up influencing." By saying artists in the studio are not part of the culture he is pointing to the fact of the aesthetic habitus which separates art and artists from everyday life. Finkelpearl said that, because it can question the authority of the power structure:

the only salvation for our culture is art, the only way it can be valuable is to be for everybody. The only solution is public art.

He is saying that public art can question the power structure of the culture and influence everybody in it. He is assuming public art is outside the power structure but he does not prove it.

Although Finkelpearl wants artists to get back into the mainstream of the culture through public art, he said earlier that lack of attention from the art world was frustrating. So he wants both to change the way artists relate to the everyday world yet retain the privileges of the aesthetic habitus.

Finkelpearl defined public art as dialogue and believes in artists' powerful skill as communicators, as do others in this category. According to this view, the culture will be saved by dialogue, and artists will not only contribute to that dialogue but instigate it.

We Should Listen to Artists

Cee Scott Brown of Creative Time places temporary work and is also committed to artists and their power as communicators.

We should be using our artists more. I mean artists are extremely powerful and they often have very important intelligent things to say. We ought to listen to them more.

He and his board are "completely committed to socially and politically mandated work at this point," and they are "of, about, for, by artists."

We often select artists to do projects that never worked in the public venue before. They expressed an interest, and by looking at past work we feel they could probably make that leap. But not all

of them are going to work the first time through. That's okay. We're encouraging them to take a risk. Guess what? Nobody's going to get hurt if it's up for 6 months.

In this sense they are committed to temporary projects and the chance to be experimental. Brown likes the open-ended undefinable nature of his program "City-Wide" which lets artists propose sites in which they would place work around the city. According to Brown, Creative Time is not "ossified or bureaucraticized" like museums or other institutions.

Brown and others agree that the public art field in many ways sets itself up in reaction to the museum, as well as to the commercialization and marketing of art which bounds/defines most of the art world. This reaction is not only, as in the last category, trying to be a more accessible museum, but also in terms of the risks they will take to redefine art and the audience in terms of the everyday world. Many of these public art professionals said that the art world does not reward them for it, rarely reviews public art, and, for the most part, doesn't bring public art into the critical discussion on contemporary art. Often the work these public art professionals do, they seem to say, goes unappreciated by both the art world and the public.

Allow the Artist Flexibility

Marsha Moss is an independent curator who sponsors shows of temporary public art in Philadelphia. She also believes in

the necessity of communication.

There's no sense in having it out there if it doesn't have an essence that gets picked up, if it doesn't create something to talk about, some kind of dialogue.

As the curator of her shows, her first concern is the artist, and she said she does:

as little intervention into the artist's thinking as possible. After seeing the proposals, I try to stay out of the process of creating it because its an opportunity that's very rare for artists--to work outside and be able to have the flexibility of the design process.

It is only temporary work she treats this way. "In a million dollar project, you can't make a mistake." Those public art professionals committed to temporary work complained that the lengthy and expensive process of making permanent work is stifling to artists and the work is already old by the time it is installed. But Bach, with her belief in legacy, said that permanent work is meant to be more enduring than a conversation and should be good enough that it is still worth doing ten years later.

Artists and the Public Dialogue

Patricia C. Phillips, the critic whose concerns, which were addressed in an earlier chapter, have to do with people as public beings, and her belief in artists to introduce those concerns into the public dialogue. Yet, she is afraid:

for all the interest and all the excitement and all the kind of organizations and apparatus that have sprung up in the last 20 years about public art, I think in terms of the intellectual life of public art, there's so much work to be done. I don't think we've really come to terms with what public art in the late 20th century might become,

what kind of public culture that we all could share might develop. I guess I'm drawn to work that seems to ask questions.

She said the questions she wants artists to ask through their work have to do with the ideas she talked about in the second chapter--what is a public being, what is the idea of public in this day and age. She was interested in what is communal, and how disparate and various people in separated places can nevertheless have things in common. She wanted to see work which related the parts to the whole. And yet she felt that an artist, in a "commitment to the communicative force of art," must:

have a particular interest in a much more kind of diverse and variegated audience and you have to be deeply committed to the communicative force of art.

She said:

I really believe in the power of art to kind of reach us as individuals and help us kind of connect with each other.

But not simply to connect with each other in Clark's serendipitous way but in a seemingly more long-lasting sense. She said:

I believe in cities, I believe in communities, I believe in this idea of a public life and I also believe in a very probably idealistic way that there is a kind of agency in art and there is a kind of power of images that can influence and effect and persuade and ask us to test our assumptions or to ask questions. So I believe very much in the power of art and I believe in the necessity of community. Somehow public art seems to be a way to bring those two things together.

So she believes that the way we are influenced and persuaded by artists could create the conditions where we test and

question our assumptions in a way that will connect to one another while retaining individuality. She is hoping that artists will instill, through communication and dialogue, an understanding in an individual of herself or himself as a public citizen, connected to others.

Building a world focused on the artist allows the individual to experience the work an artist does but not as a solitary aesthetic experience; rather in interaction with the ideas and beliefs of artists. The art is seen as communication, the artist speaks and people hear, listen, and question, but the artist is the one who knows, is allowed to experiment, is valorized to be the initiator of the conversation. Or, people may speak to one another about the artists' thoughts and experiments. The world is built for the individual to experience the artist's work but the concerns go beyond the physical world to encompass the social and political.

**Building a World Together with
the People Who Will Live in It:**

Focus on the Community

The Value of Tradition

Gordon Church, of Albuquerque's Percent for Art Program, has run the program since the mid 80s, most of its existence. As was described in the second chapter, Church runs the program according to what he called populist principles. That is, it is not the art which is important but the

community's satisfaction with it. Because his plan is to create an ongoing dialogue between the public art program and the public, he said the community needs to be engaged in all parts of the public art process, "and not simply left to digest it."

Church believed that public art could do two main things. First of all it could valorize a community's traditions, culture, and interests as forms of art in the public environment. Thus he believed, people will be reminded of who they are and what they come from, and of the values that their communities bring to the larger community. He said, "Public art is a great way of doing all those things, of saying they are valuable contributions." Offering people a chance to have their culture respected in public will give them, he said, not only a sense of their own value but a sense of being part of the larger environment, helping them develop a sense of responsibility for what's outside their homes.

Church, through the auspices of the public art program, explained that he has tried to revive craft traditions that were dying out. The current increase in interest in such traditions "helps them to keep their cultural connections alive so that those don't die," he said:

It doesn't take much today in a hot folk art market to get it into the market stream and that's helpful because that means people can make a living off it.

In New Mexico there is a deeply embedded sense of

historically disparate cultures, but there is no longer an economy to support the traditional ways. Church, by reviving crafts traditions for the "hot folk art market," is helping the original New Mexicans to sell their culture. In many cases, he said, this is a Hispano-Catholic heritage, but as a state-supported activity the objects must be secularized. It is a cultural, not a religious, meaning, says Church, that is seen in public art.

Some of these things appear repeatedly so more people get used to it. As long as we are not promoting it in a religious context and are respecting the religious values behind it then we can use it.

He was talking about items such as statues and pictures of saints and the Virgin of Guadalupe, and he argued that for some the religion is the culture. "We try not to focus centrally on that," he said. At the same time:

You can't separate Our Lady of Guadalupe out of Hispanic Mexican American culture so you have to allow a place that it comes forward as a cultural reference.

It is complicated both to allow religious images in state-supported public artwork and meanwhile to try to stimulate the folk-art market with them. For the former, Church's attention to community allows him to focus on all the community's traditions without feeling as though he is imposing on anyone outside the community. For the latter he assumes that making money from an art form, even a religious devotional item, is valuable, thus making folk-art out of religion.

Church, who believed that public art can "manipulate public attitudes" was trying to build a world in which he claimed art would be significantly "integrated with what life is about." This will happen, he said, not just by placing public art, but by involving people in making the art, in choosing the art, in designing it, or even just seeing or hearing about it happening--the very publicness of public art. This, he believed, will enhance creativity in people's own lives, which he believed to be important.

Church was instrumental in setting up other public art programs in New Mexico including the State's percent program.

May Not Be Great Art to Some People

Anne Green is coordinator of New Mexico's state percent for art program. This program was started by Church and is run with the same philosophy as Albuquerque's percent program--the community knows best what it wants and can/should be involved in the entire public art process. "We're not in the business of forcing artwork on people who don't want it," said Green.

However, Green is ambivalent about the quality of the work.

Sometimes they're just trying to fill up their space with something pretty. That bothers me, I guess, that people don't try harder to do something creative.

Green is alone among public art professionals in this category to express such ambivalence. Those in other

categories would not empower community members in this way. But Green accepts that what would be right for her, is not necessarily right for others.

A lot of people criticize public art because they say it's going to be the lowest common denominator: gear it toward the lowest so that everybody's pleased. That is not true. Some of it may not be great in some people's minds, but in other people's minds it is great. What it does is run the gamut of possibilities, especially this program.

People who choose work the art world may not valorize will, in the long run, Green believes, desire to become more acquainted with art because of being invited to be so involved in it. Their arts sophistication will develop in that way, she explained.

The reward for the program is they have strong community support, discussed by both Church and Green, and perhaps that is part of the strategy, to keep the programs funded and expand their reach.

Engage the community

Larry Ogan is chair of the committee for Art in Public Places in Santa Fe. Although he comes from a strong commitment to advocating for artists' rights, in public art he is concerned for the community. Ogan believes public art was the first form of visual art that was developed.

Cave paintings and petroglyphs, those are forms of public art. Those tell stories about the community, of the hunt, of religious experience. In other words those weren't the mythology of the artists in the studio creating from their own inner being. I think artists initially were storytellers, very much involved in their community.

Other public art professionals also spoke about the history of public art before museums--the Renaissance, the medieval Church, the Greek temple--when it was practically the only kind of visual art and that it was more truly part of people's lives. It sometimes sounds as if they are suggesting that public art could somehow have such an important role and be so integrated into daily lives again. Or perhaps it is wishful thinking to imagine a more appreciative audience.

Ogan went on to explain that these early artists, these artists who were so much more involved in their communities, were helping the community visualize things about themselves. Even today, he went on to say:

public art should engage the community in some way, create a dialogue for them or an experience they may not normally have.

He is not saying the artist should create a dialogue with an individual but rather with a community as a whole, as, it seems, an undifferentiated group.

There Is No Non-Art Audience

Richard Hooker was running New Mexico's Save Outdoor Sculpture! inventory:

I feel like I'm collaborating with these communities, individuals in communities, and if there's an interest in including something like an historic wagon from a coal mine, that we will do it, that we'll include it.

Within his very expansive view of what public art may include he does believe that art is:

an enduring testimony to what humans can be in the

world and that public art is a commitment to joining together and celebrating that.

Others, too, spoke about public art in this sense of joining together, of connecting people. But Hooker is saying something different, that is, that for him public art is a communal celebration of human potential, not a way of people connecting across their individual differences.

This joining together is done by everyone and there is no "non-art public." Rather, there are mechanisms of exclusion so the common person doesn't feel very involved:

The intimidation comes more from the art world than from these ordinary people who have a view of what art is, maybe based on a whole different set of learning experiences.

As opposed to other people who assume the common person is afraid of art because they don't understand it and that's why they stay away from museums and create controversy for public art, Hooker is quite sure people are not afraid of what they don't know, but the artworld quickly makes them feel that way. Hooker defines himself as an artist who has always worked first with communities and his greatest pleasure has been in getting communities to "say yes to art."

True Marriage Between Artist and Community

Lucy R. Lippard, writer and activist, believes that, without a direct link between artist and community, it is not public art. This is a more fundamental interaction between artist and audience than an artwork creating a discourse with an individual. But, like the last category, the interaction is

generated by the artist.

Frankly, Lippard said, she doesn't believe any public art is successful on every level. She feels quite strongly that it hasn't happened yet and perhaps only 25 people in the country are really trying to do the kind of public art she thinks is real public art.

I'd like to see a public art that really was part of the community and continued to be; that had some kind of motion to it, that was flexible enough so it could change when the community changed, and really, really be part of the community.

She described a sort of "resident artist" in a community who continually makes art on the streets about, perhaps with, perhaps for, the community, over a lifetime.

Social Responsibility

Dorothy Desir-Davis, an independent curator, at the time of the interview was planning a show in Harlem about public art in minority neighborhoods. It was to include a symposium that would give local residents the opportunity to talk about the art in their communities. Although her concerns are mainly for the individual person contemplating the art, in her case it is a minority person disenfranchised from the dominant culture, someone with no stake in that world. She said:

In cities like New York where you're confronted with so much ugliness, and so much pressure, and so many negative energies, art gives you a reason to pause. It's corny but it allows you to stop, to meditate, to relate to something else, to refocus, and to center yourself a little bit.

The centering that she wants people to be able to do is on

the potential in themselves, not on art as art.

For various economic and political reasons in Black and Latino communities people never see enough positive images of themselves. They never have enough of a sense of their creative ability and whatever empowerment accompanies that.

Like Church, she believed public art should let people learn something about themselves and encourage creativity in their own lives. And, she believed, artists should be socially responsible in their attempt to make people think and feel. Her approach, however, is more like Senie's: to listen to local concerns while educating people about the art; not like Church's: to ask them to make or choose art that reflects and endorses their own beliefs.

With this focus on community, the approach is more to work with people, not for them. People are not valorized in their individual autonomy but as part of a larger system, a community, a system with beliefs and values beyond any single individual's everyday concerns. This system relates in turn to the wider culture over which no small community has control. Artists, although they are the ones who make the art, are not valorized as they are in the previous two categories. Rather they are seen as spokespeople or activity leaders for the communities with whom they choose to work. The undifferentiated community is seen as the basic unit, not the individual.

Although all of these public art professionals, no matter

their focus, believed in the importance of public art, they did not necessarily approve of what public art programs were doing other than their own. For example, Bach, Brown, and Phillips were all concerned about the proliferation of percent projects which were not well thought out, while Church was concerned about what he saw as a majority of public art programs which still valorized Anglo, male artists. Nevertheless, although they might not have agreed with what was done in other public art programs when it was at odds with their own philosophy, they did not have anything negative to say about one another. Within each geographical area, and even across areas, they occasionally praised one another's work, and even worked together.

Discussion

Three categories emerged from the interviews. In the first, where the focus is on the city, it could be said that the problem in the world is an inhuman city, which will be corrected by humanizing the city. Thus the person who sees the art will become enriched by responding aesthetically, and having their awareness raised about place. The art is for art's sake; the concerns of priority are aesthetic but include the physical context; attention is paid to the physical environment; the basic unit is the solitary individual.

In the second category where the focus is on the artist the problem in the world is blindness to social and

political problems which will be corrected by bringing the artist into the culture. This will help the person who sees the art think beyond the obvious by reacting to the art, having their awareness raised about social concerns. The art in this case is communication for the sake of dialogue; the concern of priority is content; attention is paid to the social environment; the basic unit is the interacting individual.

In the third category, where the focus is on the community, it could be said that the problem in the world is disenfranchised people caught in everyday concerns which will be corrected by making the community feel good about itself. This will help the person who sees the art feel valued as a member of a group by seeing the communal self, raising their awareness about themselves as a group. The art is for the sake of community self-esteem; the concerns of priority are the approval of "the people"; attention is paid to the cultural environment and the basic unit is the community.

Such a simplified overview is problematic because it makes it seem as if the divisions are settled. Although categorized, these public art professionals and their organizations do not remain firmly inside those divisions. Fairmount Park Art Association has placed work that is for and about a specific community; Public Art Fund has placed strictly aesthetic objects; while Albuquerque's Percent Program has placed work by a well known artist who

communicates about social issues. Each piece of public art has its own conditions. And where those placed into specific categories differ from one another, there are also basic similarities.

Categories

The first category described has to do with the aesthetic belief in the solitary contemplative experience of art by the isolated individual separated from even his/her own body. This contemplative individual has a long history in Western thought. In this first category of public art professionals, although building a world for the solitary individual and attending to aesthetic issues, are not so far to the extreme as to be locked inside aesthetic rules. By bringing in concerns about use, about physical context, and about the untrained audience, professionals in this category have begun undermining the aesthetically separated artwork with the facts of the world. The solitary individual in contemplation must respond not just to the artwork but also to its context.

The second category has to do with the concept that an individual is socially embedded, is formed and defined by the outside world and by the never-ending back and forth between the individual and the world. This accepts 20th century philosophies that insist we are not isolated but are always part of the social order even in our innermost, individual beings. Although these public art professionals talk about communication and dialogue, the public art spoken

about here is not actually a dialogue in the normal sense of the word; it is one-sided, because the artwork is the source of the communication. The world is seen as interactive (action and reaction) as opposed to transactive (one cannot exist without the other). In the long run, this individual is an evolution of the solitary individual in contemplation with the solitary artwork. This individual develops concerns about the social world rather than experiencing art for its own sake, reacting to the world around them which acts on them.

In the third category, there is a leap away from the individual into a totally different understanding of the community as the important unit, where people are seen as part of a group, a culture, or a particular set of values that overrides individual concerns. The concern is not for the artwork or the artist; they exist for the sake of the people to be served by them. In this category there is always a danger that there will be no room for the alternative voice, for the dissident person who can get lost. It has been suggested here that those professionals more concerned with community are interested in working with the public they serve, and in many ways they do, relative to the others. Nevertheless, the public art professionals and programs retain control over who gets what and, as will be seen in future chapters, over how the with the public gets accomplished.

It seems as though something is missing between the

second and third categories. There is no place where the individual is embedded in the world; no place where artist and individual, or artist and community, transact instead of interact; where individual, community, and artist negotiate their respective roles in the public art process; where neither artist, individual, nor group is valorized at the expense of the others.

Perhaps this is because, as in the last chapter where artists are identified but members of the public are not, there is a necessity, in a process that involves art, to position the artist as the person who is required to lead the way. In the first two categories the artist is valued as planner, speaker, teacher for an individual art experience or for an individual social reaction, in the third category as activity leader, keeper of community ways for an undifferentiated group. Although some do contend that each person takes from the art what he or she can, in the end all three categories negate the plurality of the public realm in the sense of the equality of all points of view. The artists always have leadership. That is to say, if the individual is considered only an experiencer of art, or a person who must be stimulated into social awareness, or a person who is only a part of a group, there is a negation of different positions from which people come to art. Art remains separate, unknowable, special, a stimulus to which people react.

The Gift of Art

The one thing all these public art professionals have in common is a deep belief in the power of art and a strong commitment to sharing it with everyone. Immersed as they are by training and profession in the aesthetic habitus, there is a basic assumption that the thing that is wrong can be fixed with the use of art and artists. Quickly it seems evident that another thing missing is any acknowledgement that public art plays a very small role in the world. On the face of it, it is absurd to expect that public art could fix such major problems.

In this society where success is determined by the amount of money made, the intrinsic worth of art, artists, and creativity is not valued by many. Although arts organizations like to cite statistics showing that more people went to arts events than sports events in any given year, there are still astronomical rewards given to sports by the society and astronomical debt/costs encountered by arts organizations and artists. Yet this reflects the art world's own values. Public art, with its lack of commodity status, is not of much interest to the art world, as it is not of much interest to the general public. These public art professionals are focused on public art and so it is central to them, but from outside the field it barely exists.

These public art professionals are always giving a gift of art to people. Whether they place it or write about it, they neither expect people to pay money for the art, nor do

they expect to become rich and famous. They are actually, as Feuer said, public servants, usually anonymous. People may not acknowledge or appreciate the gift and may even complain and criticize it. In addition, these professionals may have very specific ideas and expectations about the people to whom the gift is offered, and how it should be received. Nevertheless, they believe it is valuable and a gift worth offering and that it will take its place as an important addition to the built environment.

The next chapter will address what happens when the public doesn't agree with them.

CHAPTER 5

CONTROVERSY: THE PEOPLE REPLY

Public art implies a context for the art missing in most art practices: a public composed in large part of people who were not trained, or have no interest, in art. Because it is public art, it cannot exist, as other art does, within the protected confines of a group of people who understand how to approach it, how to appreciate or criticize it, or how to be able to understand it. It will not be given the kind of respect it would get inside the aesthetic habitus where most art lives.

Public art professionals, building a world for the public, see art as the answer to various problems: an inhuman city, blindness to social and political problems, or disenfranchised people. In spite of presuppositions about art's role as seen from inside the aesthetic habitus to which all these people belong, and although they might prefer something different, they are aware that those outside do not accept art in the same way.

The Artist's Intentions

Larry Ogan, chair of the Art in Public Places Committee in Santa Fe, told a story about a specific artwork: "Vaquero" by Luis Jimenez. The work was a large colorful fiberglass

artwork of "this giant Mexican cowboy on a bucking horse shooting a gun," said Ogan. When it was sited in Santa Fe, according to Ogan:

Some Hispanic person wrote a letter to the editor saying we resent having a cowboy out in front of the Capitol Building on a bucking horse shooting, because that represents how the Anglos have come in and taken over New Mexico.

But that wasn't what the piece was about, said Ogan, it was about Mexican cowboys and was by a famous Hispano artist.

Ogan continued:

Then it was moved to Austin to be installed down there and a bunch of Anglos got all upset. They didn't want it there, because it would encourage Hispanics to kill whites because it was a Mexican cowboy with a gun.

This story points very clearly to the life of its own that an artwork takes on in public; like a good postmodern text, it can be read in any number of ways by different people.

In the first case this large aggressive sculpture of a man on a horse with a gun was read, logically enough given the mythology of cowboys in the west, as an Anglo cowboy. In its second siting, in Austin, it was understood as a Mexican cowboy, and its aggressive nature took on a different meaning for a different culture.

Both understandings have to do with a similar thing: underlying ethnic tensions. In the first case, in Santa Fe, where it was perceived to represent an official celebration of the Anglo take-over, those not in power were the ones complaining. They did not want to be reminded of it by those in power, who, it was thought, were representing

themselves as strong and aggressive. In the second case, in Austin, where it was perceived as an encouragement to Hispanos to kill Anglos, those in power were the ones complaining about a less powerful group representing themselves as strong and aggressive. Perhaps those in power were afraid of becoming the target of the non-dominant group. In both cases, it is assumed that some group is representing themselves, celebrating and valorizing their own power. In one case there is anger at the group claiming power; in the other, fear of them.

