

# planning for grassroots arts development: a research study of nine communities in transition

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*Works of art that are not remote from common experience, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life.*

—John Dewey,  
Art as Experience

*The future will see in [art], she herself will once more see in herself, the servant of a community which will comprise far more than "education" and will not have culture but will perhaps be a culture.*

—Thomas Mann,  
Doctor Faustus

## SUMMARY

This paper assumes that democratic, grassroots art is a basic goal of arts developers and community arts leaders, and attempts to delineate steps to this goal.

*\*Since this article and Gard's The Arts in the Small Community (page 82 of this issue of Arts in Society) strongly interrelate, it is suggested that they be read in tandem.*



We surveyed nine communities on their attitudes towards the arts, and the specific reactions of five of these communities towards the arts program for which they had been the setting. We analyzed the changes preliminary attitudes must undergo before "democracy" can be achieved. This seems to be a three-staged process.

1) Initially, the entire population of an area is receptive to the arts, and desires the availability of more arts activity. 2) But the intervention of an arts program results in the well-known phenomenon of women, the well-educated, and the white collar and professional workers being the chief supporters of the program, while the rest of the population grows alienated and bitter towards the arts. 3) Finally, to eliminate the attitudinal split in Stage 2, indigenous programs must be undertaken from within the community; this appears to raise the receptivity and participation of the entire community, erasing the sex, education, and job effects of Stage 2.

It is important (and surprising) to note, however, that attaining the Stage 3 goal of democracy may depend upon the attitudinal polarization of Stage 2—and hence developing organizations may have to plan, staff, and fund each grassroots undertaking in stages rather than in one all-or-nothing program.

## INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the arts council on both national and local levels, democracy in the arts is becoming a widely accepted goal of arts administrators. This new ethic demands the involvement of the entire American public, not just the elite previously associated with the arts. As with any new trend, however, individuals, organizations, and funding sources involved in arts development cannot immediately discern the most efficient paths to their goal. The percentage of programs which fail is high. Criteria of success and failure, in fact, have not yet been defined. Research, the backbone of any established field, is only beginning.

We hope that this study, based on extensive research, can suggest some tangible aids in

arts development. It consists of an analysis of the University of Wisconsin Department of Extension Arts' three-year program whose goal was "to pioneer in the area of arts development in small communities."<sup>1</sup> The program terminated in 1969; it is most useful to analyze the long-range effects of this program now that five years have passed, for it was clearly a goal of U.W. Extension Arts to change, permanently, arts-related activity in their five chosen project communities. If we find no effects of the program now, the project could, by its own standards, be labeled a failure.

Increased arts activity in a community, however, depends upon basic changes in attitude on the part of a substantial percentage of the population. The presence of an arts project in a community not previously exposed to the arts is likely to be a highly charged emotional issue, stirring up tremendous bitterness and enthusiasm. That this seems to be the case is evident from a small study done in 1968 which compared the attitudes of two towns, comparable in all respects except for the presence of an arts program in one.<sup>2</sup> It seems that towns which are the scene of a major arts endeavor become intensely polarized as a result. In the present study we intend to explore the nature of these opinions and try to extrapolate guidelines for community arts leaders.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE 1966-1969 PROGRAM, "THE ARTS IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY"<sup>3</sup>

*The Arts in the Small Community* is the handbook which grew out of the three-year project. The first question which must be faced, of course, is, "Why bother with small communities at all?" In answering this, the authors state the objectives of their project:

*Modern art activity can provide a new birth, and new creative directions of usefulness for [small communities]. As art activity is developed, the community is recreated. The vital roots of every phase of life are touched. As the community is awakened to its opportunity in the arts, it becomes a laboratory through which the vision of the region is reformulated and extended. And as the small community discovers its role, as the small community generates freshness of aesthetic response across the changing American scene, American life and art are enhanced. (p.6)*

Five communities were chosen in Wisconsin, each with a different size, geographic location, and kind of population. They were similar only in their minimal exposures to the arts. During the three-year period a barrage of activities ensued, each with the goal of encouraging the entire population of the towns to become involved in the arts, in either audience or participant capacities. In the brief descriptions below, only the most important activities are mentioned:

**Spring Green**, population 1100 in 1965, located in southwestern Wisconsin, is primarily a farming community and market center. Project activities included: the purchase of the unused movie house by an out-of-town corporation for renovation into a theatre; the building of a restaurant from a Frank Lloyd Wright design (built by the same out-of-town corporation); bringing touring plays and movie festivals to town; sponsoring an intensive summer project which included basing the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre in Spring Green for its summer season; and conducting classes in numerous arts forms for adults and children. Of the five towns, Spring Green's project was without doubt the most intensive.

**Waupun**, population 7935, is a major market center in east-central Wisconsin on the edge of a huge wildlife refuge which draws thousands of tourists. Activities included: hosting a Midwest Sculpture Show; a ten-day fall arts festival coinciding with the fall influx of tourists; the remodeling of the city hall to serve as a civic theatre; the establishment of a community craft center; and visits by theatre and ballet companies.

