

**The Profiles Project:
Presentations from 1999 Conferences**

**The Greater Los Angeles Arts Community: A National
And Local Profiles of Cultural Support Project Site**

David Pankratz

and

**The Rhode Island Approach
to the Unincorporated Part of the Arts Sector**

Ann Galligan

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Introduction

Researchers from several of the sites for the National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support project have presented materials on different aspects of the project which are likely to be significant in the Profiles of Cultural Support in their communities. The presentations below were part of panel discussions on the Profiles Project in the fall of 1999.

David Pankratz of ARTS, Inc. reviewed Los Angeles as a site for the Profiles Project for the "Social Theory, Politics and the Arts" conference in October 1999. Pankratz describes the significant characteristics of the Los Angeles cultural community, explaining why L.A. provides a particularly good opportunity for exploring questions about culture in the 21st century. His discussion includes demographic shifts and the presence of the commercial (for profit) arts/entertainment industry, two factors which make Los Angeles a key site for exploring patterns of support for cultural organizations.

Ann Galligan of Northeastern University described ongoing research on the arts in Providence for the annual meeting of the "Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Associations" in November 1999. Galligan and her colleagues have been exploring what the 1997 American Assembly on "The Arts and Public Purpose" called the "unincorporated arts" (sometimes called the "informal" arts/ sector), a label which includes avocational, folk, community, and embedded arts activities. This work both draws on the "arts and cultural universe" discussion work found Filicko and Lafferty (Occasional Paper Number Seven) and highlights the novel and instructive framework developed by the team at Northeastern. Galligan's work provides a means of talking about one of the most important contextual factors for the Profiles Project: the level of informal artistic activity in our communities.

**THE GREATER LOS ANGELES ARTS COMMUNITY:
A NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROFILES OF CULTURAL SUPPORT PROJECT SITE**

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The current CEO of the New York Philharmonic, Deborah Borda, recently accepted a similar position with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The move raised many eyebrows nationally—why move from New York to L.A.? One reason Ms. Borda offered was that she sees greater Los Angeles as an indicator environment for cultural life in America during the 21st century. Her statement was familiar to many in the L.A. arts community.

Los Angeles already considers itself the leading city in the world for the production of new art. The economic power of the arts in the region—as a stimulus to investment, consumer spending, tax revenues, job creation, and cultural tourism—is widely noted. Los Angeles expects to be the primary cultural capital of the United States, and the capitol city of the Pacific Rim, in the next century.

Los Angeles has other strengths, as well as weaknesses, which recommended it as a site in the Profiles study of local systems and mechanisms of cultural support. ARTS, Inc., as local site manager for the project in collaboration with UCLA, will attend to these throughout implementation of the project. I will discuss six.

1. Breadth of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Service Providers

The primary resource for data on the arts and culture in Los Angeles is ARTS, Inc.'s 4th edition ***Greater Los Angeles Arts Resource Directory and Arts & Education Guide***. The directory contains basic information on more than 1,200 arts and culture organizations in greater Los Angeles. They range dramatically in scope, size, and range of services.

Our Profiles sample numbers 550 and focuses on not-for-profit arts and culture organizations. To capture commercial arts organizations, a significant segment of the L.A. arts community, we added a question to the basic Profiles survey for non-profits:

“In the past year, has your organization participated in any partnerships or joint ventures with commercial arts/entertainment organizations?”

To explore and document these relationships, ARTS, Inc. will conduct interviews with collaboration participants. We will also draw on the growing literature on for-profit/not-for-profit arts collaborations discussed in publications of the American Assembly and American for the Arts, as well as the *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*.

2. Cultural and Geographic Diversity

Another factor recommending L.A.'s participation in the Profiles project is the fact that more different races, religions, cultures, and languages mingle in Los Angeles than in any other city in the world. Arts and culture organizations approach the challenges and issues of diversity in multiple ways. Some are culturally specific and geared to preservation and culturally traditional audiences. Others promote cross-cultural communications, diverse audiences, and sharing and merging of artistic ideas and media. Still others promote access to the great works of Western European culture. The ways in which the cultural support systems of Los Angeles foster these diverse approaches is an open question. Present-day Los Angeles is a harbinger of the cultural diversity that will characterize ever-greater portions of the American landscape in the 21st century.

Los Angeles is also characterized by great geographic diversity which, in turn, has influenced cultural development in many ways. Individual neighborhoods and cities have their own array of arts organizations and, in some cases, their own systems of cultural support, such as local arts agencies. Other public and private funders, however, continue to fund major, downtown institutions to foster a centralized vision of cultural and civic life.