In neither case did it matter what the artist actually intended. Although Ogan valorized the intentions of the artist as is common in the aesthetic habitus, in public the artwork took on a life of its own, and people understood it in their own way, and, speaking about it in public, gave meaning to it. That meaning may have had nothing to do with what the artist intended. In this case the aggressive stance of the sculpture became the focus for various explanations, but even calling a cowboy on a bucking horse shooting a gun "aggressive" is a culturally negotiated meaning.

The New York City percent program also had a controversy about a representational piece of sculpture. The artist, John Aherñ, made casts in bronze of three people who lived in the neighborhood where the work was to be sited, in front of a police station. Tom Finkelpearl, director of the

program, explained:

They're not heroes. These are just normal people, kids, they are sort of intense looking, obviously not rich, Black and Latino figures. One of these guys has a scar across his chest, he doesn't have any shirt on, he's got a pot belly, a Black guy. It's really incredible and psychologically complex.

But this very complexity, Finkelpearl predicted before the work was installed, could backfire.

What people are used to seeing in public art is not psychological complexity, but heroic. I think this could be a successful piece by John Ahern and be hated by a lot of people.

When the piece was sited a year later it was hated by a lot of people. The local community complained that the works were "stereotypes" and not role models. These "psychologically complex" images, by being cast in bronze and placed in public--something reserved for heroes--were therefore being presented as heroes; yet these images were ordinary people from the local community.

Ahern's choice of subjects became an issue to those who lived in the neighborhood, according to a newspaper article (Morrison, 1995), because these were not the sort of images they wanted representing their neighborhood. Being represented by those individuals was considered a misrepresentation of the neighborhood, a stereotyping. Once again, the artist's intentions were of no importance to the community. In spite of the artist living and working in the community, and the literal integration of particular types of community members into the art, the community as a whole

was not appreciative.

Finkelpearl later said that the artwork, which was subsequently moved to a contemporary art location, came to stand in for the city in a neighborhood that had a great deal of resentment toward city government. He felt that the artwork became the focus of other unresolved problems in the community, as indeed the Jimenez piece also did. Moving the artwork quieted the controversy, but did nothing in either case about underlying problems. It simply silenced the problems and removed the symptoms.

Bowing to community demands fits well with Ogan's presuppositions which focus on the community, but are somewhat contradictory to Finkelpearl's, who, although committed to public art which is discourse, had to accept the community's demands. That is, the artist had something to say and the people heard it in their own way. They responded, not by listening to the artist, accepting his view of reality and changing society accordingly, but rather by disagreeing with him and changing his ability to continue the discourse with the artwork.

Another case where the public's understanding was at odds with the art world's did not end with the removal of the artwork. In Miami, Claes Oldenberg had been commissioned and proposed a work, "Dropped Bowl with Oranges." When it was announced in the paper, five years before it was to be installed, Cesar Trasobares, director of the percent

program, said he:

started getting calls from members of the Orange Bowl Committee. The Orange Bowl Committee is like the super wide power establishment. The old boys' kind of network. "This man is making fun of us because he's crashing a bowl." I said, "Well, what do you mean? You're taking the bowl too literally."

People in the business community were worried about what they perceived as an insult and a misrepresentation of them to the public at large. In this case the artist (after the fact, according to his assistant [Platzker interview, May, 1992]) developed a story that the broken bowl of oranges represented the city's polyglot nature, which, although broken, could be fit back together again. This story was publicized and eventually went in place with the artwork, and so the artist's intentions became part of the negotiated meaning.

Why was this piece allowed to stay and the others had to be removed? First of all the controversy occurred five years before the artwork was actually in place. Trasobares had plenty of time to win the businessmen over to his side, which included acquiring for Miami an "Oldenberg," something cities around the world wanted and therefore businessmen might be proud to get. The people who complained, the business community, were people with a great deal of power. Yet they were willing to go along with the public art program once the artist's story became acceptable to them. Their concern had been about someone misrepresenting them, the same as the Ahern story in the Bronx neighborhood. But

in Miami there was no underlying problem between the city and the Orange Bowl Committee; the artwork didn't have to become a focus of unresolved difficulties.

In all these cases there was public discussion concerning the artwork which led to a resolution that the public could accept. Trasobares was able to resolve the situation in a way consistent with his beliefs, educating the businessmen to his views which were the art world's views, and to which they might have responded because of their class.

Occasionally no attempts are made to resolve the difficulties created by the placement of an artwork by discussion. Instead, the artwork is destroyed.

A work depicting same-sex, multi-racial couples, placed by Creative Time was destroyed when it was placed on public buses in Chicago. Cee Scott Brown spoke about the project by Gran Fury:

It started out just that little black and white card. "Kissing doesn't kill, greed and indifference do." Kissing couples, bam, bam, bam, kiss, kiss, kiss. Then on the back it says, "corporate greed, government inaction and public indifference make AIDS a political crisis."

Then Gran Fury and Art Against AIDS made it into a poster and it was on buses all over New York City and Chicago, Brown said. Washington, DC would not allow it:

And then in Chicago it was tarred. The minute it would go up it was tarred. They wouldn't feather it but they tarred it.

Brown went to Chicago to debate Alderman Shaw who was "a big leader of that, a very vocal Black alderman there," but the politician canceled at the last minute, leaving the TV debate one-sided. "Which wasn't nearly so interesting," Brown said. It got people thinking, he said, it was a "kick in the butt." Although the vandalism itself brought attention to the artwork, in the end the vandalism did not lead to debate about the issues but rather was an aggressive act stopping debate.

Brown received many calls in support of the artwork but also a few that expressed "if my daughter saw this she'd think that being gay was okay." This meant that for that person, the poster was seen as honoring homosexuality rather than as trying to initiate a debate about AIDS funding. The images of kissing couples, not the words, were the message people received. The issue, in the case of the vandalism, and Shaw not debating Brown, kept that discussion of AIDS out of the public environment. While the artists were criticizing those who denied access to health care funding, the vandals and Shaw were denying discourse altogether, keeping the issue out of public discussion, meanwhile obliterating the very image. The vandalism had the effect of keeping others from seeing, experiencing, or understanding the artwork. In this case violence was used in place of voice, and the political process of public debate was not only silenced but denied altogether, as was Brown's desire to have people listen to artists.

In another case of destruction by vandalism, James Clark of the Public Art Fund said it was the "first piece in 20 years that was ever destroyed." In this case, according to Lucy Lippard, who also mentioned the event, the public art people had done what they considered to be all the right things. According to Clark:

We had gone to the community board beforehand. The community board loved it! I thought they were going to weep because this artist, who was a Latina who was successful, wanted to do something, and they were thrilled. It was the best community board meeting. We thought this is going to be a breeze, we'll have a great relationship up here in the Bronx.

The piece was a life-sized mailbox with a face painted onto it that had a third eye in the center of the forehead by an Argentine artist, Dina Burden, who:

wanted to do a piece dealing with being an immigrant and wanting to communicate back home as fast as possible.

The third eye, in Latin American culture, according to Clark was meant to represent intuition that sees you through when you're in trouble. It was placed in front of Hostos Community College and was destroyed, Clark said, as if someone had taken a sledge hammer to it.

Community members, in a seminar held at the college to discuss the destruction, suggested that it "may have offended Roman Catholics because it's cultish, it comes from the Santeria." But, Clark said, the artist was "just talking about the spiritual aspects."

Again, the artist's intentions didn't matter. And in

this case, the community's approval didn't either. Clark's focus on the artist and interest in the interaction public art can generate between the artist and the public both backfired and worked. That is, there was reaction rather than interaction in the destruction of the piece but there was also a public discussion held by the community to try to understand that reaction.

The Greater Good

In some cases the artwork gets installed or remains in place in spite of objections, which are overruled. Penny Bach of the Fairmount Park Art Association in Philadelphia spoke about Jody Pinto's "Fingerspan", a bridge across a gorge. Community members had, early in the process, worked with Pinto to find a spot for her work. But by the time the work was to go in, some people who lived nearby objected to the artwork on the grounds that it would, according to Bach:

draw more attention to that part of the park, because they liked it that way, to themselves, so to speak.

She went on to explain:

We wound up having a very, very bitter fight with the community. And finally we had to, we went to the Park Commission to exercise their authority, because it was the Park Commission that could go back to that group and say "We're tired of your bickering. We're going to approve this because we know it's good for the park."

It was an irony, she said, because it was the park that said "no" to the people objecting; it was the park that said:

"We have to speak for all the people." So in that

sense the community, parts of it were overridden by its other parts.

There was no misinterpretation of the artist's intentions, no disagreement with the artist about how they or others had been represented or about who had the right to speak in public. The concerns were about the community's right to control access to, and what happens in, their surroundings. In this case their surroundings were a public park owned by the city.

The local community did not automatically have the last word, although the project had been concerned about the community's interest from the beginning, according to Bach. There is always an authority with a higher control than the community--the mayor, the Park Commission--with the right to determine what happens in the public environment. Although organizations want to work with communities today, this was a case where Bach believed they could not let a small number of people ruin what was seen to be an important experience for the greater number of people, the greater "good." This is in line with her focus on the city as a whole.

But in this case the common good was contestable, and was part of political negotiations. The good of the dominant "we," the individuals of the whole city, was not necessarily the good of the local group affected by this public decision. The authority weighed the various rights and in the end determined what should prevail.

A similar thing happened to the Public Art Fund when it proposed placing a series of Botero sculptures on Park Avenue in New York City. James Clark, the director, explained:

They didn't want anything in the neighborhood that wasn't theirs. "The wrong people will come in," they said. Actually it was a turf battle, one Park Avenue Group supported the project, the other didn't.

They were also concerned, he said, that "you don't put good art out in public, that belongs in a museum." They were worried that "kids will be killed" by climbing on the sculpture and falling into traffic. After taking into consideration the safety issues, because they had the permissions they needed from the mayor and the Parks Department, Public Art Fund sited the temporary sculptures in spite of objections.

Afterwards, the response was so positive that [people] admitted it wasn't as bad as they thought it would be.

In both cases, parts of the local community did not want the art and had the venue to say that. But in the end they did not get their way because, as Bach said, one part of the community overruled another part.

In the Public Art Fund case, the issue of good art not belonging in public arose. This points to the belief that art belongs in a special place, separated from everyday life.

Not only can the authorities make sure a work of art is

sited against objections, the opposite can happen too, when the public wants a particular work of public art to remain in place and the art world does not. In Philadelphia, Sandy Gross Bressler and the Art Commission had final authority on the location of a statue of "Rocky" donated to the city by Sylvester Stallone. The media and the public were loud in their demand that it be left on the steps of the art museum, where it had been sited for filming, claiming the art museum was being elitist by not wanting it to be there.

"It was the topic of an incredible amount of controversy in the city," Bressler said. People saw the image as heroic, "the little guy that fights against horrible odds" and wins. In this case the people who wanted the statue to remain saw it as representing something they agreed with, something to strive for. But, according to Bressler, the Art Commission and the art museum were not happy with the aesthetics of what was actually a movie prop. In addition they were concerned about the inappropriateness and subtle racism of a white man battling Blacks serving as a hero in a multiethnic, multiracial city. The artwork was stored until a decision could be made. Again, the ideal of the greater good of the city won over the interests of specific groups.

The public discourse which centered on the elitism of the art museum was resolved in the end in favor of the art world. The Art Commission retained power over the public environment. And those without power had to be satisfied

with a different location for their statue, where it could represent a local neighborhood instead of the whole city while the art museum could retain its aesthetic power for the good of the whole city.

"Our Tax Dollars for This"?

Other kinds of controversies arise besides how people are represented or represent themselves and who has final say.

During his interview, Tom Finkelpearl of New York City's percent for art program showed me a copy of the New York Post with the headline "Jailhouse Crock" to make a point that the media misrepresents what the percent program does. A \$260,000,000 detention center was being built by the city on Staten Island which, because of the percent for art ordinance, would allocate \$400,000 for public art. The newspaper had a cartoon of convicts in a cellblock discussing a painting on the wall. Finkelpearl said that "has nothing to do with what we do. We work in public places." And, he said:

the New York Post knew that, so this is basically a lie. What they're trying to do is attack Dinkins through his use of money.

Finkelpearl explained that public art funds come out of the Capital Improvements budgets for building projects which are paid for by bonds, and not directly out of the tax budget.

One of the things that's important, and that people don't understand, is if there's a cut in a capital budget, that doesn't mean you can hire teachers in the school. If there's a cut in the percent for art budget, that doesn't mean the city

has more money to keep a library open. To build the library is capital money, to keep it open is tax money. There's two kinds of money, capital money and expense money, and there's two ways of getting it, bonds and taxes. But the general population doesn't understand this distinction.

However, bonds, although sometimes paid off with revenues raised by an organization such as Feuer's Metropolitan Transit Authority, are also paid off with tax generated income such as increases in property taxes.

Controversy over the spending of public money has arisen not just in New York City but in other percent programs, and is an issue with which public art professionals have to learn how to contend.

Gordon Church, of Albuquerque's percent program, talked about the controversy surrounding "San Mateo Cruising," better known, he said, as "Chevy on a Stick." The artwork is:

a 1954 chevrolet that's up on an arch, it's all tiles by an artist from Tucson, Arizona named Barbara Grygutis.

It was a case, Church said, where they worked with a community but people from other communities felt "we shouldn't be spending public money for this."

In this case it was people from other parts of Albuquerque who felt it shouldn't be spent, not the people who were the beneficiaries. According to Church they said "It was a waste of money. Why have a car?"

Church felt there was a "little bit of racial stuff" because it was honoring cars and:

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Hispanics live out celebrating their cars more than Anglos do as far as glorifying them, making them into art, like Lowriders and so forth which started in New Mexico.

People thought it was "more about Lowrider life and therefore that it belonged in the valley," Church said. In this case the image, a car, with multiple social meanings, was given a single meaning: Lowrider life. And it was assumed it would only be appropriate in a Lowrider, i.e., Hispano, neighborhood.

That was a major controversy. But to me it's probably one of the best things that ever happened.

The reason, Church explained, that it was such a good thing was:

Even now there's not a person in Albuquerque, everybody you would ask could tell you, either they love it or they hate it. ... But boy, they know where that piece is.

He said that "the state actually clipped out clippings from all over the country about that because it ran nationally."

As opposed to Finkelpearl, who believed the media coverage was biased and untruthful, Church was pleased with the controversy because it "really brought public art to everybody's attention." In addition, according to Church, no one ever asked the neighborhood what they thought of it.

We always tell people ever since, you need to know that we want you to be satisfied, but there may be people across town who don't like what you're going to select, and you need to be prepared for it, to defend it.

The neighborhood did defend it and the artwork remained. In this case the dialogue, the public discourse itself was the

important thing. The issues arose and were addressed and resolved in public, bringing national attention, as Church said, to public art and the Albuquerque program.

"Tilted Arc"

Most of the controversies cited here arise with representational work but abstract work has also come in for its share of controversy. Although I did not ask about it in the interview, many public art professionals spoke about Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc," often as an example of unsuccessful public art. James Clark of Public Art Fund, for example, said, "It was a phenomenal piece of sculpture but I think it failed as a piece of public art."

"Tilted Arc" is probably the best-known piece of public art because of the controversy it aroused. Its existence and people's transactions with it led to a public discourse that extended far beyond the city of New York where it was located. Richard Hooker, the coordinator of New Mexico's Save Outdoor Sculpture! said the audience for public art became even those who read about it. The work was in the public environment even "when you're in your private home reading about Richard Serra's piece." Because of the discourse surrounding this particular artwork, it has become the most public, the most political work of public art.

The public discussion went on for years, most intensely during the hearings that were held for three days in 1985 when there were very clear lines drawn between art world and

public. James Clark said that at the time of the discussion:

If you were in the arts community you had to defend him. Or if you were not in the arts community, and said you didn't like the piece, you were a philistine. And that just can't be.

The art world took a stand in favor of art no matter the public interest, and the art world lost. Lucy Lippard, writer and activist, said:

I wrote a letter of support for Richard Serra's piece "Tilted Arc," which everybody's so sick of, because I thought the GSA [General Services Administration, the federal agency which had commissioned the work and in the end, had the work dismantled and removed] was breaking a contract with an artist, but I did not feel that it had been gone about right in the first place. When I wrote my letter of support I said maybe next time this will teach you to start thinking about who's going to be there.

The experience of "Tilted Arc," she pointed out, should teach the lesson that the concerns of the public should be quite important to all public art professionals. Cesar Trasobares of Miami became more concerned that:

A citizen that would not like the work would sometimes say "well, I'm going to have it removed."

That, he said, was the ultimate threat; and that, he said, "Was the negative lesson of the whole Richard Serra incident." In other words, concern about the public became important to him because of fear of the public's ability to undermine what a program decides. To Larry Ogan of Santa Fe, "Tilted Arc" was an example of the wrong way to treat the people who will have to live with the work of public

art. He said:

It needs to engage the community in some sort of positive way, it can't be just a constant negative experience in their mind. There's enough negatives out there now without having a piece of artwork in your face all the time.

This artwork engendered as much dialogue as controversy and that public discourse brought it into the political realm where the controversy was resolved, although, again, not to everyone's satisfaction. In this case the artist was definitely displeased about the resolution. However, though many of these public art professionals, such as Clark, wish the work were still in place for their own satisfaction, they believe with Clark that it failed as public art because it did not take into account the people who would have to engage with the art in their everyday lives.

However, Patricia Phillips, the critic, said "I think it was an incredibly important powerful piece of work. I wish it was still there." She addressed the issue of controversy as such and had a concern that controversy may be avoided at all costs:

It's not bad. It's not bad if it happens once in a while; and we need that in our lives and we need that in our public culture.

Unfortunately, she said, people sometimes get offended and, "I don't think it's so bad unless that offense is not somehow constructively dealt with." You can't have a protective cocoon around you, she said.

I'm not an advocate for careless and reckless and irresponsible behavior but you can't live your life so overwhelmed with guarding against

difficulty and controversy. It's guarding against what it means to be human. I'm not saying it has to be good but I don't think, on the other hand, that we should fear it so much.

She is saying, in line with her beliefs about the importance of public as an idea in public art, that there may be disagreements but that is part of being human. She is more concerned that:

sometimes on those committees they do end up being somewhat compromised. Everyone's afraid of who's going to be offended, who's going to be insulted. You end up coming up with this terrifically banal and boring result (laughs). Well, no one's offended, and no one's interested either.

Better controversy, she believed, than banality. Better that people are offended and say that, create dissention, than that controversy be avoided at all costs.

Discussion

The kinds of controversies talked about by this group of public art professionals have to do with the desire on the part of the public to control what they consider to be their space, or the desire to control their own or another's representation of them. That is, there is a desire on the part of the public to maintain control over their own beliefs, concerns, or identity, and how they are represented or misrepresented in public, or to obtain control over the representation of another's beliefs, concerns, or identity, and try to keep them from finding room in public if those beliefs conflict with their own.

Controversy over artwork, once it is in full bloom, is

dealt with in many ways. There may be a physical resolution where the work is destroyed or moved, in which case the controversy is silenced. There may be an appeal to a higher authority which once again has the effect of silencing the controversy or sending it underground. Or it may be allowed to run its course, allowing public debate and bringing public attention to the work. There are limits, the resolution isn't always to everyone's satisfaction, and for the most part the locus of control is in the hands of the art world.

Nevertheless, the social order is created both from what the powerful believe and disseminate and also from what the powerless say and criticize. It works both ways, and the needs and desires of the people without power feed back to those with power, and create change. The direction of the change in attitudes in the field of public art is toward this acknowledgement that both sides play a role. Rather than those in power just disseminating their beliefs downward in the hopes that the art would have a beneficial effect on the populace, as was the case in public art in the past, people in power in the field of public art nowadays are more aware that those not in power must also have the opportunity to voice beliefs and opinions, though public art professionals aren't always happy about it. One way this occurs is through controversy.

Public art professionals know they can't avoid controversy and some would prefer it to be discussion and

not battle. Discussion, or discourse, is in fact some people's very definition of public art.

Public art exists not just in physical space but in social space. It exists not in the protected space of the art world where what it means can be controlled by those "in the know," but in the public realm of contested meanings. Within the aesthetic habitus there are also contested meanings but they occur within a specific discourse agreed to and understood by the educated. In the public environment there are no such agreements. It is this public realm with which public art professionals must be concerned.

There is no objective essence to the artwork in spite of the desire of the art world, including public art professionals, to fix the intentions of the artist into the very being of the work. Those intentions get lost and the work stands on its own, becoming at one point, this, at another, that, as Jimenez's "Vaquero" did. Sometimes the artwork settles into a publicly generated meaning, sometimes its meaning is constantly in flux, but it almost never remains simply what the artist intended. The official meaning, understood by the artworld as it came from the artist, is not something people take without question. The negotiation of meaning which may start out as reaction to the artwork itself becomes confounded, with circumstances of site, society, person, artwork, and public discourse about the work all participating in the negotiation. This public discourse is part of the political nature of public art.

Perhaps not everyone feels they have a right to voice their opinions and perhaps controversies are engaged in by the few, but the public process of controversy is witnessed by many more than those who speak. The public discussion and the public resolution of public art controversies are part of the political nature of public art. In a democracy, protest, controversy, and speaking out are rights, and public discourse is the means to resolve the problems that arise between groups, between powerful and powerless, between citizen and government. Even though public art may seem a limited vehicle for such public discourse, it is surprisingly, sometimes a lightning rod.

The public, for whom the art is intended, becomes part of its new life in a way never foreseen. The process is not one of action and reaction, stimulus and response, but rather one where the artwork, the physical, social, and cultural context, and the people involved, all contribute and influence one another reciprocally.

The next chapter will show how these public art professionals attempt to deal with that non-specific segment of the public called the audience, because they have learned through controversy how important it is.

CHAPTER 6

THE PUBLIC AS AUDIENCE: INFORM AND EDUCATE

In this chapter, public art professionals approach the public as an audience, generalized and non-specific. The art already exists, and people are considered to be positioned in relationship to it. Although it may bring controversy and complaints, all of these public art professionals wanted response from the audience. Without that, they believe, why bother? In an earlier chapter, Cee Scott Brown, the former director of Creative Time in New York, spoke about his desire for the participation of the public in terms of the political activity of speaking out in public. But he wanted that for the sake of attention to the artwork. He said:

The audience is like the reflection in the mirror. If you've got one fabulous project and nobody looking at it, caring about it, aware of it, cognizant of it, then it's not worth anything either. So the feedback of the public is extremely important.