**Portage**, population 7822, is a very old and historic community, whose project included: the establishment of the Lively Arts Council (ongoing to date); a planned outdoor amphitheatre (cancelled); numerous touring shows; coffee hours held on each block for neighbors to discuss the arts; and the establishment of a community chorus.

**Adams-Friendship**, combined population 1861, is a rather poor community in central Wisconsin. Here the project was probably most minimal, but it included ceramics classes; the

**Boy in Blue** by Lynn Miller, oil on canvas, August, Wisconsin. Reprinted from *Twentieth-Century American Folk Art* by Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr. and Julia Weissman. Courtesy: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.





organization of informal painters' and writers' groups; performances by touring ballet and theatre groups; and a major Sound and Light Show.

**Rhinelander**, population 8790, is a year-round resort and industrial community in northern Wisconsin. Primarily the project here involved the foundation of a Summer School of the Arts which draws students nationwide. (It is ongoing to date, partially staffed and sponsored by local groups.) As part of the School, numerous readings, plays, musicals, and concerts were offered to the public.

**METHOD**

Our goal was to test attitudes towards the arts in the five project communities mentioned above, and for purposes of comparison we introduced four similar communities which had had no formal arts program.<sup>4</sup> These "comparison" towns are:

**Highland**—comparable to Spring Green;

**A Day in the Life of Loganville, 1907**, Sauk County, Wis. Scenes from the film by Fritz Albert, UW-Extension Journalism. Role play for adults and children by Helen O'Brien, Youth Development Program, UW-Extension Arts,

**Baraboo**—comparable to Waupun and Portage (except that Baraboo is the setting for a U.W. Campus Center with an active arts program.)

**Antigo**—comparable to Rhinelander;

**Wautoma**—comparable to Adams-Friendship.

We also, of course, wished to test the related problem of behavior: have people, for example, acquired the habit of attending performances as a result of the grant project?

These research goals resulted in a strategy that was more policy-oriented than survey-oriented. One of the few other pieces of systematic research in the arts, *Arts and The People*,<sup>5</sup> employed a very different strategy based upon a different set of research goals. This study is a pioneering attempt to establish a benchmark of artistic attitudes and par-

ticipation over a wide and diverse geographical area (New York state). Here the generality of the goal precludes systematic probing of the roots of the opinions and behaviors surveyed. The major finding of *Arts and The People*—that the potential base for the arts is a much broader one than most planners previously believed—is a useful and striking one. But the scale of the study did not allow much analysis of the true nature of this population. To know that 81% of the New York population is receptive to the arts is in itself comforting, but we would be foolish indeed to take this as it stands without hard thinking about the many ways in which this "receptivity" comes out.

The scope of our problem is much smaller. We are dealing with very clearly delineated populations and our analysis is directed at answering some very specific causal questions about the effectiveness of past policy. Since

Madison. Photos by William Scheutte. "We, in Extension Education cannot teach art, music, drama, the sciences or the humanities to boys and girls in the state. We can only hope to help them find out who they are." — Helen O'Brien

our concern with surveying broad attitudes was small (in the present study), it is particularly satisfying for us to note that many of the findings of the New York survey, especially those pointing to the utility of local organizations, were strongly corroborated by our own.

We developed a questionnaire<sup>6</sup> and mailed it to 150 addresses in each of the nine towns; names were randomly selected from the telephone books. Questions fell into several categories: simple awareness of the arts offerings (if any) in town at the moment; attitudes towards what is currently available; description of the ideal arts situation for the community; actual behavior and performance questions; recollected feelings about the 1966-1969 venture, where applicable.

We received a 40% response rate, high for a mailed questionnaire. Upon examining the respondents, and comparing them with the census figures for age, sex, and occupational distribution, we were convinced that the respondents were truly representative of each community.



We deliberately omit most statistics for the sake of brevity and readability. The computer analysis was, as can be imagined, massive. However, we are prepared to back up every statement in the following sections with statistics from the cross-tabulation, multiple correlation and regression techniques used. All conclusions here stated are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level or beyond. We append a short methodological appendix for those unfamiliar with statistical testing procedures.

Our basic question, then, is "What determines the artistic life of a town?"

## ANALYSIS

### I. GENERAL DETERMINANTS OF "ARTISTIC LIFE" (towns taken together)

We present here the results of analysis directed at examining the determinants of artistic life in a town. Several tasks are involved:

- A. To assess the effects of *demographic* background factors such as sex, education, and age, upon the artistic life of a town, and, similarly, to assess the effects of *artistic* background factors (involvement in the arts while in school).
- B. To compare the performance levels among towns, in order to lay the foundations for assessing the impact of individual programs and for further analysis of each town (treated in depth in Section II).
- C. Finally, to weigh the relative effects of background and specific programs in order to judge the "real" impact of programs upon each town.