3. Multiple Sources of Public Funding

Many Los Angeles artists and nonprofit arts organizations receive funding from national organizations, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, and the state arts agency, the California Arts Council. The two primary public arts funders in the area are the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. The Cultural Affairs Department awards grants for services related to the production, creation, presentation, exhibitions, and managerial support of artistic cultural services within the City of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission administers grant programs for Los Angeles County arts organizations. In addition, many local public arts agencies provide funding programs for artists and nonprofit arts organizations, in cities ranging from Pasadena to Long Beach to Inglewood. Finally, the Profiles project will explore funding of the arts by non-arts public agencies in areas such as education, transportation, social services, economic development, etc. Los Angeles presents several such examples, such as the art program of the L.A. subway. A key question about public funders is this: Is there unnecessary overlap between the funding programs of these agencies, or are their efforts complementary and mutually reinforcing?

4. Underdeveloped Support from Private Sector

Los Angeles now ranks 48th in philanthropy among the fifty largest metropolitan areas in the United States. Regarding individual philanthropy, a 1997 California Community Foundation report found that nearly twice the number of Los Angeles households (17%) contributed to the arts than did those in other cities. Yet, in terms of attitudes, Los Angeles residents ranked the arts low among the range of charitable activities.

5. Emerging Cooperation between the Nonprofit and Commercial Arts

Los Angeles, including Hollywood, is the center of the vast commercial entertainment industry. It is home to the vast majority of studios and companies that produce and distribute entertainment products—movies, television, recordings, and videos. It also houses the service organizations and unions that serve artists, designers, and the organizations they work with, and, increasingly, the software companies that add economic value to the products Hollywood creates. Historically, relationships between the nonprofit arts and the commercial entertainment arts, when they exist, have been filled with tension, envy, or neglect. But a new appreciation for the interdependence of the commercial and nonprofit arts is emerging in three primary areas: *Artists Careers*; *Organizational Collaborations*; and *Advocacy/Policy Partnerships*.

Los Angeles is ground zero for emerging cooperation between the nonprofit and commercial arts. In the area of artists careers, the California Institute of the Arts is partnering with Disney and Intel to create new forms of digital animation, while the USC School of Film and Television offers “First Showings” of student films to movie producers looking for new film ventures. L.A. is also home to many cross-sector ventures. Examples include: 1) a Centre Theatre group workshop to develop scripts which are produced for airings on the cable network “Showtime”, and 2) the American Film Institute’s partnerships with CBS, TNT, and Blockbuster Video to air specials distribute videos of AFI’s 100 Greatest American Films. Finally, L.A. is home to many cross-sector advocacy partnerships, such as the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences’ support of K-12 arts education programs. These and many other examples of cross-sector partnerships will be explored at the L.A. site of the Profiles project.

6. Cultural Tourism Initiatives and a Higher National/International Profile for L.A.

The Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau initiated its Cultural Tourism Department in 1995, the first such Bureau in the United States to do so. It did so recognizing that cultural tourism is the fastest-growing segment of the travel industry and that Los Angeles was known in the travel industry primarily for its natural attractions and its popular entertainment and celebrity destinations. The goal of this initiative is to entice visitors to extend their stays in Los Angeles and California by offering them a selection of themed itineraries structured around the area’s cultural assets. Whether cultural tourism has become a means of indirect support for the nonprofit arts in Los Angeles is an open question. Further, the L.A. site will examine direct support for L.A. arts and culture by governments, private organizations, and donors from outside the United States.

Conclusion

To conclude, there are several final contextual factors that shape the L.A. arts community, and its participation in the Profiles project.

As Los Angeles constructs a cultural vision for the 21st century, it would seem to possess a strong foundation on which to build. It has a vivid cultural history to draw upon, a rich array of institutions, a stimulating environment for new artistic creativity, and a strong sense of the arts as an important engine of economic growth. Yet achieving a cultural vision may prove complicated.

- Los Angeles is still beset by a sense of inferiority about its cultural life, looking with envy at the accomplishments and status of, e.g., New York City.
- The cultural accomplishments we value tend to be physical buildings and institutions, more than the connection of those places to community life.
- Geographic, cultural, economic, and artistic isolation, rather than association, remain the hallmarks of greater Los Angeles and the arts and culture community.

Despite these constraints, Los Angeles possesses key strengths which are cause for optimism.