His point is that no matter how good the work, if no one pays attention it might as well not even exist. Other public art professionals as well as Brown talked about what they called the invisibility of some public art as being problematic. That is, as Brown said, if no one even sees it any more, it's not worth anything.

Richard Hooker, coordinator of New Mexico's Save Outdoor Sculpture! agreed with the need for public feedback. He said the role of the audience is:

To respond, and I don't just mean to respond favorably. I think, as artists, our work comes to life in the response.

He explained further about his statement that the response doesn't have to be favorable.

It's not always to like the work either, it's to question it, to be critical, to raise questions about why it might be racist even, or why it might even not be a good piece of work.

People don't have to like the work, Hooker said, but they must respond. Without that response, as he said, the work has no life.

Dorothy Desir-Davis, an independent curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem agreed:

Without a response what's the use of having it out there? Keep it in your studio, put it in a gallery.

All three are saying that the relationship between the artwork and the audience is ultimately the one that counts. and that the artwork is there in order to elicit a response. As Phillips said, there is nothing wrong with controversy. She and others would agree that it is much better to have an artwork that is completely controversial than one to which nobody pays attention.

But once there is attention, these public art professionals differ markedly on just what that should mean.

Education

There is a wide spectrum of what these public art professionals expect from the audience. There are some who expect the audience to be educated in art before the public artworks can even be approached. That is, they expect a major change on the part of the audience. At the other end are those who believe it is the public art programs that must change and approach the audience on its own terms. That is, they expect no change on the part of the audience. In between are many who see the need for a little of both.

Cesar Trasobares, the former director of the Miami-Dade percent program, expects the audience to educate itself, as does Harriet Senie, the critic. Trasobares explained that the audience has "a responsibility and a duty to question what it is that they're seeing in the work of art." The "uneducated viewer," he said, must postpone the question of:

do I like or don't I like the artwork and place that question at the end of a string of other questions which includes things like what is it? Who made it? Why is it there? What made it possible? What is the artist trying to say? What kind of technical things are involved? What does this say about our times? About our society? What does it say about the artist? Then after you--and that's just the beginning, I could go on for minutes about this--but it is only after you have asked that line of questions that you can make a judgement as to whether you like it or not.

He regretted that most people jump to that question of preference immediately. Although Trasobares wanted people to discuss the work he wanted it to be in a knowledgeable art-world way. In effect what he was saying was that they

must enter the aesthetic habitus, develop the background in art that one must have there, meanwhile, giving up the impulse to make a decision of preference. He spoke about a particular sculpture in Miami "which is just 4 welded sticks kind of balanced on one pivot point," and painted yellow, which provoked a lot of controversy when it was trucked in and installed to the surprise of residents. There were analogies made to french fries which, he said, "is humorous but leads nowhere."

As a matter of fact another major metaphor of that same piece is some lady called it the McDonald's arches after a crash, and it was humorous and, I thought, tremendously creative.

But the point is, he said, "The public is thinking about the work on its terms, french fries and McDonald's." Then he went on to say:

Are they being truthful both to themselves and to the artist and to the work of art when they look at the John Henry and they see french fries and they see crashed McDonald's arches? Do they learn something about themselves? Because once they shift the thinking from that to the long list of questions I think that there is a lot that can be learned from this.

He seemed to be complaining because the work was seen from the public's point of view but, in fact, the people were answering his questions by seeing it that way. Their interpretation was in effect an acknowledgment of the place of fast food in the culture and the times. He asked are they being truthful to themselves when they see french fries? The answer from my perspective is of course they are, and in this case, they preferred to interpret it in

their own way rather than as the art world and Trasobares wanted.

He said they should ask "what is the artist trying to say?" But the artist was not there to explain his intentions and the piece took on its own life in the world. Because it was in the public environment people interpreted it any way they saw fit. And if the culture they lived in gave them the imagination to interpret it as french fries, that speaks about the culture and the piece of public art, which is exactly what Trasobares wanted. So although he criticized the audience for not discussing the work in art world terms, nevertheless they did respond, and not only with a statement of preference.

Harriet Senie, the critic, is another public art professional who wants the audience to become educated. She would like to see "an attitude develop in this country that the audience would make a commitment to meet the art halfway." Although open-mindedness on the part of the audience is desired by other public art professionals, for Senie it must include an educational process that will develop the necessary background in art to bring the audience into the same context in which the work was created. She said:

If they don't have the art context, if they don't look at the Chicago Picasso in the context that Picasso [intended] they're going to see a baboon, and they are right to see a baboon. And the public art community for many years did not take that into account. I don't think the answer is necessarily to only make art that is immediately

accessible, I don't think that's the answer.

The answer, she said, is to build an educational component into the public art process, "as important as selection, as important as maintenance."

Among the public art professionals I interviewed, Senie and Trasobares are particularly concerned about the education they would like the public to develop in order to approach public art. Both Wendy Feuer of New York's MTA, and Dorothy Desir-Davis pointed to the Miami-Dade program under Trasobares as being exceptional for its educational component, for example focusing art classes and field trips for school children on the public art in Miami. In other words Trasobares did not expect the audience to take the initiative, but rather offered them the opportunity to take advantage of an education in art, something Senie and others also wanted built into the process.

Public art professionals at the other end of the spectrum do not presuppose, let alone desire, that the non-art world public will try to become the art world public. Gordon Church, of Albuquerque's percent program, believed it to be "flawed reasoning" to think that "through education they can get the public to the point where a particular piece is [acceptable]." Rather, he said, a public art program must find "mutual ground" with its audience and grow from there. This will:

begin a dialogue that you plan to continue on a

long term. The idea is that you share as you are learning a language with each other. That's a very different point of view than many public art programs take.

In other words, the public art program does not so much educate the audience as educate itself about the audience in order to find that mutual ground. Once that foundation is there, he believed, then the program and the audience are working together to do those things he spoke of earlier--valorize cultural traditions, give people a stake in their public environment, offer a community a chance to pull together around a public artwork even if it is controversial.

Gordon Church, who was influential in starting other public art programs in the state, explained that "education is creating public attitudes that people respect the role of art in their lives." For him, education is not just to enjoy art but to explore and encourage creativity in one's own life. That creativity may be making a shelf or a cake, he said, but having public art respected in the city, in the schools, in the neighborhoods, in the community centers, increased the likelihood, he believed, of people respecting art and creativity in their own cultural traditions and their everyday lives.

Richard Hooker, also in New Mexico, said there is no non-art public, rather each person, regardless of his or her background, has a sense of what art is.

What happens [is that] there are mechanisms of exclusion that work so that some people, some

communities, or the common person doesn't feel very involved. And often they're made to feel intentionally excluded, because they don't understand it, because it's in some fancy museum or they don't have the history of it. I think that kind of intimidation comes more from the art world than from these ordinary people.

Those mechanisms of exclusion help create the lack of understanding which Senie and Trasobares are trying to rectify by insisting the audience educate itself. But Hooker and other New Mexico public art professionals don't believe the audience must take on the burden. Rather they believe it is up to them as public art professionals to create that space for art in everyday life, or as Hooker said:

encouraging people to say yes to art, to say yes to a possible experience that might be hard to understand.

Anne Green, the coordinator of New Mexico's state percent program believed that exposure to art, becoming involved in the public art process, and respect on the part of art professionals for community tastes, is education. She and her staff need as much education as anybody, she said.

There's a lot of education that needs to happen on all counts but it's not like somebody can come in and teach you, you just have to learn it through time and experience.

Saying yes to art as it exists in your everyday life is quite a difference from being expected to change your attitude toward art as it comes down from the art world. In the first, that is, saying yes to art, art is part of a continuum of your life. In the other, that is, being

expected to change your attitude toward art, art is kept separate and special and needs a specific knowledge and interest to even see it. The first is concerned about the experience of the audience members, focusing on their understandings and expectations. The second demands that audience members focus on the understandings and expectations of the artist and art world. Between these two extremes lie many others' positions. Many, like Patricia Phillips, are looking for the audience:

to try to be as curious and open-minded as possible. And not just immediately brace oneself or shut one's eyes.

She is concerned that we reject things that:

seem kind of different or alien or unfamiliar, so I think there has to be a kind of commitment to being receptive, a commitment to saying, "Oh yeh, this is unfamiliar so what do I do with this? How do I make sense of this?" Rather than just pushing it away or dismissing it.

This calls for a certain active stance on the part of the audience that many are not willing to offer. This desire on the part of public art professionals is more common than either extreme.

Like Green, Tom Finkelpearl of New York City's percent for art program appeared to believe that:

The audience doesn't need education. The whole process is educational. Both sides need it. We need it, the artists and administrators need it. Everybody learns a lot. The audience has no idea about contemporary art, the artist has no idea about the audience.

He felt that the ideal relationship would be for public art professionals to open both sides, audience and artist, to

the ideas of the other side. But, for Finkelpearl, this includes "a responsibility on the part of the community to make an effort to understand the art." Everybody has to open up a little bit, he said, and went on:

If the artist hasn't opened up, the community's going to understand that very quickly, and that's what they understood with the Richard Serra. But they didn't do anything to open up to try to understand his idea.

So as people in the middle, he believed public art professionals have to open both sides up to the other ideas:

And hopefully that will allow everybody's role to become voluntary rather than forcing them to comply with something.

For Finkelpearl the effort is three sided: artist, audience, and public art program all must participate in the educational process. The result is that both art and audience will get attention through this process. In other words, this will focus on the understanding and expectations of the artist and the art world while also focusing on the understanding and expectations of the audience members. It is neither the extreme of Senie and Trasobares where the audience members must educate themselves and go to the art, nor the extreme of Church, Hooker and Green where the audience need do nothing and the art will come to them.

These beliefs are also carried out in the selection process which in Miami under Trasobares was done completely by art world people choosing the best art and artist. In New Mexico, that selection process is done with a majority of non-art world people and in New York with a mix weighted

toward the art world.

But in all cases the educational component has been clearly thought out as policy, and a major complaint, except in Miami, was that there was not a budget to allow for it. Although public art professionals prefer a response, no matter the outcome, for the most part they would prefer at least an open-minded one. But more than that, it is also hoped there will be support from the audience.

Support

Even those who want the audience educated into the aesthetic habitus really just want to raise the level of public discourse about the artwork. The answer, many public art professionals would say, is to engender support.

Cee Scott Brown is concerned that people don't know that culture with a capital "C" is something they already support. For example, he said, that "people just don't know" that the concerts in the park they enjoy are actually culture, and so they don't complain when budgets for culture are cut. On the other hand, he said that the reason they don't know that is culture is "so few people in the country have actually been exposed to art."

However, if people love the concerts, then they have been exposed to art, to culture. And if they haven't been exposed, they don't know the concerts and can't love them. This contradiction points out the greater one at work in all these people. That art is "art" and therefore few people

have been exposed to art, and art ends up being for the few. Yet we are a democratic society where art is accessible to all and public art is one example, as are concerts in the park, so therefore many people are exposed to art, or art is for the many.

This consistent contradiction goes back to the art/public paradox and shows up when comparing Trasobares, who seemed to say art is for the few, to Church, who seemed to say art is for the many. Trasobares was also trying to build a base of support by teaching school children and college students, and anyone else he could, how to appreciate art so they could support and not just criticize the public art his organization placed. He wanted the gift of art to be appreciated, that is, understood. Church, when he talked about "finding mutual ground" and "beginning a dialogue" with the audience was trying to build a base of support. Then, he said, they can attempt more experimental art. He wanted to make sure the gift of art was accepted. Not only should the art be accepted, Church was concerned that the public art program itself be accepted and supported and he spoke about the "buy-in" that would happen when a community was happy with what the public art program did for them.

Anne Green of New Mexico's state percent program, also spoke about support sought for the program.

The community so far has been very happy about this public art program and I think that is partially because we do these small little \$1000

projects and they're all over the state.

When a motion was made to repeal the percent law, she said, people from all over the state called their legislators or came to the Capitol and the bill was killed in its first committee, a state of affairs Green thought "wonderful for us."

Whether support for public art programs, or support for culture in general, in all cases support was being sought. If they can't have active support, public art professionals would prefer not to have opposition--calls for the removal of public art, cuts in the budget, cessation of the programs. Senie believed that with an educated public the cultural barriers to art will lessen and there will be more appreciation and thus support for artwork and artists. Brown believed that knowing what culture is and its value in their lives will increase support by taxpayers. And Green and Church both pointed to support for the public art programs themselves as people become more familiar with and accepting of public art in their communities.

Inform the Audience

Mary Kilroy, formerly the director of the Fine Arts Committee of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, talked about the educational process in terms not of bringing the audience into the aesthetic habitus, as Senie and Trasobares would have it, but rather by providing advance information.

We try to get as much information out before a piece is up, when its commissioned, before a work of art is finished, we want the public to know it's coming so it is not a shock to them.

In other words they attempt to bring the art to the audience and not the audience to the art. In contradiction to this, when Kilroy's RDA attempted to include a more specific community in a public art process, described in the next chapter, there was an attempt to bring them into the aesthetic habitus. But for the general audience, when the art is paid for and approved by a developer, the RDA wanted the public to be informed. This technique of informing the public before the art is in place is a factor in all the organizations I interviewed. Some, like Trasobares's Miami-Dade, have an education budget that could include public relations. Others depend on press releases being picked up by the media. But all have learned the value of informing the public.

Church's Albuquerque percent program, for example, must go through an elaborate approval process. He said:

The way it works best is when there's no surprises, so you need to tell your elected officials ahead of time what they're going to get.

If suddenly it's out there, he said:

and the mayor or whoever has to deal with it and they had no idea it was coming--that really hurts and that can really work against a program.

In other words, the elected officials have power in the public environment and so must be kept informed in order to maintain their support.

Penny Bach of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Art Association has perfected the process of informing the public. She talked about the approval process which the proposed artwork must go through as a way of engendering support for upcoming projects. According to Bach, the approvals, which they are obliged to get, allow them to:

muster up various kinds of support. And so when the thing is done and it's out there, there are a lot of people who understand it. When you can convince 18 commissioners who know nothing about art that it's a good thing to do, you've got 18 ambassadors.

These good-will ambassadors will spread the word and support will grow for the coming artwork. Her stance on educating the public is much closer to Church than to Trasobares. Committed to informing but with no expectation that an audience will or should be interested, she feels strongly that the public should develop more confidence in their own point of view. However, she said:

They do not have any obligation to be informed about this stuff. And that's where all of this effort about public education falls apart.

She believes it works differently:

I think the way it works is that you help the local people to create a mythology about this thing so that they choose to be informed in their way. And that is very, very, very different. It's very different.

Bach's interest in people having confidence in their own opinions can be contrasted with the desire by others to have informed opinions. Both Bach and others want attention to the art but others want it to be art-educated discourse.

Although Bach finds such art-educated discourse vital as one layer of a piece of public art, she is content if the public discourse takes the form of mythologizing. She will forego art-educated discourse in favor of engagement from the public at any level, even if that level cannot be verbalized. She spoke about Claes Oldenberg's "Clothespin" in Center City Philadelphia.

You'll find people have all these millions of reasons why they hate it. But there are some things about it, if you push them, if you say, "Yes, but if you want to meet someone in this area and you wanted them to meet you next to something, don't you think you'd probably say meet me at the Clothespin? You wouldn't say meet me at the corner of 16th and Market." And they would have to admit to you that it functions as a marker, even though they couldn't say it.

The artwork's existence as a meeting place is as important to Bach as all the art world discourse about it, and she believed, superseded the public's possible dislike. Bach thought that public art programs and professionals always have to find:

something that's worthy of [the public's] engagement. If it doesn't then why do you want them to pay attention? Why? Why?

Once that worthy thing is found, Bach writes about it and feeds that information to the media who translate it in a popular way.

The media, like it or not, they're the interpreters of public art. You can write a very nice little pamphlet or press release or whatever, but they stand between us and the public, and what they do is very important.

The popular media, she said:

where people tune in to have the world interpreted for them in a language that they understand, is probably the most powerful tool available to public art. And the most underutilized with no question.

For Bach's organization, nurturing the relationship with the popular media is a central part of their policy.

The only other public art professional with such a commitment to the popular media is Gordon Church. He was very pleased with the controversy surrounding "San Mateo Cruising" because "now people really do pay attention."

[It] made people realize how important art was in this community, 'cause everybody had a feeling about that, and we kept going, and the discussion kept going. I think that was a major growing point, so I think it was very, very important.

Church studied public art in Eastern Europe and how art was "one way to manipulate public attitudes." He also learned that "in revolution it's important to gain control of the media." And so, he went on:

when I felt I had the media going enough here behind public art that's when I organized the effort to get the state public art program going. 'Cause I knew with the control of the media in the biggest city, then you already have a foothold on the rest of the state.

Church may see himself as a revolutionary in the field of public art, but he holds a position of power inside the art world. From that position, he uses the popular media as a tool to influence people about the importance of public art and thus to support the public art programs in the state. Bach saw the popular media as a tool to encourage a mythology and support individual works of art. So even in

their agreement about the lack of obligation on the part of the audience to be educated about public art and the positive possibilities of the popular media, they differ considerably in, again, the world they are building: Church for the community as a whole, Bach for individual art experiences. But both take an active stance in relation to the popular media.

Although other public art programs make some use of the popular media, most other public art organizations wait for the popular media to come to them, and are then pleased or unhappy with the coverage. Cee Scott Brown faulted the popular media.

I think that if I have any beef at all about anything it's the role the press has less and less played in coverage of all art in this city in the last year.

He went on to say:

they've curbed the arts coverage and they've increased the sports to 9 pages. That's very telling just about cultural awareness in the psyches of the general public.

The reason, he explained, for the drop in coverage was the drop in advertising budgets for cultural organizations and an increase in advertising revenue for the papers from sports-associated businesses.

But when there is coverage, they "get phone calls from all over the country," and that's important because, he said, it takes them out of marginalization, which all art is, into a "more mainstream situation."

Tom Finkelpearl of New York City's percent program

explained that:

most of the press that comes out about percent for art isn't in the art section. It's in the metro section.

As an example, the press announced the opening of the Schomberg Center in Harlem, and mentioned the public art as part of the new building. However, Finkelpearl's complaints about the press are sometimes not lack of coverage but too much negative coverage. For example, he was upset at the media's misrepresentation of the public art program in "Jailhouse Crock" as giving convicts paintings in their cells. Finkelpearl blames the negative press on the lack of funds for education in the budget.

Church, on the other hand, saw the popular media attention, even when negative, as proof of the program's success. He was pleased with controversy, even of the "our tax dollars for this?" sort, because it attracted more media attention.

The popular media is differentiated by public art professionals from the art media where fault is found for the lack of coverage of public art. As Finkelpearl said earlier, he was frustrated by the lack of attention to public art by the art world. Harriet Senie and Patricia Phillips, both critics and writers, find a lack of venue to publish their work. The art press does not have much interest in public art, they said, because it is, as Phillips said, "pretty much invested in the more conventional system of art galleries and museums." Using

Brown's logic above, these happen to be the ones who advertise. The lack of attention to public art by the art world, then, can be partly attributed to economics. Bach and Church, however, are not concerned about the art media, but find it more valuable and necessary to have the popular media as collaborator. Having been able to break into the non-art media, they can break into the non-art public. But a contradiction remains when people want to retain the privileges of the aesthetic habitus but yet exist outside of its confines, in everyday life.

Discussion

By approaching the public as if they exist only as an audience in relationship to the art, the things that come to light here make sense. Professionals hoped that the public will respond to the art, preferably with interest, intelligence, and support. Many of them would prefer the public discourse which arises to be educated, to be thoughtful, to have the confidence which comes with knowledge and experience, not simply preference and dismissal.

The expectations of these public art professionals differ markedly about the education expected of the audience and how that education is to take place. Some believe time and experience, rather than education, is necessary, and others that some formal art training, or at least self-education, is necessary. These differences point to how

embedded they are in the aesthetic habitus, how much they believe public art must depend on art world standards, or how much it can depend on the standards of a broader population. This seeming struggle about education points to the problem of placing art, which has its rules and history and critical discourse, into the everyday world which for the most part consists of people who don't know that background.

Rather than just allow art to take on a new life and new meanings in its new circumstances, these public art professionals are committed to easing its entry one way or another. Even those who don't believe any education is necessary nevertheless try to make the art they place something which is already acceptable to a majority of the people concerned. This easing of entry can be public relations in which case they try to mold public opinion, letting people know about the artwork in order to get people to support, like, or even just tolerate the artwork. Or it can be publicity in which case they give information for the sake of encouraging informed discourse and public debate. Although many would hope it is the latter, in fact, they have learned the hard way, people are not happy with surprises. The public is more accepting if they are informed; they are more likely to show interest and tolerance if they have been encouraged to support something.

Some of these organizations have a more comfortable relationship with the media than others. Sometimes the

popular media are hostile or indifferent, other times they are supportive. Some public art professionals see the media as a problem, others as a tool. With public art there is as much, if not a greater, possibility that it will be attended to by the popular media than the art media.

Public art is not a commodity and since there are fewer works of public art than other visual art forms, and less chance to publish critical discourse about it, there is less interest among the readers of art publications. So whether they want it or not, public art professionals are thrown on the mercy of the popular media for attention and are often denied the critical discourse other art receives much more readily. It is not simply because public art is not a commodity and so doesn't advertise. It is also because, in the way members of the public do not understand the art world and are kept from the aesthetic habitus by their lack of education, the art world does not understand the public world and chooses to stay isolated from it, inside the aesthetic habitus where art remains art and does not get mixed up with the messy world of everyday life. Public art has no choice about this. Public art professionals must contend with the art world's indifference, which they like no better than public indifference.

This chapter has made it seem as if all contact with the public is a one-sided stimulus which comes from the art world and is disseminated to the public through the media or the public art programs' educational component. Although

there is an acceptance that once that stimulus is disseminated the public will react, that reaction is watched carefully and the output adjusted accordingly. However, this is just part of the story. There is much more personal involvement between the public and the art world as the next two chapters will show, beginning with the new relationship between a public artist and the public.

CHAPTER 7

ARTISTS

The artist, it has been shown in many previous chapters, has been valorized as the single most important person who has something to say, whose intentions are important, who creates an opportunity for reaction to a stimulus placed in public. But it will be seen in this chapter and the next that such a view does not capture reality.