#### A. Effects of Background on the Artistic Life of a Community

Six demographic factors plus the artistic background factor will be examined as to their impact on three basic artistic areas: *attitudes* towards the arts, defined in terms of desires (e.g., "there should be more art

*Garden with Chapel of Brotherhood* by Paul L. Wagner, c. 1930, concrete and mixed media, Sparta, Wis. Photos by Roger Brown. Reprinted from *Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists* by Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr. and Julia Weissman. Courtesy: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

available in town") and awareness of the status quo (e.g., "there is presently an arts council in town"); *performance* in the arts through attendance at and participation in arts events and classes; and orientations to *professional versus local non-professional* organizations in the community.

#### 1. Demographic factors

a. Sex. This is a powerful background variable in all three artistic areas. Women are consistently higher than men in favorable attitudes towards the arts. They perceive the importance of arts in the communities as greater than do men, and they desire it more. Further, more women (50%) than men (39%) feel that the amount of art available in the community is inadequate. Women are consistently more active than men in all areas of artistic participation. For example, 50% of women report having attended a dramatic performance in the past year, while only 33% of men did so.

Although the results are ambiguous in the professional versus local question, it appears that the sex-effect is weakened in a local setting: more men are likely to get involved, through attendance or participation, if the organization is locally-based and non-professional.

b. Education. Level of education is also a powerful background factor with effects similar to those for sex. Looking at attitudes, education does not seem to affect awareness of the status quo, but does have an impact upon desires: better-educated people tend to want more art in their communities. 62% of college-educated people report "too little art" while only 37% of high school-educated people do so.

Education also has a considerable impact upon all artistic involvement. Attendance rates for college-educated people run 15-30% higher than those for others. In the cases of both attitudes and activities, however, education effects taper off as high levels of education are reached. While grade school-educated people are less active than the high school-educated, and the high school-educated less active than the college-educated, training beyond college does not seem to matter very much.

The "tapering off" phenomenon in education

reveals an interesting pattern in the professional versus local issue. If a professional organization is involved, education effects are as above—college-educated people are the most willing to attend and participate. But if the organizational framework is local, there is no significant difference between the two groups in willingness to attend; only the grade school-educated show a consistently low pattern. The use of a local organization has the effect of weakening the powerful impact of education in artistic performance.

c. Marital status. This has no effect upon either artistic performance or participation.

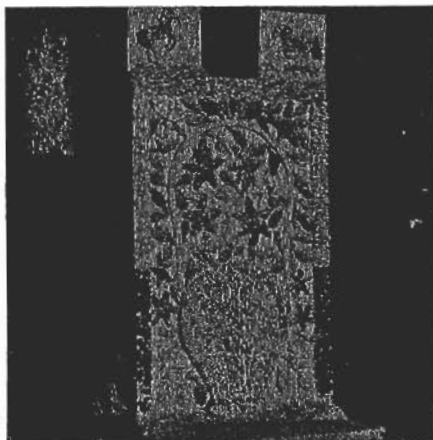
d. Occupation. The effects of occupation, though not so strong as those of education, reveal a similar pattern. Occupation does not influence perceptions of arts in the community, but has an impact on desires. 60% of professionals and 52% of white-collar workers report "too little art in my community" while only 37% of blue-collar workers and 31% of farmers do so.

People with high occupational status tend to participate more in artistic activities than do others, but here the effects are not quite so important as those for education. As in the case of education, if professional organizations are involved, occupational status tends to determine participation. But if organization is local, the results are even more striking than those for education. All occupational groups are willing to participate with about the same frequency. Farmers, for example, shift from 38% to 60% in willingness to participate when the framework is shifted from professional to local, while white collar and professional workers remain stable at about 70% and 80% respectively.

e. Age. This variable factor has a slight impact on perceptions of arts in the community, but very little on desires. Age has no effect upon participation in the arts.

f. Length of residence. This has a slight impact on both perceptions and desires. New residents perceive art as less important than people of longer residence. On the other hand, new residents are slightly more likely than others to participate in what arts activities are available.

2. Artistic background



reflected in school experience—participation and attendance in arts events—is highly associated with both artistic attitudes and performance.<sup>7</sup> School participants outnumber non-participants approximately 3 to 2 in pro-art attitudes and participation, and those who attended in school outnumber those who did not 2 to 1. It is interesting to note that, unlike general background factors, the effects of artistic background are not changed by substituting a local for a professional organization in the community. The “habit” of participation seems to override the effects of any particular organizational arrangement.

Since artistic background affects the artistic life of the community, it is important to inquire briefly into the determinants of artistic background. Once again, it is not surprising to learn that sex, education, and occupation are all highly associated with artistic background in the expected way. This suggests the possibility of a two-staged effect upon the artistic life of the community. While artistic background has an impact, it is itself affected by general background. At the same time, general background has a direct impact upon the artistic life of a community.<sup>8</sup>

In general, we see that artistic attitudes and participation in community arts are to a large extent determined by education, occupation, and sex. This is hardly startling. Program administrators have long been aware of the problems they face in getting people—especially men—with low education and low occupational status involved in the arts as either participants or consumers. What *is* a striking finding is that use of a locally-based non-professional organization often drastically reduces the effects of general background. Local organizations have the potential of involving a much greater variety of people than do centrally-administered professional groups visiting the community.