- There is a palpable sense of excitement about the capacity of Los Angeles to re-invent itself. Youth has its advantages and many opportunities.
- Societal conditions which are threatening to some urban centers, such as population growth and growing cultural diversity, are seen as strengths in Los Angeles. We take pride in a city that appears to defy the laws of physics.
- Cultural leaders are willing to learn from the experience of other cities (at times with envy), but are determined to steer their own course in an open environment of opportunity.
- Large and small arts and culture organizations are seen as complementary and necessary to each other.

Finally, ARTS, Inc. sees its participation in the Profiles project as an opportunity to serve as a policy and research resource for greater Los Angeles as it builds its cultural future. For example, ARTS, Inc. will hold public forums and convenings on how Profiles findings might contribute to:

- improved fundraising and income generation strategies by area arts organizations
- coordinated policies for the arts by public agencies and private funders,
- effective arts advocacy rooted in knowledge of arts' organizations' accomplishments and challenges, and
- additional research projects to explore issues and trends in the Los Angeles arts community.

It is our expectation that these activities will shape, at least in part, whether L.A.'s hope to serve as the indicator environment of American cultural life in the 21st century will be realized.

THE RHODE ISLAND APPROACH TO THE UNINCORPORATED PART OF THE ARTS SECTOR

Presented by
Ann Galligan

The members of the Arts Research Team at Northeastern University (consisting of Professors Neil Alper, Ann Galligan and Gregory Wassall), both individually and collectively, have been working on the identification and classification of individual and organizational involvement in the arts sector over the past twenty years. This includes the 1981 New England Foundation for the Arts-sponsored survey of New England artists (Alper and Wassall), the recent NEFA study of organizations (Wassall), and The American Assembly and The Department of Cooperative Education sponsored studies of individuals (Galligan and Alper). Together with Randall Rosenbaum, Executive Director of The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the following classification model is being explored.

The Expanded Universe

In keeping with “The Easter Egg” or “Passover Ovum” model of the Arts and Cultural Universe presented by Terry Filicko, we are exploring ways to expand the categorization of artists--from professional to amateur-- as well as the “space” in which the arts activity occurs--be it a formal arts and cultural organization to an embedded arts activity in a non-arts organization to a community setting. As discussed, the layers of the universe moving in categories 1-6 from **Professional Artist** in Professional 501 (C)3 arts and cultural organizations of various sizes to **Professional Artists** operating in embedded non-arts professional through community arts and non-arts organization. The additional layers we are in the process of developing move the artist from professional to semi-professional to amateur, and they move the setting from highly organized and tightly affiliated to the less formally structured and loosely affiliated community settings.

Additional Categories

- 7) The **Self-Employed, Stand-Alone or Sole Proprietor Professional Artist**. In this category the artist remains a professional and can be identified through self-reporting on income tax and by means of the Census. Although the artist is not an employee of an arts organization, he or she may work in a variety of professional arts settings ranging from the profit to nonprofit as well as hold other non-arts jobs in order to make a living.
- 8) The **Professional Artist** affiliated in either a **formal free-lance** or a **formal volunteer** capacity with a **Professional Non-Arts or Arts-Embedded Organization** (i.e.-Poet Laureate, Art Teacher or Artist-in-Residence in a school or hospital). In this category the artist is a trained professional who conducts highly professional arts activities in a structured, non-arts organization or environment.

- 9) A **Professional or Amateur Artist** affiliated in a formal volunteer or advocational capacity with a **Semi-Professional Performing or Community Arts Organization**. In this category the artist most likely has formal arts training and operates in a highly professional manner in a structured, albeit amateur arts environment. Examples of this are string quartets, civic chorales or membership-based watercolor clubs. Associations of this sort are most often marked by tryouts, portfolio reviews, and other formalized, standards-based terms of association.
- 10) **An Amateur Artist** affiliated over time in a less formal manner with a loosely affiliated **Amateur or Community Arts Organization** (i.e.-non-membership or dues-paying arts organization or association such as stitching group or amateur community theatre or singing group).
- 11) **An Amateur Artist** affiliated in a casual manner with a **Community, Ethnic or Non-Arts Organization**. Individual involved in this category may be involved in arts activities loosely defined in community setting such as hiphop or flipping groups or in afterschool community dance or music programs. They also may be involved in embedded amateur arts activities such as singing in a church choir or dancing in a onetime ethnic or religious cultural ritual or celebration.
- 12) **Audience Member** for any or all of the above.