Public artists are not simply ordinary artists who happen to work in the public environment, according to these public art professionals. As there are differences between the art one finds in a museum or gallery and public art, so there are differences between an artist making work for a museum or gallery and one making work for the public environment. The public art professionals I spoke to talked about some of these differences. Lucy Lippard, writer and activist, for example, talked about the artist's awareness of the audience:

I think it's very important that the artist knows that she or he isn't just making something for herself out there and that an audience does make a difference, and I think that people that go into public art by now should have some notion about that.

Her requirement that an artist must know that the audience makes a difference is, as she said, becoming known. In the

aesthetic habitus, the audience is known to be an art-educated one which will come to the work with a certain understanding of art history and be able to place the work in the same context in which it was made. This conception of, and expectation of, the audience for art is in some cases brought into the realm of public art. This was seen in the last chapter as art educators wanted the audience for public art to act like the audience for other art. Lippard explained further:

There's still a lot of "Lucky you, we brought you some art, you should be grateful to us, you don't know anything about this but we're really good and we'll just put this here, you'll be lucky." That is the kind of thing which, needless to say, goes over very badly with most communities.

That attitude of "lucky you" that Lippard described was the cause of a great many of the problems public art has seen in the last 30 years. The Serra controversy brought this particular attitude into stark relief, and it also brought forward a concern that the audience actually did have power. Artists and public art programs had already begun to change before Serra. That was just an exclamation point on why the elitist view that arts professionals know best and that whatever they do should be appreciated no longer had a place in public art.

Part of the change in artists was in relation to the way they worked to make public art. Before, these public art professionals said, artists worked in the isolation of their studios designing work that was then situated in the

public environment. These public art professionals repeatedly explained that that was no longer appropriate and that, as Larry Ogan, the Chair of the Art in Public Places committee in Santa Fe, put it:

public art is a good step for the artist to reconnect with the community and for the community to reconnect with the artist.

This reconnecting with the community must be done because artists in their studios have become unconnected from the outside world, more concerned with personal expression, he said. This is fine, Ogan said, for the market system, and choices that are made by individuals, but not when you are working for the community as a whole.

Ogan was not the only one to point to this phenomenon. Tom Finkelpearl, the director of the Percent for Art Program in New York City, talked about how artists have detached themselves from public life and that public art can:

get artists out of the studio and get them out into the culture, help them get back into the stream of the culture instead of being outside of the stream of culture.

He explained that making public art can help artists understand the needs of the culture.

In the past it was up to the world to engage with the artist's vision. According to these public art professionals, artists now are expected to engage with the people in the world, especially those who may have concerns about what happens in the public environment or those who will be directly affected by the work. This engagement takes place literally. James Clark, the director of Public

Art Fund in New York explained:

The artist should want to have a dialogue, and not just through the work but a personal dialogue with the community, and really want to communicate to a non-art audience.

In the past, he is saying, some artists believed that the work itself spoke, communicated its intent to the public who must have the skills to read that communication. This is quite different, expecting the artist to be willing to speak in the public environment as a person, not as the maker of work. Clark is saying an artist can't just put something in public and expect people to respond to it. Rather they must put themselves in public and respond and be responded to by the public. They must personally interact with the public and not just through their work. So working for the public entails being willing to interact literally in a personal dialogue with the people who will eventually have to live with the work. This issue, dialogue with the public, came up over and over in the interviews.

Dialogue

James Clark talked about that process:

If artists want to work in this environment, then they have to learn what it means to intervene within someone's community. They have to be prepared to say why they think their work is needed at that particular site.

Public art is literally an intervention interrupting the everyday world and artists must be ready to justify it. Clark goes into more detail about the dialogue in which the public artist must engage.

New York City has developed a very strong Community Board System. And a lot of neighborhoods don't want anything in their neighborhood unless they know about it. And that means going to the Community Boards to make presentations and talking about your art work. We will not do a project if a community board says no.

Clark is pointing out that community support or at least permission has become important in the public art process. This, as he said, is direct dialogue with people who will be living with the work, people who must be convinced of its value. Clark explained how that occurs:

The artists' role is to be clear about what they want to do. To communicate as clearly as possible. To be patient and to learn to speak a new language. Learning how to interpret what's being said to them and what's really a challenge to them and what's not.

He gave an example:

I've heard people at the community board meetings ask a very basic question but the artist thought it was like a defense at the academy (laughs), and therefore they pontificate on it. You just see the people glaze over and like, "What are you talking about?" In fact all they wanted to know was why it was that color red, as opposed to blue. Not the metaphysical implications of it. It's just because I couldn't find another color, that's why. I think it takes an artist a while to get used to that.

This learning process about how to explain their work, defend their work, make their work understandable, is not something artists had been used to having to do except in the terms of the art world. To bring it into the terms of everyday life was the new language they had to learn. In other words, the working process of artists had to change to include more voices than their own.

Rita Roosevelt, the coordinator for the percent program in the city of Philadelphia, explained that:

working in the public arena requires a very different kind of thought process I think. Many artists are not able to translate their personal feelings, to articulate that to a public, which they have to do. Not only visually but also they have to explain why they're doing things.

Roosevelt talked about, again, the difference between what a public artist must do and what a studio artist did not have to do--articulate their personal feelings, their personal working method, to a public. Not only that, they must listen to the public, hold a dialogue, understand what is meant by people who often do not have much information about or interest in art. She said:

It is the successful artist who is able to interpret those things and convince the community that what the artist is giving them really incorporates their ideas and their goals.

Once again, just as Clark spoke about justifying why the work is needed, Roosevelt talked about the artist convincing people, persuading them they are getting what they want. In the case of temporary work like Clark's organization places, the persuasion takes place very often with the artists' design already in place. In Roosevelt's case with permanent work, there is more discussion of what the community might want.

Tom Finkelpearl pointed out that there has been a change in attitude about this.

You can go to the community meeting with two attitudes, either to try to sell the design to them, or you can go a little earlier in the process and see what they have to say. We used to

do more of the first, now we are doing more of the second.

When the public art professionals and the public art programs change, the artists by necessity change because they are dependent on the good will of the program in order to be able to do work themselves. Now public art programs are quite insistent that artists, if they want to work in the public environment, must directly deal with the public.

Harriet Senie, critic and educator, talked about what the public artist must do:

The role of a public artist is to listen to the public and to get as much information about a specific project as possible. Then I think it is their responsibility to make the best project. I think at this point in time all artists are going to pay attention to the physical site but how much they're willing to listen to the community and work with the community, that has to be a judgement call in terms of what's appropriate for them.

Listening and paying attention to other's concerns and building one's work around it is a change for artists taught to work in the studio. They have been taught to think only about art world concerns and taught, not how to work for other people, but only how to work for themselves. Being involved with other's concerns is new for them. Nevertheless, as Senie said, it is not appropriate for all artists.

Anne Green, the coordinator for Art in Public Places for the state of New Mexico, said:

A lot of artists don't work with the public in mind, they want to work in their private studios. They don't want anybody giving them any ideas, they don't really want the feedback, they don't

want to incorporate the community's ideas into what they're doing. That's great. Those are artists that are working for their own private selves and it's simply a different way of working and artists recognize that they're different.

Feedback and incorporating other people's ideas into artwork is part of the dialogue that takes place, a dialogue that artists, even public artists for the most part, didn't have to concern themselves about in the past. The dialogue implies a different method of working, one whereby the artwork becomes the result of a process. Richard Hooker, the coordinator of Save Outdoor Sculpture! in New Mexico said:

I think when an artist decides to participate in public art that there is an agreement to a process which is different than work which is created privately. And the process is really a willingness to collaborate on all different levels.

Collaboration is working together or cooperating. Listening, incorporating ideas, discussion or dialogue, convincing and being convinced are all part of collaboration to a degree.

The literal dialogue between the artist and the community becomes fundamentally an artist/client relationship, Gordon Church of Albuquerque's Percent for Art Program believed, one to which artists used to the studio must adjust. Some artists have a harder time than others, he said.

They have to be aware that they are coming into a situation where they are going to have dialogue and we really encourage them that if they really can't deal with that then they probably best not address this. But even if they're just willing to

try, that's fine. We will help try and work them through it.

Public art professionals like Church, knowing that some artists can't work this way, want to help those artists who are able or who may be able to learn how, to get out of the studio and into this new much more open realm of dialogue where they are not the only one they have to please.

The Artist as Politician

Sandy Gross Bressler, the director of the Philadelphia Art Commission, talked about the artist's role in the public art process as:

a kind of a consensus building role--and I don't think public art is any different than probably just about anything else--when you have to bring a lot of people together to arrive at some sort of agreement.

This consensus building role is challenging, she said, and not easy for anybody in that role.

It's like a politician, you can't make everybody happy all the time or whatever that saying is. Sometimes you wonder if we're all in sort of impossible situations because we just have so many constituents and so many stake holders. The best thing to do is to have a dialogue and good open communications, to be open and honest about what's going on.

The dialogue process makes public artists into temporary politicians. The political nature of working in the public environment--persuasion, dialogue, speech and action--are brought clearly into focus with the comparison of the public artist with a politician. She went on to talk about what that must mean for an artist.

I think to be a public artist, you've got to have a lot of chutzpa, a lot of internal strength. An artist has got to know what is the core of an idea that is something you will not, can not give away, and then what is peripheral that can be modified.

This brings another new element into the public artist's role which has to do with the art of it. In other words, Bressler is saying that although they must be flexible in order to be engaged in a dialogue they must also have the conviction of their artistic ideas. James Clark explained the same thing:

Artists have the responsibility of using their best efforts to create a work that takes into consideration the things that they've heard or learned or know about a community and also to stand by their work, and to not back away from it when there's criticism of the negative sort.

Clark is saying that although artists must be sensitive to the community and work in such a way that the community can understand and be willing to have a dialogue and explain themselves, still they have to be willing at one point to stand by their work, to defend their reasons and their visions and not to let it be compromised in such a way that they can no longer stand behind it. For Clark:

In many ways it's like a politician who deeply believes in something and who's going to fight until they get it or are defeated.

To Clark, a public artist is like a politician with a vision. Both Bressler and Clark are literally saying an artist must be like a politician, that is, a person who will try to satisfy their constituents, yet maintain what they believe in. Yet some politicians bow to special interests with big money in order to further their own careers. In

our culture, the word "politician" is often used derogatorily, yet Bressler and Clark seem to be using it in a positive sense of someone who cares deeply and will work to do what they feel is right. In addition, a politician must have a concern for his or her audience which is symbiotic in a way, unlike what artists are usually thought to have. Politicians' very careers depend on convincing a majority of voters they are doing what the voters want. Most artists only need to convince a few people that their work is valuable. Public artists, on the other hand, these public art professionals are saying, must satisfy many more.

Patricia Phillips, in the same vein, mentions the complications faced by an artist working in the public environment.

To be a public artist these days is really tough. You have to be willing to deal with what's often a very arduous and painstaking and difficult political process. You not only have to be a good artist hopefully (laughs) but you also have to be able to deal with a whole group of political processes and community groups, and you have to do a whole lot of coalition building sometimes before your project can ever even be out there.

Phillips is saying that making public art is a political process for an artist who, first of all, must be a good artist, or, as Bressler and Clark said, must have a conviction about the artwork. Then, in dealing with community groups, the artist must do coalition building, must, as Roosevelt said, first listen and then persuade and convince people they are getting what they want and that they should stand behind it.

But Phillips also spoke about her concern that too much compromise will lead to boring work.

I think this striving for consensus or this kind of bureaucratic dimension to public art, I think it can be kind of a normative sensibility. Where there's a kind of boundary of what's acceptable, that's very antithetical to what art has been or can be.

She spoke of a book called The Power of Images (Freedburg, 1989) which is about the images in artistic practice which have driven people to acts of political activity. Phillips said, "It seems to me that once you try to rule that out you come up with something other than art." It's an interesting question in public art, she said.

You want to be consultative and you want to be communitarian, but on the other hand not to the point where you don't let the art be the risky and possibly provocative activity that it must be.

In other words, she is being very clear that the artist is NOT a politician who must be bounded by normative sensibilities and the need for consensus. The artist will not be voted out of office for failing to keep constituents happy, and, for Phillips, art remains a separate and possibly provocative activity that does not bow to consensus.

Discussion

No longer can an artist make work in the studio and put it in the public environment without further consideration. Now they must have specific and literal dialogue with the public. This new process of listening to others' voices and

including others' thoughts can overwhelm someone who is used to answering only to themselves, and those artists are not good candidates for making public art. It should be pointed out that it is somewhat of a misrepresentation to say studio artists please themselves alone--actually they must please the market, the gallery owners, the critics, the collectors, and so on. But all of those exist inside the aesthetic habitus, which is what the artist must please, not, as in public art, the public at large.

Satisfying the aesthetic habitus where people speak the same language as the artist is quite different than satisfying the public at large where the artist must learn a new language, the language of the politician. The coalition building, consensus building, justification and persuasion, convincing and explaining that artist who works in the public environment must do all point to the political nature of public art today.

Comparing public artists to politicians, as some of these public art professionals do, even though they don't get elected, points to the necessity of the convincing and persuading that must occur. These political processes, this speaking and acting in the public realm, are extraordinary contradictions to the aesthetic mode of working where an artist did not have to consider an audience as a group of constituents with whom she would be involved in a back and forth public dialogue, but rather as groups of people who would be inspired, uplifted or even entertained by the

artwork that would come from her alone.

Contradictions are coming to light between this kind of public discourse as a way to make art and the presuppositions laid out in Chapter 4. There it was shown that public art professionals were building a world in which art exists as something to which individuals relate as solitary people responding to or being influenced by the art object. Or else they were seen as building a world in which art exists as something to which a community as a group responds, where individuals see art as pointing out their group nature. The process is much more dynamic than that.

So it seems that, despite some of the presuppositions that validate the artist as the person setting up the situation to which people will react--the stimulus-response model shown in the last chapter--actually, more involvement of a transactive nature occurs. That is, although public art professionals continue to talk about the artist as the person to whose work others react, what they are describing here is a person who is adjusting her work to the fact that other people are closely concerned about it.

Regardless of how much they consider what the community wants, in the end, some of these public art professionals said, the artist must make art, and art is not a democratic or political process. Art is that "core belief," that "vision" which the artist can't let go and which they must have the conviction to stand behind. Even those people most focused on the artist in the public art process are saying

here that the artist must at least explain their work and what they are trying to do to a public that may have no art background. This is seen as a political process which is quite at odds with the aesthetic habitus where one is separated from society.

In spite of the intended dialogue between artist and public, there is not a lot of choice on the part of the public. There is going to be public art. People are being asked to engage in a dialogue but in the end are to be convinced that they are getting what they want. Nevertheless, being brought into the process before the fact and being involved in a literal dialogue with the artist is being invited into a political public process in which they at least do more than just buy the already completed design.

How that plays out will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

A STAKE IN THE WORLD: THE COMMUNITY PROCESS

Public art ends up in the public realm not because some artist decides to put it there but as part of a complicated and, as was said in the last chapter, political process. Although the last chapter gave the sense of artists working closely with people in a somewhat democratic fashion almost as if at the artist's instigation, in fact the artist has no choice and, wanting to do public art, enters a system set in place by public art organizations.

Working differently for each organization (see Appendix A), these people I interviewed either have in place, or institute anew for each piece, an advisory committee which defines the parameters of the public art-to-be. This may or may not be the same as the selection committee or jury that decides which artist gets the job. The organization has some control over both of these groups, although there are often formulas that must be followed for the makeup of the groups. Then there are the approvals needed from various government organizations and community groups that can range from technical approvals (government engineers), to domain approvals (the Streets department, the Parks Department), to artistic approvals (art or historic commissions), to community acceptance approvals (community Boards,

neighborhood organizations). Neighborhood organizations usually do not have any formal authority.

Ownership and Protection

As has already been shown, there are various reasons given for what turns out to be a desire to involve community members in the public art process: to limit controversy, to garner support for the public art project or program, to bring the artist into the stream of culture, to enhance a sense of self-worth for a community. A further look will discover also the desire to avoid vandalism by giving ownership. Cee Scott Brown, the former director of Creative Time in New York, said:

If they're not involved, they're not engaged. If they're not part of the process, they're going to hate it, they're going to destroy it, they're going to dismantle it, they're going to do whatever.

He talked about giving people a sense of ownership of the public art by at least asking people do they mind if the art comes in, as was shown in the Black Sheep story in Chapter 2. Giving the people in the park a voice in whether or not it was all right to put the work there gave them, Brown said, a sense of ownership, and in return, as he described, they took very good care of the piece.

Gordon Church, of Albuquerque's percent program, said that when people are actually involved they will make it their own, and that will protect the work from vandalism.

'Cause involvement always gets you the buy-in.

And that protection you think maybe would just last a couple of years while those kids were still in high school or something, but it seems to be passed along, I don't know why. It seems to be something that goes in place just like the artwork.

Kids who worked on a mural "buy-in", that is, take ownership, and along with that goes protection, he believed. A stake in their world, Church seems to say, becomes part of the artwork that these kids now own.

These public art professionals who put artwork into the public environment, for whatever reason it is done, want it to remain unmolested. Whether people take or are given ownership, or even refuse ownership in some cases, the artwork going into the public environment usually no longer belongs to those who put it there. They have learned, Church said, that if people are involved before the fact the artwork will more likely come to belong to them. And in this culture, what belongs, what is owned, these public art professionals seem to believe, is more likely to be cared for.

Patricia Phillips, the critic, was concerned at the time of the interview about limiting the stake in the public environment.

I mean who owns public art? Who makes the decisions? Is it the office worker who walks in and out of the building each and every day? Or is it the surrounding residents? Or is something truly public because we all have a stake in it?

In other words ownership cannot be limited to those with everyday contact. It's an interesting question, she said:

because there is a sense of the public realm being something we keep at arm's length or that we neglect or that we sometimes even abuse these days. What is public? Is it because we truly all do have a stake in it? Or because no one does?

If a sense of ownership is the thing that gives people a stake in the world, then that which is not owned (or owned by all), that which is public, will not be given the same concern. She seemed to say that limiting the stake in the public environment to only those with daily involvement is hurting us all, taking away or giving the rest of us no stake at all, and that we all must have a stake or the neglect and abuse will continue. She went on to say:

I'm beginning to think that this whole idea of site specificity can be problematic because it can provide the artist and the community with an inward myopic gaze at a particular location, or a particular art object or art installation.

While Church and Brown talk about ownership in ways that are very specific to a site--the giving of individuals or group a sense that a single work belongs to them, Phillips is arguing for a broader ownership, one which, as she said earlier, connects people across their differences to the whole environment. Either way, it seems as if these public art professionals are saying that being given ownership of the world may lead to acting responsibly toward that world.

James Clark of Public Art Fund explained that artists must be aware:

that it is not their space to do with what they want. And if the community gives the okay then it's permission from the community which should

not be taken lightly, and is not to be abused. There is a sense of ownership for the neighborhood already in place that must be respected in the same way they want the artwork to be respected. Clark doesn't talk about the artist owning the community in order to have a stake in it. The community does not need ownership, it has it. The artwork has none until the gift of art is accepted. Involving the community in the public art process, it is believed, is the main way such ownership happens. Being involved begins with offering people in the world a chance to speak about what happens in their world.

Input

Mary Kilroy, the former director of the Fine Arts Committee of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, talked about a public art project in an African American neighborhood for which percent money from small budget RDA projects had been pooled. They specifically sought out a neighborhood of the city which had an active and well organized community group.

We contacted the Advocate Community Development Corporation. And this is a community based development corporation. They have rehabbed houses and historically restored houses on Diamond Street. They have been responsible for Miller Housing around the corner and they're an extremely active organization.

Kilroy's committee began working with a small group on the organization's board and then expanded it because "we wanted a much broader outreach." She said:

We have 60 people now on the urban art committee.

And that includes block captains, people who are politically involved in the community, people who are gardeners, etcetera.

Kilroy pointed out there were differences between this project--a city owned and community maintained public space--and their usual projects, which are developer owned and maintained.

We take a lot more precautions in designing this kind of park. We also take into consideration totally the community's desire.

But before they take the community's desire into consideration, she said, an educational process proceeds it:

Before we put the community in that position of making these decisions, aesthetic decisions, we do a lot of raising of consciousness and education so that they are part of an educational process that takes place.

They brought in an art historian to do a survey of the history of public art. The education of the non-art public into an art public, which some public art professionals called for in an earlier chapter, is clearly at work here. People are being asked to understand and be familiar with the history of public art as the art world knows it in order to be permitted to participate in a process that is actually about having specific desires concerning what would occur in their own neighborhood, on their own block. Then, she said, the community members would be:

part of the very process that selects the artist, selects the project. That was a competition if you'll recall.

Harriet Senie, the critic, was on the jury for that competition and described what the community desired as a

"Gramercy Park aesthetic" which surprised her because of other panels she had worked on in other ethnic neighborhoods where community members wanted more ethnic work. In this case the community members were educated in a way that let them know what the art world thought about public art and public spaces. As Kilroy said, they "had their consciousness raised," in this case, being brought into the thinking of the art world. The art world, working for the city, was giving them the money for the park.

In addition, although Kilroy said they were then "part of the very process that selects," she did not exactly mean select. Senie explained the selection process.

I was impressed that the members of the community were there right across the whole thing and were able to listen to our deliberations.

She also said:

The community members were privy to the artists' presentations and privy to our articulating and privy to what our choices were. It helped to make the selection process even better, and the more you listened to the community the better.

Community members were there during selection and seemingly were allowed to contribute opinions to the group of art world professionals that was actually making the decisions.

Senie said:

We really listened to what they had to say. It became very clear, from what it was they were saying, what it was that they wanted, and there was a project there that really did seem to fill their needs. I don't know what would have happened if there weren't.

So actually a panel of art experts chose the final artwork,

not the community members themselves as Kilroy seemed to say.

The educational process that occurred in this case would have been problematic only if that education was forced, if community members' desires were trampled on, and if they felt intimidated by the experts. Without asking them, it isn't known how they felt. In this case it appears that listening and learning, being educated about the possibilities that allow informed decisions were occurring on both sides--the community listened and learned from the experts and then the art world experts listened to the community. In the end the project they got, regardless of the aesthetics of the park, was clearly something in which they were involved, something they would own, in which they negotiated their wishes with the wishes of the art world and ended up with something acceptable to both.