## B. Differences in Performance by Town

### 1. Attitude.

Two project towns, Spring Green and Adams-Friendship, are at the extremes in reporting “too little art” in their communities—13% and 87% respectively. Two non-project towns, Baraboo (28%) and Highland (70%) exhibit the same patterns, but less strongly. Antigo, a third non-project town, closely



Holy Ghost Park, by Father Mathias Wernerus, c. 1921-31, mixed media, Dickeyville, Wis. Reprinted from

follows Highland with 63% reporting “too little art” in the community. The remaining towns, three project and one non-project, lie in the middle, at about 40% reporting “too little.”

These relationships appear complex—and so they are—but making sense of them is not too difficult. First, it seems clear that the effects of projects are not uniform—different towns are affected in different ways. Spring Green was the target of the most intensive project, while Adams’ project was the most minimal. What appears to have happened is straightforward: Spring Green residents are artistically satisfied, while Adams-Friendship residents desire satisfaction more than any other town. The maximal program in Spring Green reduced demand by providing multiple opportunities; the minimal program in Adams-Friendship created demand by providing a glimpse of what could be. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that Spring Green and Adams-Friendship residents both report programs to have had a great impact—more so in fact than in any other project town.

The fact that Baraboo exhibits a pattern similar to Spring Green’s may be accounted for by the existence of the U.W. Center in town with its active arts program. Highland and Antigo seem to want programs, but not as much as Adams which has had a taste of one.

### 2. Performance.

Our findings for artistic participation generally



Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists by Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr. and Julla Welssman. Courtesy: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

follow the pattern of attitudes outlined above. Spring Green residents are high participants in all activities, while Adams residents are low participants. Reflecting their attitudes, however, Adams-Friendship residents are by far the most willing to travel elsewhere to participate in arts activities. Thus their low participation seems to be largely caused by the lack of opportunity in the community.

As expected, Baraboo residents are high participants in most activities. Highland and Antigo both report very low participation, though not as low as Adams-Friendship residents. Unlike Adams, however, neither report undue willingness to travel.

Taken together, results for attitudes and for participation yield a very consistent picture. Arts programs influence both the level of demand for arts in the community, and the level of demand-fulfillment. Spring Green is a highly fulfilled community with high participation and little desire for additional opportunities. Adams is a highly motivated but as yet unfulfilled community. In both cases, programs seem to have had considerable impact though in different areas.

Participation rates for the other three project towns are generally higher than those for non-project towns with the exception of Baraboo which enjoys the active Arts Extension programs. Yet these three towns exhibit only average desires for more artistic opportunity.

Here the effect of projects seems to have been to raise demand slightly and to then satisfy the raised demand. This results in raised participation but only an average sense of satisfaction.

Thus we may tentatively conclude that minimal programs raise demand without raising participation, maximal programs eliminate demand through full satisfaction, while moderate programs raise both demand and participation slightly, resulting in higher participation, but a basically unchanged level of satisfaction.

## C. Combined Effects

Knowing the independent influences of each background factor on artistic attitudes and participation is only part of our story. We would also like to know the *relative* importance of these factors in their influence. Multiple regression is a statistical technique which allows us to gain such knowledge.

On both attitudes and performance, sex and education emerge as the most powerful general background factors. Occupation is not nearly as important a factor as simple tabular analysis had led us to believe. As expected, artistic background emerged as an independent factor, although weaker than might be thought at first as inherent “education effects” are now eliminated. The presence of a project appears to be an important factor in attitudes, but not in performance. This seems reasonable given our earlier finding on the different effects of varying levels of project intensity. While in a maximal program participation was increased, in moderate programs satisfaction was increased more than levels of participation were raised.

## II. RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN TOWNS (towns analyzed individually)

In the preceding section we have noted the effects of background on performance in general. Next we would like to know whether these effects are consistent or differ among towns. If there are differences, we may legitimately ask if the presence or absence of a project could account for them. For example, we previously noted that people with higher education tended to have more favorable attitudes towards art in their communities, and to participate in activities to a greater extent than those with less education. We now want to know whether this is a general effect

occurring in all towns, or just in some. If it occurs only in some, we want to know if the presence or absence of a project may have had something to do with it.

Our analysis reveals two things. First, there is no significant difference between towns in the effects of background factors on *participation* in arts activities. Second, towns may be broken down into three groups, each with its own pattern of relationships between background factors and attitudes towards arts in the community.

In line with our previous findings, Group I consists of a single town—Spring Green. While sex, education, and occupation are all strongly associated with participation in Spring Green (as they are in all other towns), these background factors have absolutely no impact upon attitudes towards the arts in the community.