A comparable story concerns another park that also was being built on a vacant lot owned by a city, this time in Santa Fe. Larry Ogan, Chair of the Art in Public Places Committee, described the process whereby a few active members of the surrounding Hispano community came to them and said they wanted a "torreon," or tower, built in what was to be the park of the same name.

At that time, Santa Fe was just getting its public art program in place, the advisory committee for the Torreon project did not have a clear set of guidelines, and mistakes were made, Ogan said. The original jury for the competition

to choose an artist ended up consisting of only two people, Ogan and one of the community members. An Anglo artist was chosen to make the piece, but before the process could move on, Hispano artists protested that an ethnic person from the neighborhood should have been selected. According to Ogan:

It got the attention of City Council, even though the city, under Federal law, cannot discriminate in either direction, in other words, they cannot discriminate by race, creed, color, whatever. But he [the Hispano artist] was able to overthrow the jury's decision and take it back to the committee because the jury process itself was not done correctly. Pedro Romero who eventually ended up winning the second jury was the guy who protested, which is interesting, but he was one of the top people in the initial go-round anyway.

Even though a community member had been on the original jury, city politics and underlying ethnic tensions became part of the political process of the community speaking up and defining what they wanted. According to Ogan's story the entire process from start to finish was political. The initial conflict happened when the community wanted to build a replica of a torreón--simply a stone tower--and were told they couldn't use public art money for that. From there, Ogan said:

What you had to do was educate their leaders by going round and round and round talking about the process.

City Councilor Debbie Jaramillo from the community was involved, and part of the process, Ogan said, was:

her having to educate herself on the processes and on public art itself. In a way she had to come around and be more open to how the whole thing works and become more educated herself and go back to her constituents.

Ogan said she would go back to the neighborhood and say "this is the deal I've struck:

The artist is going to be under contract, and by contract is going to have to deal with and have your approval."

So, Ogan said, "the neighborhood knew they had some sort of say-so over it." He went on to describe how the process between the artist and the neighborhood then worked.

The artist would say, "This is what I would like to do," and they would say, "Well this is what we would like to see," and the artist would reach a compromise with the neighborhood into what they wanted.

In the end the artist made a stone tower with a tile mural encircling the top which depicted the Hispano farmers who had settled the area. Ogan said:

You have a kind of a replica of a torreón built that has a tile mural on it so I think the neighborhood in a way got what they wanted. When I went to the dedication they all seemed very delighted with what the final product was. They got more than they could imagine from the beginning.

Being forced to become educated about what public art could be, in this case, according to the public art professional involved, worked to the advantage of the community, allowing them to have a more interesting product.

In both Philadelphia and Santa Fe, the committee that actually selected the work was made up mostly of art world professionals although in Santa Fe there was at least one non-art world community member involved. Ogan explained:

I do believe in using professionals who know how to look at quality and materials and whether it will work or not.

But, he said, you need to have:

public input into what the artwork is about and you will have their input into choosing the artist. You should have a representative from the community there to deal with those community issues.

Harriet Senie, on the other hand, didn't feel that community members themselves "should be the ones to pass on the thing professionally." She explained:

The way I look at the public art process is that it's part of the representative democracy. In the way that the rest of the country, in the way other decisions get made, for example, decisions about the economy are made by elected representatives or the people that representatives appoint. And I think that public art has to be exactly the same way. That not everybody has a vote, but it is a function of a representative democracy to get the best professionals to make an enlightened decision in the context of a democracy where people are talking to one another.

The representative democracy analogy that Senie made here in terms of decision making is a little misleading because in spite of saying experts are appointed by representatives of the people, in fact the people have no vote. That is, they don't elect their representatives let alone get to vote on decisions by experts appointed by their supposed representatives. Those representatives are selected by formula but it is not everyone in the community who gets to be involved in that selection. Occasionally that formula may lead to choosing an elected representative since the committee is intended to reflect the community getting the work, but nevertheless it is not a representative democracy at work.

The similarities of these two stories, including the selection of an artist through a process involving mostly art world professionals, point out how close the public art field is even in organizations with disparate presuppositions such as Kilroy's, whose focus is the city, and Ogan's, whose focus is the community.

The biggest difference was the extent of political involvement on the part of the community. In Santa Fe the idea came from the community in the first place, at least one community member was involved in the decision making, and, because of the ethnic controversy over the choice of artist, the whole city was aware of and in some way involved in the process. In Philadelphia the community was offered the public art, community members gave input but did not select the artwork, and no one in the city but the neighborhood and the art world knew about the project.

Two issues which came up in these two stories, decision-making and representation, were also addressed by other public art professionals.

Decision Making

Penny Bach, of the Fairmount Park Art Association in Philadelphia, believed that the public is always changing, whereas art is enduring. The public, she said, is tied to time and over time it will inevitably change, as will tastes. The artwork, she said, "will be there longer than we are. The piece will have to transcend a variety of

publics." She voiced concern with overloading community input with a single group who are potential "tastemakers," especially if such authority is given to the "users" of a space.

Tastes change, art doesn't, and the danger is you won't achieve a more enduring solution. You need people who will participate in evolving a great project, a contributory position, not people only interested in defending their right to use the space, which is a defensive position.

She distinguished people who contribute versus people who defend. In other words, people who feel invited to contribute and whose contribution is respected as part of the process, versus people who feel attacked or invaded so that they must be on the defensive. These two positions depend in a way on how the public art organizations approached them in the first place, but further, it does depend on how they respond to that approach.

James Clark, speaking about this same issue, explained that you must get "factual concerns" from the community but "opinions aren't helpful" because, he said, what would you do, "Hold an opinion poll every month?" And then, he asked, would you remove work because someone who was there at the time didn't like it? He said:

Curators of public art should be experts who can defend public art and be respected for their professional judgments.

In other words, those who make decisions about public art should be art world professionals, not people who just happen to be there at the time.

Sandy Gross Bressler, director of the Philadelphia Art Commission, speaking about the "Rocky" controversy said:

One thing about the "Rocky" was that when I was in City Council testifying on our budget, one of the council people said "Well who are you? Who is the Art Commission to make a decision on 'Rocky'? What does the public want? The public wants it there, who are you to be making that decision?" And that's a very fine line. On what basis do people make decisions and who should make decisions?

She went on to talk about that fact that it is the people who have a "perspective of time," knowledge of "what has happened in other cases" who may be able to understand better how to make that decision.

"Rocky's" a classic case where emotions run so high at that time, and then they just die down. Whereas when you think about that work sitting there forever, and looking at it as a work of art, and not associating it with Sylvester Stallone who is very popular right now but maybe in 15 years nobody will know who that guy was. It really doesn't withstand the test of time.

Only art professionals can make such judgments, many have said.

Even when it comes to saying what they want, some public art professionals are concerned that the community doesn't have that ability. Mary Kilroy, as was shown, had to educate the community before they would be ready to say what they wanted. Sidney Druckman, of the Battery Park City Association in New York, also mentions that an artist should "open people's minds. And quite often that is not giving them what they think they'd like." She seems to be saying that it doesn't really matter what people think they'd like.

Rita Roosevelt, former coordinator of Philadelphia's percent program also alluded to this:

Very often a local community comes to the table with very immature imprecise ideas about what they want for public art. Most of the time they want a statue on a pedestal. They want something historical, they want something ethnic.

She went on to say that the artist must interpret the community's desires and convince the community she is giving them what they want. In other words, it is up to the artist-politician to negotiate with the community and reach consensus, or otherwise convince them that they want what they are being given.

It becomes evident once again that the basic problem faced by these public art professionals, to place art, with all that that entails, in public, with all that that entails, creates an ambivalence about community involvement. By using the analogy of a representative democracy they can alleviate some of their concerns by having experts make decisions while getting information from and giving information to those people who will be affected by those decisions.

Even those people most committed to respecting the community's opinions and desires in public art projects see community involvement being by way of representatives.

Representation

Lippard spoke about, first, the problem with literal community choice.

I mean people get in there they might want a giant pink puppy dog, or something like that, but if they got a giant pink puppy dog they wouldn't want it. So if Jeff Koons got hold of them (laughs)-- who knows.

She is referring to a work of public art Koons did for Documenta.¹ Lippard said that the complicated process for community involvement in public art hasn't really been figured out yet and spoke about the responsibility of those representing the community.

Locating the people who are interested at all, getting them to take responsibility for the interaction with the artist, getting other people to say that it's okay that these are the people that do the interaction with the artist.

In this case the community representative must take responsibility for negotiating with the artist. She pointed out that not everyone in the neighborhood or community chooses to become involved. Lippard said that it is difficult:

catching them or getting them to care about what's going on. But there's bound to be somebody out there, there will always be somebody out there that cares once it's up, that's going to raise hell or not. Preferably [they'll express their opinions] before the thing goes up, if there are town meetings and things.

It's like any kind of activism, she said, "You can't whine about things you've never gotten off your ass to do anything about."

No matter the approach, not everyone in the community speaks up. Tom Finkelpearl, of New York City's percent

¹Documenta is an international art show held in Kassel, Germany every 5 years.

program, went so far as to say:

That's the other thing. Sometimes when you talk about the community it boils down to one person, one powerful person in the community who galvanizes sentiments in one direction or the other.

In other words, opinions can be formed by single powerful people who can get others to go along with them. Sometimes these are literally the politicians. James Clark and Sandy Bressler in an earlier chapter spoke about the fact that elected officials or community leaders are not always representative of a full spectrum of community opinion which must be unearthed. Yet Green and Church in New Mexico actually count on those elected officials not only to be representative but also to garner support.

Anne Green, coordinator of the state of New Mexico's Art in public Places program spoke about their attention to the makeup of the representative committees. In New Mexico every project must have a new committee.

What we try to do is try to have the committee feel responsive to the community at large, broader than the art population.

What they need to know, she said, is they're not curating a museum collection, that's not their task. They're putting art in public places. She went on:

You hope you have several people on the committee who represent several different factions within that community. It's really a task; setting up the committee is the biggest task. To get people on them who are going to be responsive to the community.

The formula is set, she said, there are seven people: a

representative of the users, the owner, the architect, two art professionals (one an artist), and two community members-at-large. It is up to the owner to set up the public art committee.

The leeway is with the two community members at large. We tell them first of all, you have to think about the culturally diverse aspect, that's really primary. And beyond that try and think of people who are going to be able to speak to the press, who the community has some respect for, who would be answerable to you. If you're trying to get a local neighborhood person, go to that neighborhood, represent that neighborhood. Get somebody from the mayor's office involved, somebody from, if you've got a big ethnic group there, somebody from the chamber of commerce, and so on.

She is talking about people who may be elected officials, or chosen by elected officials, those people others warned against as not necessarily representing public opinion. Green is also concerned with involving those people who have previously been excluded or who exclude themselves. She said:

We require that all of our committees reflect the composition of the communities in which they are. That really varies. We just tell them right from the start that they need to do it. So that's really good because part of the deal of including multi-ethnicities in terms of the artist is that you have a committee that thinks about that. If you have no Hispanics on your committee chances are that committee, if they're all Anglo they're going to think of art in Anglo terms of what is art. Well, Hispanics have different ideas of what is art, and Native Americans, yet other ideas of what is art. So to get them all involved in terms of sitting on a committee is crucial, and that's our main vehicle for getting the involvement of those artists, and therefore those art forms.

It is not just important to be aware of who from the

community is involved in the process but that the selection process then affects which art form will be asked for and which artists will be chosen.

Tom Finkelpearl spoke about the same thing. A panel was deciding about public art for a school in Queens:

The panel was very aware of the ethnicity of Queens and also of the school which wasn't particularly Black or Latino but mostly white and Asian. But the whole thing is that, one of the artists we selected was a Chinese American, and then an artist who's Black, and another artist who is white. The overall package reflected the panel in some ways. You ended up with Asian, Black and white artists, and we had as the art professionals Asian, Black and white panelists. Even though that wasn't necessarily who those people were supporting.

So, as Green said, if the panel can reflect the community, the selection will more likely reflect the community. In a later update, Finkelpearl said "because there is always a diverse group of artists and panelists" minority involvement is "not even an issue."

James Clark of the Public Art Fund said that they make a conscious effort to publicize information about the public art opportunity to artists, and haven't had a problem finding a wide range of minority involvement from artists because they're always trying to do projects in the outer boroughs of New York. He also said:

To work with only Anglos would have to be a deliberate act. If one is interested in the breadth of contemporary art, one can't ignore minorities.

Clark spoke about Public Art Fund's new project, "Urban Paradise" which is proposals for gardens in communities. He

said, "it seems women, African Americans, and Hispanic artists tend to come up with more community-directed proposals." So that, as the organization's efforts go more in the direction of community-involved projects, the people who do that kind of work are more likely to apply and be chosen for the projects.

Meanwhile, there have to be ways for the community itself to have a say, to be asked their opinions. Here again the political analogy of a representative democracy holds. Town meetings are sometimes held. These can run the gamut. For example, a very structured 3-hour town meeting held in Philadelphia, instigated by the percent program under Roosevelt for a rehab project, had a formal presentation, audience discussion groups, and then a final summary of opinions that echoed the original presentation. Another meeting was a 2-day symposium in Santa Fe about a monument to honor the Native American contribution to the area. This meeting was instigated by the Native American community who had originally suggested the monument. The two days, which also had presentations, audience discussion groups, and a final summary, resulted, not in specific suggestions, but rather in guidelines and a request for the necessity of the community staying closely involved as the project went forward.

In the Philadelphia town meeting, the audience seemed to be led by the presentation to offer ideas that reflected what the planners thought would be the best use of the

space, and did not assume any future participation. In Santa Fe, the audience, although influenced by the numerous presentations, led the suggestions and insisted on their own direct future participation.

In some cases the community is in agreement about what it wants, but occasionally it turns out there are more diverse interests inside the community than was evident at first.

Community not Monolithic

Gordon Church of Albuquerque is willing to give the community veto power. He told a story about a project in an upper-middle class Anglo neighborhood where a dam was going to get a mural.

We hadn't had an experience with this community, so I asked the two neighborhood associations, "Well, if we work with your executive committees or boards would that be workable?" And they thought it would be.

That is, they didn't go out and solicit involvement by all the people in the neighborhood but began working with small, supposedly representative groups as many public art organizations do. The project involved a mural artist working with "graffiti kids." At one point the artist and those working with him began to put the cartoon on the dam.

Well as soon as they did that then it brought all of the people out of the woodwork. I mean people who were not members of their neighborhood associations, or other people, so then there was a big dialogue that came down to, well they didn't feel it was right for the community.

The newspapers took up on it, Church said, and made jest of it while also wondering whether it was racism.

And some good things came up like do these people in the heights think they're living in--I forget how they said that, but I mean, barrio art, New Mexico's a barrio. So the idea was "Where do you people think you're living?" It was actually healthy that that came out.

But the end result, Church said, was that the mural was moved out of the neighborhood. This very well organized neighborhood "did not feel comfortable just with their board leading us." What they really wanted, he said, was more control over the selection of the art work, which they got. They chose an artist's design to be painted by professional mural painters.

In Church's story the dissenters got their way because, as Church said, he wanted a:

bridgehead, we needed more public art in the heights. To me this is important. They're so satisfied now with the process, they feel really good about it, and that's the buy-in I want, but it also gives me a beachhead in a very important type of environment.

Church, it turned out, wanted community support for his government program, a relationship with them that would allow his program to bring more public art in, and, as he said earlier, they will then own and protect the artwork.

Penny Bach's story, from the chapter on controversy, about Jody Pinto's "Fingerspan," in which some of the people in the homogeneous neighborhood decided they didn't want the bridge to come into the park near their neighborhood is another example. In that case the park agency had final

authority. Bach said:

I'm probably one who writes always about working with the community, and I believe one should and I don't think there's any way to get around it, but you sort of do need to have your eyes wide open in that communities change and even the perspectives of people who are representing communities change, And there may be two diverse viewpoints within a community.

In other words, communities are not monolithic and even though a group may seem in agreement it does not mean all opinions have been considered. So, she said:

you should never really work to please a small number of people. You really should be working to deal with important issues, that are solved in the most creative way. Then you can stand behind that.

Bach is in agreement with those who say that the community should not have the final authority. She is saying, as expressed in Chapter 4, that the program must concern itself more with the larger picture, with the issues. In this case the issues as she described them were the use of art as a functional object, a bridge across a gorge in the middle of a wooded section of a public park. Deal with that creatively, she said, and stand behind it, and you can withstand the diverse and changing viewpoints that are bound to occur.

In both cases, Albuquerque and Philadelphia, there was a political process of discussion and debate. In Church's case there was compromise and eventual consensus inside the community. In Bach's case there was no compromise, the decision was turned over to a higher authority. In Bach's

story the dissenters in the upper middle class white neighborhood did not get their way and the bridge has been in place now for many years. In Church's story the dissenters in a similar neighborhood got their way because he needed a buy-in into the community for his public art program. Bach is insulated from the need for a buy-in in a particular neighborhood because of representing a private organization. But the difference between telling a community which art will be there and letting the community tell you which art will be there also points to their different presuppositions defined in an earlier chapter. Bach is concerned about the whole city and the needs of each individual art lover. Church is concerned about the community as a whole, for itself.

Other public art professionals also pointed to events which showed that the community was not monolithic and not represented by those who were meant to represent them. Public art professionals have personal experience with the fact that communities are differentiated, and yet they seem to talk about them as homogeneous entities. It is only when the people inside the community speak up in public and reveal their differences that the variety is acknowledged.

Getting input from the community, however that is done, raises the expectation that the input will be heard and more than that, acted on. Usually involvement in the public art process is limited to getting information and support from a community. But many artists and some public art programs

prefer to involve the community more closely, collaborating in the actual planning or making of the piece.

Collaboration

Collaboration may take the form of soliciting specific ideas or stories after the artist has been chosen and a general approach has been agreed. Marsha Moss of Sculpture Outdoors in Philadelphia described one example:

Andrew Leicester on the riverfront [in the process of designing "Riverwalk"]: a lot of times he would walk in the neighborhood, talking to people that had retail establishments, he walked in the hotels around, and discussed what he was going to do and asked their feelings, their memories of the waterfront, and tried to integrate it into the piece.

This is one way for artists to consider themselves participating. They get ideas and memories, and incorporate the people's memories in their thinking about the artwork. In this case, Leicester also incorporated tools from the workmen on the project and local fishermen.

Similarly, the project by the Public Art Fund, "Urban Paradise: Gardens in the City" involved and will involve the community in ways that may collect memories, consult with residents to produce a neighborhood space, and even collaborate in design in some cases. However, according to Clark:

From the beginning we assert that the artist is the person with the creative vision and is to be used as a visionary person and the community has this resource available. Their responsibility is to let the artist know the factual conditions of the site, their concerns, their dreams for the

site. The artist will accommodate their concerns. Clark's earlier comparison of artists to politicians because of vision holds up in the sense that the artist as well as the politician must maintain a vision while accommodating constituents' concerns, although politicians can be voted out of office. This organization, Public Art Fund, and the organization that placed Leicester's work, which was Kilroy's RDA for whom Moss was consulting, are both quite clear that the artist retains authority and aesthetic control. Not only are art world professionals making decisions about public art, the artists, although they must be political and have various ways of involving people, in the end have final say. The artist retains authority of the whole project even though relegating it in small parts by incorporating people into the making of the public art itself.

Tom Finkelpearl described a project at Stuyvesant High School, "Mnemonics," where the artists Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel installed 400 hollow glass blocks, some containing a diverse range of artifacts, all around the school. One hundred seventy-six of the blocks are there to honor the years of the school's past and future--one for each class since the school opened eighty-eight years ago, and on into the next century. Each class, including those who have already graduated, forms a committee and decides what to place in their block. In this case community members actually have control, but only over their small

part of the final public art product.

In New Mexico, according to Green, the community is almost always involved in helping muralists develop a theme and often people from the community, usually students or seniors, work on the mural itself. Green gave an example:

We had another project for a senior center where an artist went in and worked with the women to embroider using the traditional coltcha stitch to embroider a mural. There were 15 one-foot by one-foot panels. For this mural the women did the embroidery and the men at the center told the stories of the history of this community neighborhood. It's a wonderful mural and it depicts their whole history.

Gordon Church also talked about this same project and explained that the women at the center didn't know the technique, which was:

a traditional Hispanic way of embroidering. We had to have an older woman teach many of the older women at the senior center how to do it. Many of them remembered it as kids, sort of, but they had forgotten, and hadn't done it. They had to relearn it and then do this whole mural in coltcha stitch.

Church was interested in going out to the community and valorizing their traditions and art forms by putting them in public art projects. Yet, in this case, it seems that it wasn't their art form at all but one from their grandparents. It had died out on its own, but Church saw this as a tradition that "needed to be kept alive" along with other traditional crafts. From Church's description it seems as if it is Church and the public art programs that want to keep the tradition alive. He went on to describe how the market is "picking up on it."

When you go to some of our crafts markets and so forth you see more and more coltcha stitch out there.

This means, as he said earlier, that people "can make a living off it." So Church's commitment to community involvement is not just for the sake of a single work of public art but, as he said before, for changing the everyday relationship to art in the lives of the participants.

Most public art community collaboration allows the artist to retain authority and, although the community is requested for input, non-art world people are rarely involved in the aesthetic decisions.

Penny Bach, who described herself as having been an advocate of community involvement since the seventies, was talking in an update about her future plans. In the eighties, she said her organization asked artists to think about and propose works for communities. Initial proposals came from artists and her organization went to the community to fit the artist in. Now, she said, she wants a more equal partnership between artist and community. She spoke about Mary Jane Jacob's show of temporary community oriented public art called "Culture-in-Action" in which various communities at times directly participated in planning, in decisions, or in making the art. Bach said:

Now we are thinking of ways to bring the artist and community together in authentic collaboration like the idea from "Culture in Action." But there the artists left and the community has what, a video? We really, really believe in permanent work.

Culture in Action got a lot of press, she said, "but from the perspective of the community there was a lot lacking." The artists were involved a longer time, she said, two years. "But in the end the community is there, the artist is gone." What Bach wanted to do was figure out a way for more "authentic" and long-lasting collaboration.

The fact that Bach, whose focus was on the city and the individual art experience, and Clark, whose focus was on the artist and the reaction to the artist, are both working on more community-oriented projects, shows that, although it may not be their main focus, the involvement of the community has taken on more importance than ever.

Discussion

The community, unlike the generalized anonymous art audience, is specified and usually in these stories, attached to a location. Public art professionals choose to involve such specified, located people in their public art projects in order, they say, to give them a sense of ownership which in turn protects the artwork. When a neighborhood accepts or even requests a work of art and receives it, it is always meant to be something they will care for. Thus involving equals ownership equals protection. But involving does not give someone ownership, nor does it predict protection. For example, a mural described by Israel (1987) which was participatory was graffitied by one of the participants. The confounding of

involvement, ownership, and protection fits well into the belief system of a consuming culture in which only that which is owned is cared for and what we hold in common is, as Phillips said, abused and neglected.

Involvement may take the form of public discussion and debate. This public discussion may involve all interested community members or it may be by representatives of various community groups or interests. It may be amicable or contentious but the public debate is part of the political nature of public art. Public art professionals themselves use political analogies to describe the process of community involvement in this and earlier chapters. Some public art professionals call community people a "constituency," a word that is being used in the public art field more and more. It is a word that comes from politics and is specifically localized, that is in residency or in the empowering of someone to speak for another. It is generally a word of politics implying voters, or active participants in democracy. Constituents are the people who authorize the elected officials to speak for them. The elected representatives in turn must convince the constituents that they are speaking for them.

But although there are political processes evident in the field of public art, in the end there is no voting, no electing of representatives, and therefore no accountability to the voters. Decisions are made by representatives but those representatives are not usually elected and can't be

un-elected. People can only let their objections be known when they find out what is going on, which may not be until the project is a fait accompli.

The process of people letting their objections be known will often point out that communities are not monolithic and undifferentiated and cannot always be adequately represented. This self-disclosure of the variety within a community is part of the political nature of public art.

Arza Churchman (1987) laid out various kinds of community involvement, one of which was that the official decision makers try to gain support, prevent opposition, or control the situation through cooperation with the public. The goal for public art programs, Churchman might say, is often to get approval or support for what the professionals are doing. This could also be considered involvement by assimilation in which community members are expected to become educated and learn the language of the dominant group. They may be left with no voice of their own but pulled into the dominant "we." This is involvement, not on their own terms, but on the terms of the professionals. Because of the lack of apparent decision making, Churchman would say there is not participation on the part of the community in most of these cases even where people--usually children or seniors--make the artwork.

The kinds of collaborations described in this chapter are very different than could have been considered by the art world twenty years ago. Opening the doors to

involvement by people not trained in art, not part of the aesthetic habitus, is still being figured out by public art organizations as they jump on the bandwagon of community involvement. It seems that the right mix of community and artist is not easy to get, but that public art programs are trying to bring that involvement to a higher level than just to inform or get information from. But the collaboration is complex, and often they want to keep the art world in charge, which immediately limits any "authentic" community involvement.

The last two chapters have pointed to the political processes involved in some public art--the artist as politician, the community as constituency. The next chapter will show the connection of politics and the state to public art.

CHAPTER 9

FUNDING: THE GOVERNMENT AS PATRON

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All along, I have been trying to point out the analogies, references, and the nature of public art in which it is political, and how this very political nature is the source of many of the dilemmas, ambivalence, and controversy in the field. The complications increase because, although by "political nature" I do not mean politics or the state apparatus, but rather speech and action in the public realm, in the case of public art the government is literally involved. The government--federal, state, and local--is not an abstract reference, but in many, if not most, cases is an actual participant in the public art process, whether through law or funding.

Government Funding

More than half of these public art professionals literally work for the government, in various bureaucracies and agencies. They run public art programs which have been required by law, that is, the percent organizations, and their salaries are paid by the state. The percent for art laws insure that at least one form of art--public art--is going to be part of the world. The amount of money available in percent budgets increased every year, according

to these public art professionals and budgets for single pieces are often large.

Private organizations, too, get at least a part of their budgets from the government in the form of grants for special projects, or ongoing support funds from federal, state and local governments as well as tax-exempt status.

Many of these public art professionals are quick to say that the government's role is "to provide the money" (Senie). "Funding, funding, funding" (Desir-Davis). "Well, money" (Lippard). "Buckaroos! Money!" (Trasobares). "Financial, funding support" (Hooker). "Funding" (Moss). Although others saw government support as important, they did not specifically mention the money, but rather focused on other parts of the process. In many cases the money part of it is in place for them, for example with percent programs.

Tom Finkelpearl, director of New York City's percent program, explained in Chapter 5 that percent money comes from bonds, and it is also true for other percent programs. He wanted to clarify the difference between expense money paid by taxes and construction money paid by bonds. Yet either way it is public money which pays for the art and the administrator.

State Authorities are not tied to the city or state budgets but have power to float bonds themselves, as well as getting other capital monies. Wendy Feuer, director of New York's MTA percent program said:

A state authority is sort of quasi-independent, It's not a state agency. An authority can bond. We do our own bonds, and we have our own revenue source. The reason we have the bonds is that we have something to back the bonds, although we would never get in trouble, the state would back us.

The public art money in these cases is tied to a site; where construction occurs, public art occurs. But some cities can pool funds. In Santa Fe, Larry Ogan, the chair of the Art in Public Places Committee, explained:

The difference between Santa Fe and a lot of projects is the money doesn't have to be tied to the particular building it comes from. In other words it all goes into one pot.

That way, he said, they can do larger projects, and get, he believed, a better quality of art work.

In Miami, there is also pooling of funds. Cesar Trasobares, the former director of the county's percent program explained.

The Art Trust Fund was created whereby all of the monies from all of the sources were deposited into this account.

Three types of expenditures were allowed, he said:

Project costs: artists fees, materials, installation, insurance, all that stuff.
Administration costs: all of the staff salaries, and all office operations, publications that we did and so on. And then the third category was a combination of education and maintenance.

He went on to talk about how that can create problems.

Obviously the agencies kept their own tab on what they were contributing to us, and say the airport, who is a major contributor, didn't see that a lot of money was being spent in their facility, then that would get complicated.

So pooling of funds can lead to higher quality artwork being

commissioned but it can also lead to complaints by those organizations who pay in but don't get such visible return for their money.

The quality of the art work being better served by pooling funds is mentioned by Penny Bach of the Fairmount Park Art Association in Philadelphia which is a non-profit organization. She is concerned about public art happening in "incredible numbers" she said:

So therefore I think the whole percent idea warrants further examination for that reason. I don't think it should be eliminated. I just think that there may be another way to do it.

She went on:

For example, the RDA, which is a percent, permits the pooling of small amounts of funds. And Chuck Fahlen's piece [Diamond Park], it happened that way. It's not attached onto a building in North Philly. The accumulation of all these little bits of money, and then going to the community and saying, "Where should we invest it?" That is a percent, but it's a very different way of actualizing it.

Her other concern, since her organization is not a percent:

is that there is considerable funding for large scale projects nationwide. In "Form & Function" we were able to attract artists of considerable reputation.

Pinto's "Fingerspan" and Puryear's "Pavilion in the Trees" are examples of Form and Function. Her worry is whether or not it is:

possible to attract seriousness of purpose when there are huge amounts of money in the percents and artists can do that in one or two years? Do we just throw more money to get good artists?

The huge amounts of money available to public art programs

nowadays, she is concerned, will keep small private organizations like hers from hiring artists who can get more money elsewhere.

The way those percent organizations get so much money is that they are authorized to be involved in a large number of expensive building projects. Government agencies which are going to be getting Capital Improvement funds for building projects must give up that percent for art from the project budgets. Anne Green, coordinator of the state of New Mexico's percent program, said:

We're lucky this is in the law. Because now these agencies are learning. It's taken years for them to learn that it doesn't matter to me if they've already spent their money, I'm going to come after it anyway. And they're going to have to find another way to raise it. It's in the law. Thank God it's in the law. If it weren't in the law they'd never do it.

So the agencies which must participate with percent for art because of the law are not in it for the love of art. In Philadelphia, Rita Roosevelt, former coordinator of the city's percent program, said they now encumber percent funds from a project's budget, alleviating the problem Green spoke of.

All percent money is given by law and the responsibility of the people coordinating percent programs is to spend it, something which, in the end, they do not control personally, but must leave up to the committee process set up in their organization.

Public art professionals from non-profit organizations

sometimes have more personal say over where the money is spent, but on the other hand, they must find it in the first place. Non-profit organizations' funds do not come in by law and so part of any non-profit's budget must include fundraising, and often it is government funds they must raise. The NEA has "Art in Public Places" funding and also funding for organizations that work with artists, as well as funding for state arts councils. So the Federal NEA, state arts councils, and city governments all contribute to the expenses of non-profits, as do private foundations and donors.

The difference between percent money and government funding such as the NEA is that percent funds are there by law and cannot be cut out of the budget by changing politicians. Laws would have to be repealed. This is one reason why Green and Albuquerque's Gordon Church are so committed to making the public happy. Green spoke in Chapter 6 about an attempt to repeal the law which failed. She credits the community involvement and the lack of pooling funds, that is, doing many small-budget projects, for the public support.

As opposed to percent budgets, which are increasing as construction costs rise, direct government grants as a funding source keep being reduced and some non-government organizations struggle to find other sources of money, while often remaining dependent on government funds. Cee Scott Brown of Creative Time in New York, for example, said they

get funding from the NEA, the New York State Council on the Arts, and from New York City.

We are one of the largest funded organizations in New York City for our size. We get almost \$200,000 a year from New York City. And for an organization whose budget is less than \$600,000, it's telling.

So even non-profit organizations count on the government for financial support. In 1991, Creative Time was subject to budget cuts from city and state because of budget problems and Brown had refused funds from NEA, taking a stand against a language change in the NEA contract. The language was ultimately ruled unconstitutional and Creative Time accepted their federal award. Meanwhile, Brown said, they were lucky to find foundations who were interested in supporting their work.

The problem with government involvement that comes with funding, alluded to by Brown's stand against the NEA, is government interference. Organizations want the government to give them money but not to tell them what to do with it. Lucy Lippard, writer and activist, after saying "well, money" is the government's role, went on to say:

Ideally they would just fund things and let other people figure out what got done, but of course that's not really [going to happen].

Some public art professionals do not seem to be concerned about the public accountability that must go with the granting of government funds. Rather they seem to believe the government should just give them the money to spend as they please. Marsha Moss, the director of Sculpture

Outdoors, a non-profit organization in Philadelphia said:

I would rather not have the government, but realistically we need the government involved, only with money and not with political input.

Political input is of great concern to these public art professionals and has always been one of the worries about government involvement in the arts in this country. This is part of the problem with the art/public paradox. When public funds are involved, these public art professionals are concerned, the government has a say over it. This particular problem extends into all of the art world and not just public art, and brings up the matter of censorship.

Government Censorship/Interference

Cesar Trasobares of Miami, after saying the government should give money, went on to say that he thinks the government has a role in developing the standards in the field through law and precedent. But, he said:

Every time a governmental agency censors a work of art, that puts us behind in the advancement of this field.

His government organization, that is, the one which he runs, he is saying, develops standards and sets precedents, but other government agencies, he believes, create problems.

Mary Kilroy of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA) believed that the government should make sure there are responsible arts professionals, not government officials, in a position of advising. She said "No, I don't think Jesse Helms should decide what's good art and what's

bad art." Like Trasobares, she distinguishes her part of the government, which valorizes responsible arts professionals, from those government officials who will not. But the issue of censorship is not the same as who makes decisions about art, though it can take that form. Rather it is government interference for the sake of expurgating certain expressions. Brown pointed out that the censorship controversies in which the NEA was embroiled were alongside the call for dismantling government support for the arts. The timing, he said, was "very, very smart."

You know Helms in 1975 was interested in dismantling funds and I think he was very smart in waiting for this election term [1990] when he could put the pressure to all the people in the house--you support pornography, I'll let your people know that you like queers and they won't vote for you.

Brown believed:

this is all calculated. This is not circumstance. This is all happening because of a calculated effort to completely fortify the government's role in this country.

According to Brown, the rallies against the NEA by the extreme right, and the Republicans in the country who wish to see it gone, were using warped and distorted versions of artwork to get the public on the fence to swing their way. The fact, he said, that artists are making a lot of people uncomfortable, is just feeding it.

And with the financial situation of this country the way it is, I think what we're looking at is probably an easy decade of this kind of retrenchment.

Brown was not belittling the controversy over censorship by

showing its association with the desire to dismantle funding for the arts. In fact he was a founder of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, a grass roots organization committed to pointing out government censorship in the arts.

Mary Kilroy also made the connection between censorship and funding.

It was bound to happen. You don't think that in the public sector that funding such as we've had for the last 25 years can be ignored by politicians--they want to get in, they want to get a piece of the action, they want to grandstand.

She believed that it would blow over.

We just have to ride it out. And we'll have a period where it may be conservative for a little while but the pendulum will swing back.

Both Kilroy and Brown make the point that politics is the problem. That is, it is not intended to be a reasonable debate about the government's role in funding the arts which would be political or public speech and action. Rather, politicians try to further their careers by distorting the public speech and action of others. This is a different kind of politician than the visionary with strong beliefs described earlier to which the public artist was compared.

Richard Hooker, the Save Outdoor Sculpture! coordinator in New Mexico, talked about a result of the controversy over censorship and funding.

I think arts administrators are much more cautious, they don't want this kind of controversy. They have to rethink some of their willingness or openness to get involved with projects that might be controversial because of

funding and so on.

Because arts organizations are so dependent on government money, Hooker is saying, they have become more careful about what they do. Cee Scott Brown gave an example about the same issue which concerned the artist Karen Finley, who had been denied an NEA grant.

Karen actually needs to do a public service as part of a NYSCA grant that she got. It's supposed to be upstate, but a lot of the people that she used to deal with upstate are afraid to deal with her now because of the fact that her work is "indecent." So this whole self-censorship thing starts to happen. She can't find a place to do it up there.

Funding is implicated in censorship and especially in self-censorship.

Whether budget or censorship, if the government cuts off funding, Brown believed that, although some artists who were raised on public support would be "up a creek without a paddle," he said:

On the brighter side, artists have always made art without subsidy, and will continue to do that. We are like cockroaches and we will continue.

Brown does not want funding cut off, but Lucy Lippard said she is:

old enough to remember the days when we didn't have a lot of government funding. And everybody's so dependent on it now that I wish it would get out.

But, she added, she would rather be funded by the government than a corporation, because there is a system of checks and balances if it's the government, depending, she said, on who is in power. Although she "just love[s] the things that

artists do when they just go out and do things," she understands that artists have to live. She talks about a public artist, Suzanne Lacy, who she says is a brilliant fundraiser:

To do the thing she does, she has to raise a tremendous amount of money, and a lot of artists just aren't into it or can't do it, are just not good at it. She gets it from all over and she spends a great deal of her time raising money to do the pieces.

Many things just can't be done without some sort of funding. And individual artists often spend as much time fundraising as organizations.

The censorship and funding controversies have not been all bad according to Richard Hooker.

I feel like the arts really went on the defensive and its been a real retreat. And I think a lot of good comes out if it, too, soul searching and prioritizing and all that.

Of course, as pointed out in the introduction, and as seen by these public art professionals, there is ambivalence in this democracy about what the government's role should be in culture. But if the government is to take some responsibility for culture, according to James Clark of the Public Art Fund, then it must have a cultural policy, which, he said, New York City did not have. In 1991 he spoke about budget cuts by the city, saying there were no criteria for determining the service which arts organizations gave.

If Dinkins was really doing a good job he would say the criteria for service is servicing those neighborhoods that don't have art activities, and encouraging cultural expression within communities that are not normally encouraged. But none of

that exists. And therefore cuts are across the board 50% cuts to everyone. Well, I can absorb my 50% cut but the Museo del Barrio can't; it threatens to close them. Because I think I should have been cut more. If it was a policy that reflected what Dinkins talked about originally, then it would do that.

Or, Clark suggested, there could be a policy of supporting the strong, thriving institutions.

Therefore I'm cut less and can keep doing work throughout the city, and the smaller marginal groups are just cut out, let go.

But either way, he felt, the city government should have a policy. The lack of a point of view on policy in city government is reflected at all levels and points back to a basic ambivalence on the part of this country which believes that art is an elite phenomenon unnecessary in an egalitarian society and that it is more to be avoided than embraced. The ambivalence that the government feels about funding art is echoed by the ambivalence public art professionals feel about government involvement.

Working for Government Organizations

Mary Kilroy, who had worked in a government agency for 30 years, earlier distinguished herself from government officials such as Helms. She called the government "them." "I would rather see them fund than not fund." She also distinguished her work on the Fine Arts Committee from the rest of her own organization.

I don't think the RDA [Redevelopment Authority] should ever take a strong position on an aesthetic question, when I say the RDA I mean the front

office. That's why we have committees and they bring the best professionals they can.

As she said earlier, the government's role is to make sure those professionals are part of the process. Actually that is the role she has taken on, supplying those professionals to the public art process.

Gordon Church of Albuquerque's percent for art, rather than distance himself from the government he works for, like Kilroy, actually embraces government involvement with art.

Well, I feel that it's healthy that the arts be a part of what government's about. Because government by its nature--regardless of how good it does that--is about us doing things together collectively for our collective improvement.

Art and design are a part of that, Church said. That is, art and design can be a collective improvement. As he talked about in an earlier chapter: valorizing a culture's art forms increases the self-worth of the culture and thus is a collective improvement. He went on:

I want to be right in it, even though that does obviously make me a bureaucrat. I want [the public art program] to be integrated with the fabric of what government's about.

In this way he can have more control over how that collective improvement occurs. He explained that being involved in public art is good for the bureaucrats, too.

It really has a lot of payoff with the public. I had a dedication for the mayor and city councilors Saturday, and then the one Sunday. I mean, boy, that had lots of good stuff for them. They got p.r., connection with the community, cultural values--keeping traditions alive, all of those things which are very healthy for the bureaucracy to do.

He believed that bureaucrats, although they supposedly serve the public, rarely have direct contact with the public and being included in public art projects forces them into contact. It's good for government, too, he said, it really makes them responsible, taking more care of the environment, having a stake in it, and articulating cultural goals. That, Church felt, needs to be done in government because so many other types of decision making, on crime, building, and so forth, are done in the same place, and "we need to have art as part of the consciousness of it. Then we do design better environments." In other words, art can help build a better world. Tom Finkelpearl, identifying neither with the government nor the art world, said, "It's very different now that I'm in city government." He went on:

It's very different from the art world, where some of the issues I've been talking about, [for example] community involvement, that's hard in the art world. It's taken for granted in city government, you have to do it in city government, and [you have to be] multicultural.

This quote by Finkelpearl points out that it is government directives that insist on the inclusion of minorities and the involvement of communities, especially underserved ones. NEA guidelines for public art are very clear about this. So interest in community involvement didn't come about simply because public art organizations thought it would be a good idea in light of the various reasons given in the last chapter. The government which controls the funding insisted on it. On the other hand, Finkelpearl continued:

Here, things like irony, that's very difficult--to get a city official to understand what role irony would have in a public project. They're not interested in anything that diffuses the seriousness of a situation. And that's really weird for me because in an art context irony is absolutely taken for granted.

Community participation is hard in the art world, while something common in the art world is confusing to government officials. This points once again to the basic problem faced by public art professionals putting art in public. Things that make sense in an art context don't always make sense in public. Things that are valuable in public don't necessarily have value in an art context. Yet the field of public art must constantly negotiate between these two realms. Finkelpearl doesn't distance himself from the government that he is a part of as Kilroy does but neither does he claim it as Church does.

There are other ways people viewed the government's role. Richard Hooker of New Mexico, like Trasobares, felt the government must insure fairness, and "basically try to depoliticize situations." The government, which, as a government employee, he calls "we," shouldn't impose "our views" but rather should, he said, standardize the process so it's not political. It seems a little strange to ask that the government depoliticize situations, but what is meant here is to create the rules for fairness, say in the makeup of the advisory committees, so that everyone will be represented and it will not be able to be stacked with friends of the owner, for example.

Sandy Gross Bressler, the director of a government agency, the Art Commission in Philadelphia, believed, as did others, that the government should create the "ambiance" to allow all parties the right "share their perspective" and:

insure that no one party is wronged. You don't
mow over the community's concerns, you don't
discount or ignore the artist's concerns. Sort of
act as a facilitator in the best of all possible
worlds.

In other words, the government should create the conditions for speech and action in the public realm making sure all parties have a chance to be heard.

Discussion

There is a symbiosis between public art and the government which goes back through the history of this country. The current conditions of that symbiosis may be different and not always directly obvious. Because of lobbying by artists and appeals to the government's self-image, it set in place legislation to provide funding for public art, accepting the role of patron, while in effect believing that offering art in such a visible and permanent way was a good. Public art, it is believed, can bring prestige and a beautiful city and be an economic incentive to businesses. Art implies class, the elite, and order, all things that appeal to businesses. Businesses might mean taxes and employment and a cared for environment, all of which make a government seem of value, and seem like it is concerned for its citizens.

The government is decidedly part of the public art

process. Without the government's involvement there would be no percent programs, no federal, state, or local funding for arts organizations, no NEA as a place to apply for funding for special projects. Not just public art of course but all of the arts are subsidized by the government: museums, orchestras, educational institutions, as well as individual artists, critics, writers, musicians, and so forth. In spite of the ambivalence shown both on the part of the government and on the part of the recipients, both sides benefit from government support. With the government helping, and not hindering, it is believed that public art will help make the world a better place for all citizens.

The political analogies in public art, like calling the public "constituencies," are not just metaphorical. Given that so much public art is placed with government money, or, at the very least, government approval, the tie is direct. Some public art professionals, like Church, are overt in their acknowledgment of the symbiosis between public art and the government and their own active role in the government. Others acknowledge the tie when they find themselves and the work they place standing in for the government, as Finkelpearl did in the Ahern controversy. Artists themselves may not accept such a tie but yet it was artists who insisted on such government generosity and artists who benefit from it.

In addition, much of the current discourse about public art: racial and cultural diversity, community participation,

education and dialogue, as well as "constituencies and communities served and how they are served" (NEA, 1995, p.18) are NEA criteria for granting the funds which are so important to state, local, and non-profit public art projects. The percent programs as government programs are bound by law in terms of diversity and community involvement. Government involvement and availability of funds may have something to do with such themes becoming concerns in the art world today.