Group II consists of the other four project towns—Adams-Friendship, Portage, Rhineland, Waupun—and one non-project town—Baraboo. Group II displays just the opposite pattern from Spring Green. Here sex, education, and sometimes occupation are generally related to artistic attitudes; female, highly-educated, high-status people tend to favor more art than others. Participation, as in Spring Green, is also associated with these factors.

Group III, consisting of the remaining three non-project towns—Antigo, Highland, and Wautoma—lies between Groups I and II. Background factors occasionally affect attitudes, but not across the board. Sex seems to be the most consistent factor, with education and occupation following in that order.

We are now in a position to assess the impact of projects on a somewhat higher level. Once again, we have a pattern with project towns at the extremes of a distribution, with non-project towns (except Baraboo) in the middle. In Spring Green, the impact of background upon attitudes was *eliminated*; in the other towns this effect was *amplified*. (The presence of Baraboo in Group II, once again, seems explained by its “abnormal” exposure to the arts through the University system.) Our earlier hypothesis that the intensity of the project is the key to unraveling the mystery again seems supported by the fact that

Adams, the town with the least intense project, is closer to the non-project pattern than any other Group II town.

We earlier made the point that projects of moderate to low intensity seem to shift attitudes more than behavior. We now can see that this shift has taken place along lines of education, occupation, and sex. A community “elite” is mobilized with raised expectations and desires. It is only in situations with a high level of intensity, such as in Spring Green, that the expectations of the elite are met (with greater participation, accordingly, on their part), but participation is also spread throughout the community—attitudes are no longer affected by sex, education, and occupation. While the raised level of participation is still to some extent affected by background factors, there is a consensus among people of differing backgrounds as to the value of the arts in their community.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

We suggest that there are three distinct ways in which a community arts project in the *National Plan* mold can succeed.

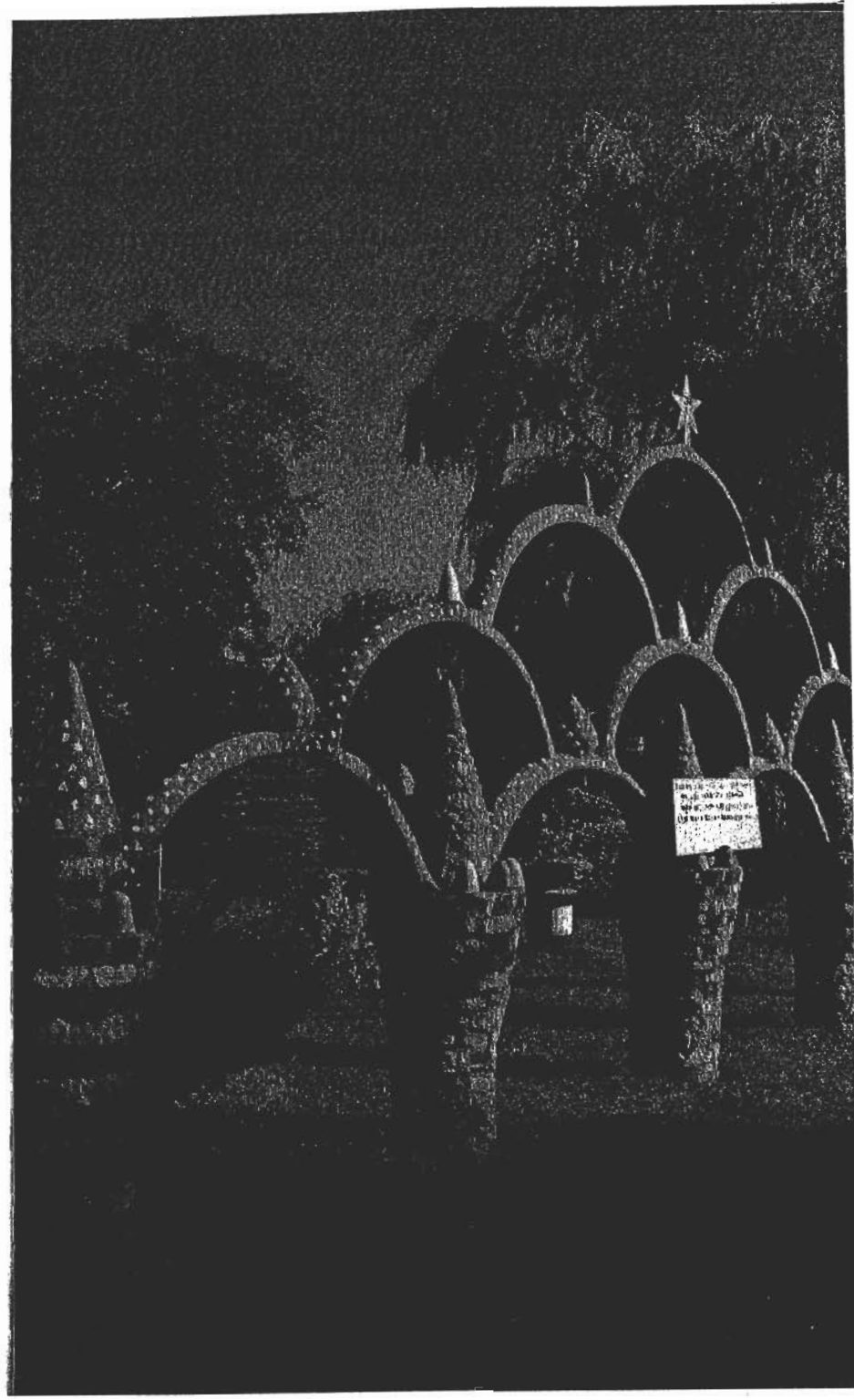
First, and most simply, the absolute level of participation in arts activities may be increased. Success is here measured in terms of the sheer numbers of people attending events, with little attention paid to who the participants are, or what their motivations are.