The issue is complicated because of the symbiotic relationship between these organizations and the government. They are public organizations and also arts organizations. As public organizations getting government money they are committed to inclusion and community participation. As arts organizations they are committed to freedom of expression and artists' rights. The first takes art out of the aesthetic habitus and puts it in the public environment on the terms of the public. The second asks the public to accept the aesthetic habitus on the terms of the art world. It seems that the government, which validates the first, makes problematic the second. This paradox does not seem to be solved easily in spite of the many methods in place for dealing with it. The ambivalence shown by some of these public art professionals who want government funding but not government involvement point back to the arguments raised (in Chapter 1) pre- and post- World War II about giving funds and decision-making powers to the art world.

The funding debates that have occurred and are occurring are often associated with censorship. Brown said that the issue about censorship is really about government funding. But the amount of funding being discussed is minuscule when compared to other parts of the federal budget, and the money spent funding arts will not make any difference in balancing the budget. In fact, as has been pointed out by supporters of the NEA, NEH and PBS, it will take away tax money generated by arts organizations. But the controversy that has arisen over censorship and the NEA is really about partisan politics and ideology, not funding. Censorship is not an excuse for dropping government funding, rather, funding is an excuse for censorship. What should be a political discussion has become politics.

Politics has to do with self-interest, power, and doing things for the sake of career desires or because of values that are not open to debate, that make it impossible to search for common ground. Political discussion and public debate have to do with speaking and acting in public, searching for that common ground, for example, and even defining and exposing the reality of those positions people take for the sake of politics. In this case the politics point to a kind of thinking which wants to control what is done in this democracy, and wants to take decision-making out of the hands of the art world. This thinking wants to define and control a moral ground, closing off public debate, that is, closing off the political.

The art world, too, wants to maintain its power and needs unrestricted government funds to do so. Therefore it does not necessarily encourage a debate about the legitimacy of state involvement at any level, the legitimacy of the percent laws and the funds that therefore go to art, or the legitimacy of demanding funds for art with no strings attached. But these issues too are grounds for public debate.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

I have said that the basic problem faced by most public art professionals is that they must take art, which by definition exists in a separate world, and place it in the world of everyday life where it is subject to a context from which it is usually protected.

Emerging from these interviews is the sense that public art professionals have committed themselves to the necessity and importance of art. They place art, which they see as powerful and valuable, and thus contribute, each in his or her own way, to making a world in which they believe art will have an influence on the lives of the people who come in contact with it. Public art professionals see themselves as public servants, even missionaries, not only giving the gift of art to the world but also saving cultural traditions and pointing out issues of public interest.

Building a world with art, they have discovered, is a task which is not necessarily welcomed by the people for whom they do it. This is because art as we know it--with its history of being split off from the rest of society and existing only for those carefully taught how to appreciate it (Bourdieu, 1987; Rosenberg, 1971)--does not easily find a home in the public environment.

The answers to this dilemma, I believe, have been twofold. One is to change the art, the way it is made, and the maker, all of which have been talked about here and are being done in various ways. The other is to change the relationship between art and the people in the everyday world. Although some have said here that means changing opinions through education and public relations, more seem to suggest it is to allow people to be involved in the public art process in a way that is political, that is, coming together to speak and act about matters of public interest.

The Political Nature of Public Art

The difference between what I mean by the political and politics was laid out in the last chapter. Politics is something engaged in by people with self-interest in the state or other apparatus of power speaking and acting for the sake of that self-interest, whereas the political would be people speaking and acting in the public realm about issues of public concern. The way the political occurs in public art has emerged from discussions with public art professionals.

First of all, it happens in the disclosure of reality that occurs as artists make work with political or social content for the purpose of raising consciousness about issues of concern. This is fairly straightforward. Public art itself can be considered speech and action in public,

and the very placing of it in public is placing a form of speech and action in public, thus potentially instigating a political debate. But this kind of art remains the privileged speaker, addressing, but not able to listen to, its public.

More importantly, the political occurs as I see it when the audience for public art takes or is given a place in the public art process. Public art professionals try to encourage acceptance and support for public artworks when they are placed by opening up the public art process beforehand to the involvement of those most closely concerned, the "constituency" for each artwork. In these cases the artist as well as the public art professional must personally take a political stance--that is, speak and act in public about matters of public concern--as they try to understand the public's needs and wishes. They attempt to arrive at consensus or some agreement between the art world and the public in which the public has or believes they have had some say in what they get. The art world uses persuasion and justification while inviting a dialogue. In the best of cases, concerns must be addressed and the constituents must feel they have been heard and their opinions valued in the process. In the worst of these cases, they are allowed to speak and then ignored or overridden as the art world retains final say. Even then, however, they have engaged in the political.

Emerging from these interviews is the sense that people

are being brought into the public art process beforehand and asked to disclose the world as they see it from their own perspectives. This is either so artists can then make art for them that relates to that reality, or so they can advise artists or art world professionals what art they would like an artist to make for them. Organizations which work with people in this way--offering them a chance to speak and act in public about the art--are engaging in political strategies. If the public doesn't speak up, define itself, and announce its concerns, then they are not involved in this political opportunity. If they do, whether invited or on their own, then they become part of the political aspect of public art.

First and foremost, the public must define itself. Public art professionals also try to define the public in its variety, but the public does not necessarily go along with the art world's definitions. No matter how people may be defined by the art world, it is only when they define themselves that their important issues surface. And it is when they come together to define themselves and to act that the essence of the political is disclosed (Arendt, 1958; Frazer, 1992; Westbrook, 1990), even if that disclosure is denied or overridden by the state power vested in the art world. Not every speaking of people in public leads to action, not every action leads to the desired results. In a normal democratic political process the constituency has the power of the vote. This vote, and most decision-making

(Churchman, 1987) is missing in the public art process, leaving the ultimate power in the hands of the art world where the authority of art and the artist is privileged. But the very opening up of the art world to the political realm begins to undermine that authority.

Because the art exists in public, public art professionals have had to deal with the public. The political way is chosen not out of belief in the importance of people being given a place to speak, but out of acceptance that there is no way to ignore the public in a democracy. And the political is an orderly mode of handling that aspect. The political nature of public art allows the dynamic and unpredictable existence of public art in the public environment to be put into some kind of order. By speaking and acting in public, the issues of concern are named and debated. Artists and art world negotiate with the public in the political realm in an orderly fashion: in the media, in the confines of the public art committee process, in the legal system of hearings and judgments, in the local structure of town meetings. Reason is expected to hold sway in the political realm and issues are meant to be defined, discussed, and dealt with in an orderly process. This doesn't always happen, as publics sometimes define themselves in protest and raised voices. Yet there remains a focus, a frame around the issue, a coming together in public speech and action. This frame or focus, this reasonableness, is not at work in the disorderly day to day

existence where the art comes to reside, where disagreements about meaning confound the art world's plans.

The art world wants the public to appreciate the gift of art they give, but the public is not easily or completely persuaded. When they are not, another, sometimes political, process emerges, that is, the negotiation of meaning. Artists may disclose the reality they see and build their intentions into the work, but once it is in public it takes on a life of its own. It can become a focus of public debate about its meanings and appropriateness. Despite the art world's desire to hold the public meaning to the artist's intentions, the public has a desire to place its own meanings, and the public debate privileges no one's meaning. It is unpredictable, pluralistic, and dynamic. These debates about meaning are welcomed by some of these public art professionals and disparaged by others, but they can be part of the political nature of public art. Meaning floats free, undermining the privileged authority of art and the artist.

In the chaotic world of the determination of meaning, the political nature of public art in which the public comes together to speak and act is only one part of the process, and does not reach everyone on the street. So the political nature of public art, introduced here as vital to the public art process, is not the whole story but rather one part of it in which not everyone participates. This differs from that messy world of everyday life in which all people are

part of the dynamic of the ever-changing social order where their acceptance or resistance, non-involvement or participation, activity or passivity, are always at work, affecting the cultural sensibilities into which we are always already thrown (Butler & Scott, 1992; Dreyfus, 1991; Lorraine, 1990; Nicholson, 1990).

Two things have emerged in the course of this research that public art professionals talk about in one manner yet seem to act in another. One is the centrality of art, the other is the nature of the public. They say that art is central and yet the very act of placing it in the context of the everyday world displaces its centrality considerably, as does the practice of allowing the public into that process. They talk about people as though they are anonymous and yet it is those people who are decidedly not anonymous, who are willing to forego anonymity to speak and act in public, who are the ones who become involved in the political nature of public art.

The Centrality of Art

The analysis presented here reveals that, for the most part, public art professionals still talk about public art in terms of stimulus-response. The art is the stimulus to which people respond. It is understandable why this thinking remains in effect. The separated nature of what Bourdieu (1987) calls the aesthetic habitus, the

valorization of the artist, and concentration on the importance of the art all lend themselves to a view in which what is done in that separated place is the thing to which the world will react in the manner of responding to a stimulus. For example, the artist's intentions get lost when the art takes on a new existence in the public realm, yet those intentions remain of prime importance to the art world, in spite of the post-modern questioning of the authority of the author.

The concept of building a world for others, which seems to be a force in the commitment of these public art professionals, retains a stimulus-response approach. Even when the public is involved and invited into the political process of persuasion, negotiation and collaboration, from the point of view of these public art professionals, the art retains all the power and the public is responding to that powerful art.

The priority seems to be that public art keep its art nature, that the artist keep her privileged name and ability intact, and that, regardless of their involvement, that people keep being defined as those who respond to the art. Even when attempting to offer people a stake in the world, so-called ownership of the world, it is always done with the focus on the art. Even the political nature of public art negotiates and debates around the focus of the centerpiece, art. Of course, this is the job of these public art professionals, of these public artists, and even of these

community representatives who sit on committees. And so, the art never loses its art nature, though it may change considerably in the public realm; the public never loses its nature as anonymous respondent to the art.

By focusing centrally on the art, what gets hidden is the reciprocal dynamic nature of the existence of art which has been placed in the public realm. Certainly the art world's dismissive attitude toward public art shows that, regardless of what is said, it knows public art is not the same as other art. The fact that the artwork itself, the maker, and the process of placing all must be adjusted when the art is to be public, point out that in spite of the talk about the centrality of art, what actually occurs is much more dynamic.

In the public art process as it has been revealed in these interviews, the art world wants to maintain the centrality of art and the artist. But while the art world may try to control the outcome and talk about the art and artist as if a stimulus to which the public responds, the living and acting that occurs around the public art takes place on other levels, making for some of the contradictions and ambivalence found in these interviews. The political nature of public art and the development of meaning take place in spite of the belief that the art exists as somehow complete in itself, as the thing to which people respond. These practices are an undermining of the authority of art and the artist regardless of the beliefs of public art

professionals.

There is no centrality to art in the public environment. It takes on a new life outside the aesthetic habitus where the artist's intentions are lost and control over meaning belongs to the culture at large. Art is not a stimulus to which people respond. The world that is built with art is not for certain people or ideas but becomes part of the dynamic existence of the public environment.

Environmental psychologists have turned away from the stimulus-response model of the environment by invoking Dewey's transactionalism as a model. However, although it seems to be appropriate to describe the political nature of public art, it does not fully define what occurs in the reciprocal process of the negotiation of meaning in the messy world of everyday life. Transactionalism, as defined by Dewey and Bentley (1948), and taken up by environmental psychologists, was meant to go beyond the stimulus-response model to show the participation of various sides in any event. It was meant to show that organism, environment, and historical-cultural background were all parts of the event. For Dewey, it was an economic metaphor involving, for example, lender and borrower, loan and legal-commercial system, all participating in the transaction (Dewey & Bentley, 1948).

A sense of the transactional nature of the process in the way Dewey meant it can be found in the political nature of public art. Because transactionalism was meant to be a

method of inquiry, a scientific process determining observation, of naming the parties to an event for the purpose of study, it is an appropriate theoretical perspective to apply to the discussion of the political nature of public art. The various parties involved are laid out, starting with art, artist, public art professional, public art program, the art world which defines art, the value of the artist, and the audience. Not stopping there, a transactional view goes on to show the other parties, the public defining itself, the democratic culture in which the entire event occurs, the state that helps or hinders. So it could be said that my analysis of the political nature of public art is based on a transactional model.

In a world where the stimulus-response model holds sway, a transactional model is a huge leap. However, one area of existence in the public environment, the negotiation of meaning, involves not a definable event, but a dynamic, ever-changing, inclusive, and unending process over which no one has control. So although it points out the reciprocal nature of existence, transactionalism does not lend itself to defining the chaotic world of the determination of meaning, of everyday life, where the political nature of public art is only one part of the process. Art in the public environment is more than the political process that places it there.

The Nature of the Public

Because the stimulus-response model is used by public art professionals to describe the public's relationship to art, so people are spoken about by public art professionals as if they exist simply in relation to the stimulus, art. When people are considered merely respondents they are immediately limited to a single possibility of acting. This makes it easier. Rather than having to deal with an overload of issues, with an identified and pluralistic population, public art professionals can deal with the art and make assumptions about people's relationships to it. Assuming the anonymity of the public and the undifferentiated nature of community allows them to imagine people respond the same way to a stimulus. Thus, a single work of public art can be imagined to have a stronger effect than it may have in actuality. Yet these public art professionals know people are not all the same. Attempting to deal with that, they divide them into definable groups, but doing that does not make them any less anonymous and undifferentiated. Public art professionals are not the only ones to define the public as members of undifferentiated groups.

In trying to come to terms with the autonomous, isolated individualism passed down through the Western European culture by philosophers, people of various ideological bents are calling for a return to community (Miami Theory Collective, 1991). So are some of these public art professionals, even people for whom that is not a

main focus. Community is thought to be a way to correct the excesses of individualism, and, for public art professionals, a way to deal with the unpredictable pluralistic public. Community is painted, not as unique individuals, but as a group, homogeneous and of one mind, even when this is known not to be true. According to Iris Marion Young (1990), such desire for social wholeness and identification devalues and denies difference and generates exclusions.

In the world of everyday life, I believe, we exist as socially horizoned beings unable to know what is unavailable to us at the moment of our cultural embeddedness. We are members of multiple communities but do not disintegrate into any single stereotype, into any single undifferentiated community. However, identifying with any of those multiple communities is politically valuable, as it allows us to take a public place that will not be made invisible. Speaking and acting together with others in public is the way toward political power (Arendt, 1958; Dewey, 1927). Being of like mind about an issue of public interest and thus gaining political power, as happens sometimes in the public art process, does not mean one is then of like mind and undifferentiated from these people in all ways and at all times. Yet when one's group is then identified from outside in light of that political action, it appears that way. These public art professionals, in talking about groups of people as communities, seem to define them in this

undifferentiated way. Thus something that occurs as an accidental commonality, or something that occurs as an event, a temporary coming together in the mode of political action or for whatever reason, is construed as existing immutable, a defining factor for humans. This seems to occur in spite of the fact that these public art professionals have had personal experience with the differentiated nature of community. This fact, that communities are not monolithic, can only be revealed when people speak and act in public, when they reveal themselves, when they participate in the political realm. But participation in the political realm does not limit a person to that action, to that identity.

There is a complicated push/pull at work in the political realm because of the necessity to identify with the differences of others without becoming undifferentiated. The delicate balance that goes on between the pluralistic world where each stands in a different place, and the political world where one must speak and act together with others, can easily be read as two different things--the individual and the community. But each person is both--neither autonomous nor undifferentiated, neither merely communal nor merely individualistic. Each must negotiate his or her own way and meanings and define his or her own plurality and relationality.

A call for community that tries to correct what is seen as rampant self-focus or individualism by loss of self or

lack of differentiation is as problematic as was a call for autonomy, for the concept of the distinct and separate individual (Young, 1990). Public art professionals, although they speak about this undifferentiated concept of community, deal with the community with whom they work differently. As public artworks in their various settings are different and particular, so the people with whom public art professionals work are distinguished and with varying opinions. Such people are willing to forego anonymity in order to speak and act in public, to be involved in the political nature of public art.

Using the language of the distinct and separate world of art while engaging in the public world where people and things are neither separate nor undifferentiated complicates the job of these public art professionals. Adding the language of the democratic and persuasive public sphere but allowing the artist to maintain individual identity while relegating people to communal groups distorts the notion of the public sphere where there is pluralism as well as a coming together in speech and action.

When people are defined as respondents to art, when art is seen as the central thing to which all other parts of the process bow, this minimizes and even hides the political nature of public art. Yet the process of trying to build a world with art makes it necessary to engage with that political nature, at the very least to present the idea that people matter and that even the artist has to appease them.

But with the lack of decision-making, the lack of any real power except the power to influence, perhaps such engagement with the public is merely to make palatable what is actually going on. That is, someone with power, money, and intention is handling the construction of part of the public environment. In the process they are reinforcing their own belief systems, with only passing reference to people in the world of everyday life. If so, then talk which makes art central and people anonymous is not merely accidental, a hold-over from a different point of view, but rather an attempt to maintain power, a privileged world, the world of art and the artist.

On the other hand, for some of these public art professionals, perhaps what is occurring is not a conscious maintenance of the status quo, the power of the art world, but rather an undermining of the privilege of the art world, a genuine attempt to enter the public world. They still speak their old language but somehow realize it is unsatisfactory in describing the new world in which they work, so they supplement it with language of that new world. They hold on to some of the old beliefs--the primacy of the artist, the power of art--but they begin to speak in terms of the people for whom the art and artist will perform, and the new language undermines the old beliefs.

I believe public art professionals know they must engage a pluralistic public in the process of building a world which includes art and are working toward ways to do

that, in the process disclosing the political nature of public art. By acknowledging the necessity to engage the public, to include and involve the public in the public art process, they are, like it or not, poking a hole in the walls of the aesthetic habitus, and changing the status quo. The very processes and practices in which they engage, regardless of their beliefs, are undermining the authority of art and the artist. Even the most reactionary of these public art professionals is complicit in that undermining by having to deal with the public in an active, persuasive involvement, using the discourse which is becoming appropriate to the public art process today. The metaphor of undermining implies a silent and slow structural process underneath what seems to be a solid structure. Even though the authority of art and the artist in the field of public art may continually be shored up, eventually, because of the undermining, they may collapse.

If people are, as Lorraine (1990) said, products of the social world in which they act, if they constitute a self and a world through language and are always pushing against the edges of the culture's constraints, then these interviews show that pushing. Public art professionals are constrained both by the aesthetic habitus and the public world in which they act and are constantly pushing against the edges of those constraints, as their language shows. They speak the language of the aesthetic habitus but are constrained by its limited view when they must act in the

public realm. They try to speak the language of the public sphere but again are constrained by the aesthetic view which limits their chances to see the public as decision-making participants or art as anything but a stimulus.

Nevertheless, many of them are not accepting those limitations without question, and are pushing toward readjusting the constraints of their social world, and are consciously or unconsciously, slowly undermining the authority of art and the artist in the process.

Limitations of the Research

One of the limitations of this study was laid out in the first chapter, that is, as researcher, I was as firmly embedded in the aesthetic habitus as the people I interviewed. There are undoubtedly many things I could not see because of that embeddedness. During the interviews I accepted their stories (which I have called public relations) at face value and did not challenge the contradictions I was later to uncover. Nor did I challenge their valuing of art and the artist as I had a similar presupposition.

In addition, I did not go back to them with my analysis and question them about its appropriateness. For example, I did not go back and ask if they would say that their most significant problem was placing art, with all that that implies, in public, with all that that implies. Nor did I ask if they would agree with the implications of "art" or

public as I laid them out. Nor did I suggest to them or ask them if they tried to solve that so-called problem by inviting people into the public art process in a political way or by asking artists to deal with it in a political way. Thus, I cannot say that anything I've suggested here would resonate with their experience or their understandings of their positions.

In fact the interviews suggest that many of these public art professionals would say it is artists who are directing their work, leading the way in the field of public art. They might say that, no, their most significant problem was not placing "art" in public, but rather was being the interface between the artist and the public. That is, some might say their most significant problem was keeping the artist within bounds while preparing in public a place for the artist to do his or her work. They said the ideas and changes in the field were coming from artists, and many public art professionals strongly recommended that I speak to the artists, which did not happen in this research. Artists are seen as controlling the new ways of public art and, although the definition of art has been allowed to float freely, the authority of those artists and of art itself remains in place in the discourse of these public art professionals. That authority is at odds with the ideal of egalitarianism in the public realm. Thus the problem of preparing a space in public for the artist to work necessitates inviting the public into a political process

where they may at least speak and sometimes act in the hopes of making that space they prepare welcoming to the artist. So they maintain the myth of the value of the artist (Bourdieu, 1987) and yet, as I said, by inviting the public into a political process they undermine the very authority they privilege.

Another limitation of this research was the small number of people interviewed (nineteen). There are hundreds of public art programs in the country yet there was no attempt in this research to do either a representative or a random sampling. However, some of the people to whom I spoke have been quite influential in the field, and thus are likely to have had some part in the cultural sensibilities at work today.

Another limitation is that each of the public art programs in this research was run differently with a different legal mandate, different budget restrictions, etc, (see Appendix A) and yet in here they were lumped together in a way that distinguished their approaches to the audience but not their approaches to their own work. Each of the critics or other ancillary people also had quite different roles and approaches to their work differing from one another and from the administrators with whom they were compared. Administrators spend money and make sure work gets placed, others discuss the results of that work. Yet they too were lumped together. This is not unlike my earlier complaint that public art professionals lump

community members into one undifferentiated mass.

Nevertheless I believe that what I suggest has emerged here as a picture of what is being said in public art, what is considered of value, and how public art professionals are seeing their jobs currently, is of interest for any further understanding of how people experience public art.

Implications of the Research

Regardless of its limitations, this research has pointed to certain practices and beliefs that may affect any eventual experience of public art and it leaves questions to be addressed.

Is the undermining of the authority of art and the artist really occurring in the trend toward community involvement in the public art process as I say, or is it just a temporary blip, the latest passing fad? Is what I am calling the political nature of public art really in place? Is there more public say in the process, as these public art professionals said, or has the art world just developed better public relations, able to talk about public involvement without actually engaging in it? Have public art professionals actually learned the persuasive ways of the politician where debate about issues of public concern is valued, as I say, or have they merely learned the ways of the advertiser, selling their product? Although I have said public art professionals are acting in a political way, I am interpreting their words. Further research must test this

premise from the perspective of the other people involved.

This was to be phase one of a planned three-phase research project. It is clear from the elements missing here--public artists, any in-depth look at the public art itself in context, and especially, the audience's own voice--that further work must be done to get a complete picture of how public art is being experienced. In the original plan, I hypothesized that what would be said here in the first phase would in turn affect what would be said in the third phase when the audience itself speaks. That is to say that the beliefs and practices of the public art professionals as they placed public art and spoke about it in public would become part of the cultural sensibilities and thus be available to the audience and affect their eventual experience of the artwork. Only empirical research will show whether this is so and the extent to which public art professionals' practices and beliefs ever make a difference in the everyday lives of a generalized public.

It would be important in future research to speak to those people whom public art professionals describe as being actively involved in the public art process. That is, people who were on any committees making decisions, people who were invited to express their concerns before the work but were not permitted decision making, and people who were invited to participate with the artist in designing and/or making the artwork. If there is community involvement or participation it would be important to compare the

understandings and experience of the people involved with that of the non-involved. It would be worthwhile to compare an involved but non-art community with an art-educated passer-by audience as well as to compare work placed without community input to work the community requested and helped plan as Israel (1988) did before. In terms of the artist, it would be important to know the artists's intentions and the art world's commitment to them to compare that to what people saw and experienced. It would be important to be aware of the public relations that went in place with the work in order to see if that affected any eventual experience of the work. If an educational component was part of a public art program, it would be important to see if it worked to allow people more understanding and thus a more complex or tolerant experience. On the other hand perhaps Bach was right that if the piece was complex enough to allow multiple meanings--including a use for the piece or its location--that would give even uneducated, uninterested people a way into the work. It would be a challenge to discover if there is actually community involvement occurring now, if the people who are the beneficiaries of public art feel they were somehow involved in the process of placement even if they were only informed, or if it still seems as if art is trucked in and plopped there. And then of course, it would be necessary to discover how such public art is experienced by people in the public environment in the light of these findings. Is there more to people's

experience of public art than that which was found by Degnore (1987) and Israel (1987)?

Public art remains a field in flux and although I have pointed at what I see as the direction of the change, the actual voice of the audience has yet to be heard on this view of the subject.

Doing this research has been an eye-opening process for me personally. As an artist who had been involved in public art projects, I discovered I had been quite ignorant of the complexity of the issues concerning public art and the role an artist could be expected to play. I was unaware as well of the wide-ranging importance of the concept of the political realm and had never thought about the implications of imposing an intersection on two worlds--the aesthetic habitus and the public world of everyday life. I have come out of this research seeing more clearly the nature of the particular and changing contextual concerns public art professionals must consider in their aesthetic, political, and technical roles of building a world with art.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

In order to have a clear point of reference for each person interviewed, a one-page synopsis follows. Each page includes:

1. name of person interviewed
2. date of interview
3. person's position
4. name of organization
 - a. where located
 - b. type of organization
 - c. larger organization it is part of
5. purpose of organization and/or person interviewed
6. kind of art placed
7. how sites chosen
8. how artists/artwork chosen
9. makeup of committees
10. funding sources
11. how funds are used

The people interviewed have been divided in the following way:

Those who place public art

Government, City

Church.....p.251
 Finkelpearl.....p.252
 Ogan.....p.253
 Roosevelt.....p.254
 Trasobares.....p.255

Government, State

Druckman.....p.256
 Feuer.....p.257
 Green.....p.258
 Kilroy.....p.259

Non-profit / Private

Bach.....p.260
 Brown.....p.261
 Clark.....p.262
 Moss.....p.263

Those who do not place public art

Bressler.....p.264
 Desir-Davis.....p.265
 Hooker.....p.266
 Lippard.....p.267
 Phillips.....p.268
 Senie.....p.269

1. **name:** Gordon Church
2. **date:** May, 1994
3. **position:** Director
4. **organization:** City of Albuquerque Public Art Program
 - a. **location:** Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** Capital Improvements Division--
-Planning Department--City of Albuquerque
5. **purpose:** further awareness of arts/culture; employment opportunities in the arts; integration of art into architecture. Give visual form to community's artistic traditions.
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff/board choose or departments request
8. **selection:** Requests for Proposals sent to artists, local planning committee chooses artwork.
9. **committees:** advisory - Arts Board: 9 members appointed by mayor, ratio 5 art world professionals/4 community members or vice versa
selection - Project Planning Committee: 7-11 members including Arts Board liaisons, user department representative, project design consultant, and a minimum of 2 representatives from the community or neighborhood.
10. **funds:** 1978 city ordinance; 1% for art, paid for with capital improvement bonds. Funds do not have to stay with specific project but must stay in department.
11. **funds used:** artist responsible from ground up, public art program pays landscaping, underground improvements, staff salaries

1. **name:** Tom Finkelpearl
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Director
4. **organization:** Percent for Art Program
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs
5. **purpose:** bring artists into design process, enrich city buildings
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff/Commissioner of Cultural Affairs choose from available sites
8. **selection:** artist selection panel chooses artist, may request proposals.
9. **committees:** advisory - none
selection - includes the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, a representative of the city agency, a representative of the design agency, 3 art world professionals, one of whom must live/work in borough
10. **funds:** 1982 city ordinance; 1% of capital budget to be spent on art, paid for with capital improvement bonds. Funds have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** artist responsible for all expenses. Staff paid by City of New York.

1. **name:** Larry Ogan
2. **date:** May, 1994
3. **position:** Chair
4. **organization:** Art in Public Places Committee
 - a. **location:** Santa Fe, New Mexico
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** City of Santa Fe Arts Commission
5. **purpose:** further awareness of arts/culture; employment opportunities in the arts; integration of art into architecture
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff/committee/city employees/public generate ideas for sites. Committee chooses from suggestions and priority plan for city
8. **selection:** Requests for Proposals sent to artists, jury chooses artwork.
9. **committees:** advisory - Art in Public Places Committee: 7 members: Arts Commissioner, community representatives, historian, architect/landscape architect/urban planner, art world professionals
 - Community Advisory Committee: as liaison between project and community
 - selection - Arts Commissioner, Art in Public Places Committee member, art world professionals, community representatives
10. **funds:** 1985 city ordinance; 1% of not all Capital Improvements Projects bonds is set aside for art. A pool of revenue is accumulated, funds do not have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** artist responsible for all expenses. Entire committee is volunteer.

1. **name:** Rita K. Roosevelt [left job 1992]
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Public Art Coordinator
4. **organization:** Percent for Art Program
 - a. **location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** City of Philadelphia, Office of Arts and Culture
5. **purpose:** aesthetic ornamentation of city structures
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artwork
7. **sites:** staff choose from available sites
8. **selection:** requests proposals, jury chooses artists
9. **committees:** advisory - art world professionals, architects
selection - changes for each selection, art world professionals
10. **funds:** 1959 city ordinance; up to 1% of capital budget for city construction, funded with capital improvement bonds. Funds have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** artist responsible for all expenses. Staff paid by City of Philadelphia.

 Rita Roosevelt, at the time of the interview, was also the Director, of the Public Art Institute, a non-profit/private organization whose purpose is to gather information on public art practices. The organization does not place art.

1. **name:** Cesar Trasobares [left job, 1990]
2. **date:** August, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** (ex) Executive Director
4. **organization:** Metro-Dade Art In Public Places
 - a. **location:** Miami, Florida
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** Metro-Dade Art in Public Places Trust, Metropolitan Dade County
5. **purpose:** commission site-specific art for the community
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** Trust chooses from available new building projects in county, clarified by Master Plan.
8. **selection:** Professional Advisory Committee chooses artist.
9. **committees:** advisory - Metro-Dade Art in Public Places Trust: 15 member citizen advisory
selection - Professional Advisory Committee: 11 members, national and local art world professionals. Three members follow through project.
10. **funds:** 1973 county ordinance; 1.5% of cost of county construction. Funds may now be pooled in trust fund and do not have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** trust fund pays for project costs, administration, education, and maintenance (artist's fee 10-15% of total budget)

1. **name:** Sidney Druckman
2. **date:** June, 1991
3. **position:** Director of Special Projects
4. **organization:** Battery Park City Authority
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** Battery Park City Authority,
State of New York
5. **purpose:** engage artists in planning/design of open spaces
6. **kind of art:** permanent and temporary public artworks, performing arts
7. **sites:** Fine Arts Committee recommends projects in line with Master Plan.
8. **selection:** Fine Arts Committee chooses artist from consultant's recommendation.
9. **committees:** advisory - Fine Arts Committee of BPCA: art world professionals
selection - Fine Arts Committee
10. **funds:** State Authority established by bonds. Land owned by state, leased to developers who contribute a percentage of construction costs to the Authority. Funds do not have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** Authority pays project costs, administration, artists fees.

1. **name:** Wendy Feuer
2. **date:** August, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Director
4. **organisation:** Arts for Transit and Facilities Design
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** Department of Policy and Planning, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, State of New York
5. **purpose:** incorporate visual and performing arts programs into MTA facilities for enjoyment/enrichment of transit riders.
6. **kind of art:** permanent and temporary public artworks, performing arts
7. **sites:** staff recommends from available sites
8. **selection:** panel chooses several artists to submit proposals, commissions one.
9. **committees:** advisory - Arts for Transit Advisory Committee: art world professionals, community professionals
selection - MTA people, art world professionals
10. **funds:** 1982 MTA Capital program, bonds, for restoration. Funds stay with station. In some cases, developers above ground have to contribute percent for art funds to subway stations; those funds stay with project.
11. **funds used:** proposals paid honorarium, artist responsible for all but occasionally installation paid for by Authority. Staff paid by MTA.

1. **name:** Anne Green
2. **date:** June, 1994
3. **position:** Coordinator
4. **organization:** Art in Public Places Program
 - a. **location:** Santa Fe, New Mexico
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** State of New Mexico Arts Division, Office of Cultural Affairs
5. **purpose:** to acquire art for certain public buildings all around state
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff/local committee chooses from available sites
8. **selection:** local selection committee develops prospectus, open submission by artists, committee chooses artwork/artist.
9. **committees:** advisory - Local Advisory/Selection Committee: 7 members. representative of user, owner, project architect, local art professionals, 2 community members at large
 - selection - same as above
10. **funds:** 1978 state statute; 1% of construction costs. Funds have to stay with specific project.
11. **funds used:** artist responsible for all expenses. Staff paid by state.

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1. **name:** Mary A. Kilroy [retired, 1993]
2. **date:** June 13, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Director
4. **organization:** Fine Arts Program
 - a. **location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - b. **kind:** Government/percent for art program
 - c. **larger organization:** Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA)
5. **purpose:** commission contemporary public art for new development in urban renewal areas and newly constructed buildings on RDA land
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff recommends from available sites, no housing sites
8. **selection:** Fine Arts Committee/panel/jury chooses several artists to submit proposals from recommendations of art consultant or two-tier competitions, commissions one.
9. **committees:** advisory - Fine Arts Committee of RDA: art world professionals, architect, landscape architect
selection - includes Fine Arts Committee, developer, architect, art consultant
jury - art world professionals
10. **funds:** 1959 resolution, 1% of construction costs on Redevelopment Authority land. RDA land sold to developers. Authority chartered by state, can float capital bonds. Small amounts (less than \$10,000) can be pooled and such funds do not have to stay with specific project. Funds can be pooled by specific developers. Staff salary paid by RDA.
11. **funds used:** proposals paid honorarium, artist responsible for expenses, developer pays site improvements. RDA pays staff salaries.

1. **name:** Penny Balkin Bach
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Executive Director
4. **organization:** Fairmount Park Art Association
 - a. **location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - b. **kind:** private/non profit
 - c. **larger organization:** none
5. **purpose:** humanize environment by artists
6. **kind of art:** permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** staff/artists suggest sites
8. **selection:** staff/board choose artist-instigated project proposals, commission research and development, sometimes commission final artwork.
9. **committees:** advisory - Board of Trustees, 18 members made up of cross-section of professional community
selection - Sub-Committee of Board, complete Board must approve
10. **funds:** endowment, grants from foundations and government, membership
11. **funds used:** endowment pays salaries, research and development; grants fund rest. FPAA pays artist fees and all site costs.

1. **name:** Cee Scott Brown [left job, 1994]
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Executive Director
4. **organization:** Creative Time
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** private/non profit
 - c. **larger organization:** none
5. **purpose:** present public art, support work of artists
6. **kind of art:** temporary public installations, performance, and media works
7. **sites:** artists suggest sites, CT curates used architectural sites.
8. **selection:** panels choose artist instigated project proposals, staff may have discretionary projects
9. **committees:** advisory - Board of Directors made up of art world professionals
selection - panels made up of art world professionals
10. **funds:** grants from government and foundations
11. **funds used:** pays artist fees, certain budget for artwork, documentation and publicity.

1. **name:** James M. Clark
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Executive Director
4. **organization:** The Public Art Fund, Inc.
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** private/non profit
 - c. **larger organization:** none
5. **purpose:** securing place for artwork within urban landscape, artists can make a difference in the urban environment.
6. **kind of art:** temporary and permanent public artworks
7. **sites:** artists suggest sites, PAF curates certain sites in city.
8. **selection:** panels choose artist instigated project proposals.
9. **committees:** advisory - Board of Directors, 19 member civic and art world leaders
 - for some new projects: locally based advisory board including art world professionals, business and community leaders and representatives
 - selection - panels: art world professionals, may include community members
10. **funds:** private donations, grants from government and foundations, corporations
11. **funds used:** PAF pays artist fees, all costs.

1. **name:** Marsha Moss
2. **date:** June, 1991 [update: September, 1994]
3. **position:** Director
4. **organization:** Sculpture Outdoors (SO), Artfront Partnership (AP)
 - a. **location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - b. **kind:** private
 - c. **larger organization:** none
5. **purpose:** exhibit sculpture outdoors or vacant store fronts
6. **kind of art:** temporary visual artworks
7. **sites:** SO finds sites for groups shows, AP curates sites
8. **selection:** staff/advisory committee choose artist proposals.
9. **committees:** advisory - for AP, art world professionals, business and government representatives and civic activists
selection - advisory committee for AP, staff for SO
10. **funds:** grants from government, foundations, corporations, financial institutions
11. **funds used:** SO pays artist fees, catalogue, publicity. Artist pays all other costs. AP gives artist budget depending on project.

1. **name:** Sandy Gross Bressler
2. **date:** June, 1991
3. **position:** Executive Director
4. **organization:** Philadelphia Art Commission
 - a. **location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - b. **kind:** government
 - c. **larger organization:** City of Philadelphia
5. **purpose:** approve art and design in city
6. **kind of art:** does not place art
7. **sites:** entire city
8. **selection:** none
9. **committees:** advisory - Art Commission: members include art world professionals, architect, landscape architect, business executive, Commissioner of Public Property. appointed by mayor
10. **funds:** none
11. **funds used:** city pays staff salaries, commission members appointed without compensation

1. **name:** Dorothy Desir-Davis
2. **date:** June, 1991
3. **position:** independent curator
4. **organization:** Studio Museum of Harlem
 - a. **location:** New York, New York
 - b. **kind:** private/non-profit
 - c. **larger organization:** none
5. **purpose:** curate show about public art in minority neighborhoods
6. **kind of art:** does not place art
7. **sites:** State Office Building, 125th St., NY
8. **selection:** curator chooses documentation of artworks
9. **committees:** advisory - Museum's Board of Directors
10. **funds:** government
11. **funds used:** Museum pays salary, government grant pays show expenses (funding cut, show canceled)

1. **name:** Richard Hooker
2. **date:** May, 1994
3. **position:** Coordinator
4. **organization:** Save Outdoor Sculpture!
 - a. **location:** Santa Fe, New Mexico
 - b. **kind:** private/non-profit
 - c. **larger organization:** national Save Outdoor Sculpture! Washington, DC
5. **purpose:** locate, identify, and collect data on all publicly accessible outdoor sculpture in state.
6. **kind of art:** does not place art
7. **sites:** state of New Mexico
8. **selection:** staff/volunteers identify art
9. **committees:** advisory - national Board of Directors
selection - at each locality, a volunteer organization, art-related or Chamber of Commerce, suggests art.
10. **funds:** government grant
11. **funds used:** federal grant pays staff salary, expenses; state pays second year; most work volunteer effort.

1. **name:** Lucy R. Lippard
2. **date:** May 21, 1994
3. **position:** writer/activist
4. **organization:** none
 - a. **location:** New Mexico, New York
 - b. **kind:** NA
 - c. **larger organization:** NA
5. **purpose:** look at artist as part of society, not isolated individual
6. **kind of art:** does not place art
7. **sites:** wherever
8. **selection:** interested in art that interacts with community
9. **committees:** has served on selection committee
10. **funds:** publishers pay for writing
11. **funds used:** NA

1. **name:** Patricia C. Phillips
 2. **date:** June, 1991
 3. **position:** critic/teacher, Environmental Design Department, Parsons School of Art
 4. **organization:** none as critic
 - a. **location:** New York
 - b. **kind:** NA
 - c. **larger organization:** NA
 5. **purpose:** encourage discourse about public art
 6. **kind of art:** does not place art
 7. **sites:** wherever
 8. **selection:** art that pushes boundaries of public art
 9. **committees:** has served on selection committees
 10. **funds:** publishers pay for writing
 11. **funds used:** NA
- .
- .

1. **name:** Harriet F. Senie
2. **date:** June, 1991
3. **position:** critic/teacher, Art History Department, City College of New York
4. **organization:** none as critic
 - a. **location:** New York
 - b. **kind:** NA
 - c. **larger organization:** NA
5. **purpose:** write about contemporary public art
6. **kind of art:** does not place art
7. **sites:** wherever
8. **selection:** issues of controversy, areas where art and public intersect
9. **committees:** has served on selection committees
10. **funds:** publishers pay for writing
11. **funds used:** NA

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: ART WORLD PROFESSIONALS

[Additions made in 1994 are in boldface italic.]

INTRO: I'm a graduate student working on a dissertation about public art. I know that you are a specialist in the field of public art and I'd like to interview you about this topic. I'd like to ask questions about public art in general and your role as a professional in the public art process and also about your own experiencing of art in the public realm.

1. FOR ART PROFESSIONALS WHO PRIMARILY PLACE PERMANENT WORK: First could we talk about what happens (in this organization) in the process of placing public art. How is it decided which sites will get public art? What is the process of deciding what kind of public art should go there? How do you decide who will pay for it? *[PROBE: where does money come from, how is it distributed? How is the organization supported? Who decides on the allocation of money?]*. How do you find artists or work to choose from? How do you make the final choices? Could you give me two different examples of how an artist was chosen and why that artist over other options?

1. FOR ART PROFESSIONALS WHO PRIMARILY PLACE TEMPORARY WORK: How do you find sites where public art can be installed? How do you decide to sponsor group shows versus individual pieces? How do you choose artists and/or art work? Do you pay artists? Where does the money come from? How is the organization supported? *[PROBE: where does the money go?]*.

1. FOR ART PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE PRIMARILY CRITICS: How do you decide which public art you will write about? What is your process of investigating the piece? *[PROBE: Are you paid? By whom? (If free lance: Do you ever pitch a story?)]* *[PROBE: Who is your audience? Does what you write differ depending on audience?]* Have you been involved in the decision-making process about public art? Could you tell me about it?

2. FOR PERM. AND TEMP. PROFS.: Then what happens? What are some of the problems and issues that come up in the course of placing the art? Do you ever run into conflicts with the various people involved? How do you solve them?

3. FOR ALL: In this study I'd like to look at both successful and unsuccessful examples of public art. In your own mind, what do you think is the most successful piece of public art (either that you have been involved with or not)? Why? The most unsuccessful? Why? Do you have any idea if other people would agree with you? Why? (why not?) (You can give more than one example.)

4. FOR ALL: I'd like to talk about public art in general now. What do you mean when you say "public art?" [PROBE: What or who is the "public" of public art?] [PROBE: Would you consider what has been called public art to be "art?" If yes, why, If not, why not?] [If they use the phrases "public realm" "public space" "public life": PROBE: What do you mean when you say "public space?" "public realm?" "public life?" If they do not use the phrases: PROBE: Various people talk about public space, the public realm, public life. What do these phrases mean to you?] Can you talk a little about what you see as the difference between art in museums - or somehow "private" spaces - and art when it is in the public realm? Do you think there should be public art? Why? What should it be like? What are your thoughts about permanent public art versus temporary public art?

5. FOR ALL: How did you get involved in the field of public art? Why do you stay in it? What is your background? Could you define your role as an art professional in this field of public art? Could you define the role of the artist in this field? [PROBE: Is the person who designs public art an "artist?" Why?, why not? What if it comes out of a participatory process, is it "art?" Who is the "artist?"] Finally, could you define the audience for public art [PROBE again: who, what where is the "public" of public art?] What is their role in the process, if any? How about the local community [PROBE: Who, what is the community?], or the people who will have to live with the piece? Do art professionals and artists have a responsibility toward the audience? Toward the local community? [PROBE: Have you ever been involved in community participation? (if yes: Could you tell me about it?) PROBE: What do you think of community participation? What does it mean to you? To your organization? Have you dealt with minority involvement? How?] What is the government's role in the process, if any?

6. FOR ALL: Ultimately I'm trying to understand people's experiencing of art that is in the public realm. If you'd be willing, I would like to talk about your own personal experiencing of public art and art in general. Could you tell me about specific pieces of public art you've experienced and what that experience was like? Do you think there is a difference, in your own experience, between art that is in the public realm and art that is somehow more private? Could you tell me about a past experiences with art, in general, that was particularly special? Can you try to verbalize what you experienced? Can you describe how you felt? What you thought? Was this special experience similar to other experiences? In what ways? Are these experiences common? What do you think about these experiences? Do you value them?

7. Do public artists and administrators make an effort to reach a non-art audience? What do you mean by that? Do you think that the audience needs to be educated to understand and appreciate public art? If yes, how should this be done? If no, should people feel they have the right and the ability to express their opinions? How should this be done?

8. What do you call the people who go to the public art sites? [PROBE: It seems, in relation to public art nowadays, that the people who go to the sites are often termed "users," where in the past they may have been called "viewers." What do you think of that?]

9. Do you have any questions for me?

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