A second criterion of success is an increased demand for arts in the community—a shift of attitudes. Here again, the absolute level of demand is the focus; little attention is paid to the source of the demand.

The final and most complex criterion of success is to make the arts more democratic. This criterion implies both an increase in participation and a *redistribution* of participation. People of widely differing backgrounds ought to be motivated to participate.

Our general conclusion is quite simple. Different levels of project intensity result in different kinds of success. But we must remember that towns characterized by different kinds of success may behave quite differently. Spring Green, the town with the most

One of Herman Rusch's arched cement garden sculptures, Cochrane, Wisconsin. Photo by Eric Sutherland. Courtesy: Walker Art Center.



intense project, comes closest to attaining the democratic ideal. Participation is very high, and people of differing backgrounds have similar attitudes. Other project towns (and Baraboo) have increased participation slightly, and changed attitudes a great deal, but at the price of appearing less "democratic" than towns with no project at all.

But is it really the intensity of its project which gives Spring Green its distinctive character? If this were true we could argue that only time and money stand in the way of successful community arts development. Unfortunately the evidence is against such a simple conclusion. At the close of the project in Spring Green we collected data similar to that presented here.<sup>9</sup> Those results are striking when compared with the present results. Then, despite the intensity of its project, Spring Green appears as any Group II town. Like these others, attitudes had shifted, but along educational lines. Far from fostering a more democratic view of the arts, the project polarized the community.

What happened since 1968 to change Spring Green into a Group I town? In the 1968 study we noted that the *only* area on which Spring Green was not polarized was orientation to local drama: everyone thought it would be the only way of achieving democratic arts and ending the polarization.

Spring Green in fact developed a powerful local non-professional organization, the River Valley Theatre, Inc. It is probably this group's activities which have made the arts a "household activity" in Spring Green.

But it is important to stress the fact that this group, while it received considerable outside encouragement, was independent of any central control. Its leadership is dynamic and talented; its success has been of its own making. It is also important to point out that Spring Green, due to its growing importance as a resort area, is probably endowed with an unusually sound financial base for local arts development.

These two elements, quality of local leadership and soundness of financial base, are probably the main determinants of successful transfer from Group II to Group I status. Neither is subject to direct control by a central development agency, although both may

be influenced, the first by active encouragement of local talent, and the second by limited financial support of local organizations from central resources. The role of a central agency is thus likely to be quite limited in the Group II - Group I transition. But its impact through centrally-directed pro-



Standing men with horse and rider by Fred Smith, Phillips, Wis. Photo by Eric Sutherland. Courtesy: Walker Art Center.

grams seems crucial for the Group III - Group II transition.

Let us now try to forge these pieces into a coherent picture—and it is an exciting one for policy-makers in the arts.

## IMPLICATIONS AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

The policy implications of these conclusions are complex. While it seems that centrally-administered, non-indigenous programs of community arts development have the desirable effect of increasing the demand for

Theatre group was created as a reaction to the project experiment, and that its success is largely as an alternative.

This suggests that the utility of large community arts development projects is confined to the *initial* stages of a policy aiming at increasing *both* participation and democracy in the arts. The *middle* stages of such a policy seem to demand encouraging predominantly local organizations as soon as feasible, where the original administrators of the project serve as consultants on call, only. Towns such as Adams-Friendship, where demands have been increased, but participation possibilities are limited, seem prime targets for such an effort.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the arts developers will achieve their goal—of erasing themselves from the scene.

Thus, the organization (or individual) whose goal is community arts development must keep its role clearly defined. Its function is to create an attitudinal readiness for the arts in a democratic framework—it cannot expect to bring about the grassroots changes alone. After the organization's initial intervention in a community, this job is best left to indigenous groups.

How to encourage the founding of such groups without their being a satellite of the original organization is, of course, a major problem. One possible solution might be found in the U.W. department of Extension Arts' current experiments with the "community arts specialist" concept. The community arts specialist would be a person native to, and residing in a community or area who would be salaried by the original organization, but who would otherwise be totally independent of it. His job would be the encouragement of indigenous groups to "take the arts into their own hands." There is considerable evidence that the experimental community arts specialist in the field since January, 1973, is indeed achieving the goal of democratic arts in his geographic area.

We feel that the days of blind spending and major undertakings in the arts, which are not followed up, must end. It seems clear that fostering democracy in the arts is *not* an impossible dream, but depends upon a multi-staged process. Too often an arts program gets no further than the first stage, and when attitudinal polarization occurs, it is written off as yet another failure—and federal and state

arts activities, they have the less desirable side effect of mobilizing only the highly educated. Although we have considerable evidence that employing a local organization increases "democracy," we have no evidence to believe that a local organization would succeed in a community whose attitudes towards the arts *had not already undergone a considerable shift*. There is much evidence to believe that Spring Green's River Valley

arts council money goes instead to safer ventures like established symphony orchestras and theatres. It is rare that a follow-up to an apparent failure of a community arts program occurs—and developers may never realize that they may have been on the brink of success all along.

We hope that the preceding may serve as a basis for more carefully-planned, multi-staged projects—we believe that democracy in the arts in America is *not* despairingly far away, but could be much closer than anyone suspects.

#### TECHNICAL APPENDIX

All statistical testing is designed to answer a simple question: "to what extent might the results obtained from sampling a population be due to pure chance rather than due to any substantive factor?"

For an example of the application of this question to a substantive case, let us turn to our first finding—that women tend to perceive too little art in their communities more often than do men. The results break down as follows:

	Sex	
	Male	Female
Too much art	3 = 2.6%	3 = 1.3%
Right Amount	66 = 57.9%	100 = 48.2%
Too little	45 = 39.5%	114 = 50.4%
	N = 114	N = 225

Total: 100% = 340 respondents

340 respondents may be treated as a "large" sample, so we are statistically justified in using a fairly simple procedure. Our object is to set up "confidence limits" for our obtained percentages within which the real answer may be asserted to lie with a given level of confidence. In this case, for example, we may be 95% sure that the real answer for the number of men responding "too much" does not vary more than 7.6% from the obtained answer. The corresponding variation for women is 5.4%. As the obtained difference between men and women on this issue is 10.9% and the sum of our two confidence limits—13.0%—exceeds this, we can-

not be 95% sure that men and women don't feel the same way. We can, however, be 90% sure. Here the confidence limits are 5.9% for men and 4.3%—a total of 10.2%. Thus it is not likely that the difference between men and women which we observe on this issue is due to chance. Similar tests have been applied to all cross-tabulations generated by this analysis. Each assertion in words in the text is derived from a series of such tests.

An additional indicator of the significance of sample results is their consistency. Our questionnaire was composed of clusters of questions dealing with the same issue. The fact that different indicators yielded the same pattern of results provides us with heightened confidence that we are indeed measuring something real.

Attempting to ascribe causes in statistical analysis is at best a tricky business. What we have done here is to use the above "consistency criterion" to test out hunches in the data. For example, from our result that Adams residents are greatly above average in seeing "too little arts activity" in Adams, we have a hunch that the town has been culturally stimulated, but not fulfilled. We think that they would participate if given the chance. What other questions can we examine to support this hunch? Willingness to travel seems appropriate; high willingness to travel should indicate high desire and low fulfillment. Checking this hypothesis with the data, we find that Adams residents do exhibit high willingness to travel.

While it is not our purpose here to present a lengthy argument in favor of a certain kind of research design for arts research, it is perhaps appropriate to end this technical discussion with a consideration of the advantages of studies of this kind. First, the fact that research is focused on a particular problem in a limited geographical area makes such studies of immediate policy valuable. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this focus makes the research process much more efficient—smaller samples are required to detect gross effects, and shorter questionnaires, suitable for mailing, may be employed. With careful planning and attention to proper techniques in analysis, we believe a study such as this to be well within the resources of most arts councils, arts development organizations, and university departments. □

<sup>1</sup> Federal Grants A-02042-1; A-68-0-57; A-69-0-53; July 1966 - June 1969. Grants given by the National Endowment for the Arts to the Office of Community Arts Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

<sup>2</sup> See Maryo Whitmore and Peter Ewell, "An Assessment of a Community Arts Development Project."

<sup>3</sup> See Gard, Kohlhoff, Warlum, Frlou, and Temkin, *The Arts in the Small Community: A National Plan*, available from the Department of Extension Arts, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Lowell Hall, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

<sup>4</sup> By "similar" we mean that a town is comparable in size, rate of growth, and geographic area to a project town.

<sup>5</sup> *Arts and The People*, conducted by the National Research Center for the Arts, was sponsored by the American Council for the Arts in Education and the New York State Council on the Arts, 1973. Copies are available for \$5 from Cranford Wood, Inc., 310 E. 75 Street, New York, New York 10021.

<sup>6</sup> A sample copy of the questionnaire is appended. For non-project towns, questions 27 and 28 are omitted.

<sup>7</sup> Since almost no respondents had had any formal train-

ing in an art form, we ignored this aspect of "artistic background."

<sup>8</sup> We discovered a similar "two-staged" effect among practicing artists in Wisconsin. See Peter Ewell and Maryo Whitmore Ewell, "Democracy in the Arts: An Analysis of the Wisconsin Regional Arts Project."

<sup>9</sup> Again, refer to Maryo Whitmore and Peter Ewell, "An Assessment of a Community Arts Development Project."

<sup>10</sup> Indeed this seems to be the notion behind the "arts council" institution of the *National Plan*, but this notion is not well-defined.

<sup>11</sup> Write to Professor Edward Kamarck, Research and Statewide Programs, 728 Lowell Hall, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, for information.

Angel with raised arms by Fred Smith, Phillips, Wis.  
Photo by Eric Sutherland. Courtesy: Walker Art Center.





## Waupun

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_; Age: \_\_\_\_\_; Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

- How long have you lived in town? \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- Please check all of the following schools you have attended.  
Grade School: \_\_\_\_\_ High School: \_\_\_\_\_ Vocational School: \_\_\_\_\_ College: \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate School: \_\_\_\_\_ Art School: \_\_\_\_\_ Military Academy: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have school-age children living at home? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- When you were in school, did you PARTICIPATE in dramatic performances, concerts, or exhibits? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_  
How frequently did you do so? Regularly: \_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally: \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom: \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't Recall: \_\_\_\_\_
- When you were in school, did you ATTEND dramatic performances, concerts, or exhibits? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_  
How frequently did you do so? Regularly: \_\_\_\_\_ Occasionally: \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom: \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't Recall: \_\_\_\_\_
- How important are the arts in community life? Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Not Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Completely Unimportant: \_\_\_\_\_
- How important do you think the arts *should* be in community life? Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Not very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Completely Unimportant: \_\_\_\_\_
- How much are the arts stressed in young people's education in Waupun? A Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ A Moderate Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Not Too Much: \_\_\_\_\_ Not At All: \_\_\_\_\_
- How much do you think they *should* be stressed? A Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ A Moderate Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Not Too Much: \_\_\_\_\_ Not At All: \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you get an educational TV station in Waupun? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, would you like one? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_  
If you can get an educational station, what percentage of your family's viewing time is with this channel? \_\_\_\_\_  
What changes would you suggest to make this channel more interesting?
- How do you feel about the amount of arts activities that are available to you or your children (excluding TV) in Waupun? Too Much: \_\_\_\_\_ Just Right: \_\_\_\_\_ Too Little: \_\_\_\_\_
- Please arrange the following sources according to how much you think they contribute to present arts activity in Waupun. (Put a 1 beside the source you think is most important; put a 2 beside the source you think is next important, etc.) Leave blank the sources that make no contributions.  
\_\_\_\_\_ schools  
\_\_\_\_\_ area colleges  
\_\_\_\_\_ UW Extension agents (county, home, continuing education agents)  
\_\_\_\_\_ local clubs or organizations  
\_\_\_\_\_ professional touring groups  
\_\_\_\_\_ area churches  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- Have you seen a live concert in the past year? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you been to an art or arts-and-crafts exhibit in the past year? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you taken an art or craft class in the past year? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you gone out of town to attend any of these? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Would you ever consider going out of town to attend any of these? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have children living at home, do they belong to 4-H? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have they ever participated in 4-H band, chorus, or plays? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have they ever worked on an arts-and-crafts project for 4-H? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know: \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there an arts council in Waupun? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know: \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, have you ever been involved with it (go to meetings, work on their projects, etc.)? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_
- Suppose that a PROFESSIONAL theatre group from Milwaukee, Minneapolis, or Chicago were brought into Waupun for the summer, living there and performing regularly, at reasonable prices.  
Would you attend performances? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you encourage your children to attend? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you help publicize the events? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Suppose that in addition to performances, classes were offered by these PROFESSIONALS in art, dance, drama, crafts, for children and adults, again for reasonable prices. If they were held at a time that you could attend,  
Would you attend classes? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you encourage your children to attend? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you help with publicity? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Suppose that instead of an out-of-town professional company, live performances were offered regularly with PEOPLE FROM WAUPUN doing all of the acting, directing, technical work, and sponsorship, at reasonable prices.  
Would you attend performances? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you encourage your children to attend? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you help with publicity? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you remember the program in Waupun from 1966-69 which involved productions like "Die Fledermaus," visits by the Wisconsin Ballet Company, the Community Craft Center, the formation of the Penrock Writers group, and the Fall Festival and Midwest Sculpture Show? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ I wasn't living here then: \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, would you care to see such a program repeated in Waupun? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain: \_\_\_\_\_  
How much value do you think the program was to Waupun? Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Not Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Totally Unimportant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Why?
- How important are such arts activities in general community life, for business, recreation, or people's satisfaction with Waupun? Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Not Very Important: \_\_\_\_\_ Totally Unimportant: \_\_\_\_\_