

NEA Cultural Workforce Forum

Friday, November 20, 2009



Professor **Joan Jeffri**, Director

Research Center for Arts and Culture | Teachers College, Columbia University





*“Art is what makes
me live.”*

-93 year old visual artist
IOA III: Special Focus NYC Aging Visual Artists



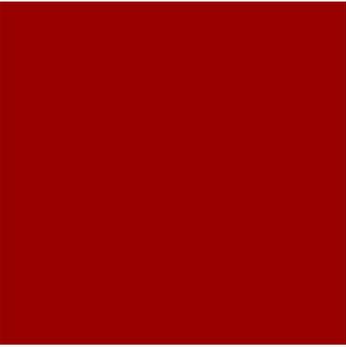
What's the point of collecting research on artists?

- Get artists on the national radar?
- Position artists as central to society?
- Make policy and program changes

At the NEA? In Communities?

- Advocacy?
- Restore individual artist grants to the NEA?





Traditional Sources of Information on U.S. Artists

- U.S. Census, BLS, ACS (discussed)
- State Arts Agency Data & NASAA | Interesting for programmatic information about kind of activities artists engage in, kinds of support they receive
- Membership Data: Unions & Service Organizations
 - Artists may be vetted in some way to be members
 - Eligibility requirements vary widely from apprenticeship in DGA to securing a contract for unions, to voluntary and other kinds of membership for service organizations
- Discrete Surveys
 - Funder studies: attitudinal studies of artists applying for money (NYFA)
 - Student/Alumni lists from art schools: in-house surveys done to assess progress some years out of school (SNAAP)
 - Private research institutions: Research Center for Arts and Culture, RAND, Urban Institute: condition and situation of /support structures for artists

General Categories of Studies on U.S. Artists: Points of View

- Sociological | Jeffri, France-Raymonde Moulin, Pierre Michel Menger
- Economic | Wassall
- Psychological | Howard Gardner
- Anthropological | Urban Institute
- Information and Advocacy | Dance NYC



- Definition of artists and of art
- Sample Problems: size, composition, diversity, representativeness
- Depth of Questions
- Agenda Based?
- Urban vs Rural

Commonalities and Challenges



Example: Research Center for Arts and Culture

Use of a New Method in Studying Artists

Respondent-Driven Sampling

Jazz Musicians – Detroit, New Orleans, San Francisco, New York City
2 SAMPLES: GRASSROOTS SAMPLE USING RDS; AFM SAMPLE

A FEW FINDINGS:

- **Strong Social Networks** | People with any level of education have approximately the same size networks except for jazz musicians with a doctorate – networks are 8 times larger
- **Difficult linear career path** | 32% played with more than 16 groups a month – lone wolf syndrome – do it alone
- **Health insurance** | 63% (RDS) with some medical coverage vs 89% (AFM)
- **How many jazz musicians?** 33,000 NYC; 18,000 SF; 1750 New Orleans

Aging Professional Artists in NYC's 5 Boroughs



62 and Older

Lifetime Making Art

Resident in 5 Boroughs

Mean/median age 73
vs many other artists studies 38-42

Average annual income \$30 K
\$1750 from art
85% sold a work in the last year

93% have health insurance
(80% Medicare); Occupational
Prestige studies = 99% have
health insurance

77% communicate every day or
every week with other artists



Research Into Action

- NY City Dept of Aging | 13 Free Artist Studios
- ART CART | Intergenerational, interdisciplinary course at Columbia Fall 2010

INFORMATION ON ARTISTS IV:

Aging Performing Artists in LA and NY

Actors, Dancers, Choreographers, Musicians, Singers

Challenges for the Research Center for Arts and Culture

- Comparison with Larger Data
 - Questions from national surveys on aging
 - Can compare 2 probability samples
 - Comparisons | Sarah Montgomery, D Throsby
 - Replication | Portugal
- Skating Between Competing Needs
 - Information vs medical intervention
- Rural vs Urban
- International Comparisons



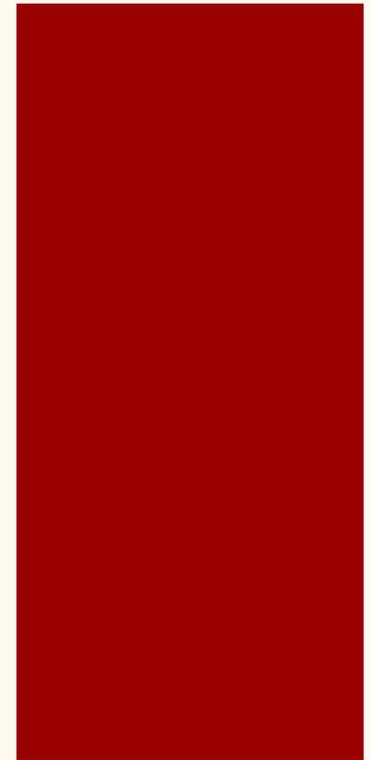
KEY ISSUE: PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

THE DILEMMA OF DEFINITION

Professional to what end?

Traditionally: to achieve compensation,
benefits and recognition from their work

- Performing Arts Unions → Members
- For Funding Purposes: (a) “not” amateurs (b) emerging/mid-career
- To Qualify for Subsidized Housing
- vs. the Pro-Am Movement?
- vs. Greater Arts Participation
- Is Everyone an Artist?



Investigation Needed of 20 Years of Data

On “Professional Artists” Using a Consistent Set of Definitions as Follows



The Marketplace Definition

- I make my living as an artist
- I receive some income from my work as an artist
- I intend to make a living as an artist

The Education and Affiliation Definition

- I belong to an artist’s association (discussion group, artists’ co-op, etc)
- I belong to an artist’s union/guild
- I have been formally educated in the arts

Self and Peer Definition

- I am recognized by my peers as an artist
- I consider myself to be an artist
- I spend a substantial amount of time working at art
- I have a special talent
- I have an inner drive to make art
- I receive some public recognition for my art

In addition, we have information on union memberships and on lapsed union memberships, and on the above definitions as they apply “to someone else.”

Professionalism

1st Choice as Applied to Self

1988



IOA I: AEA

25% "I make a living as an artist."

1990-1992



AEA ACTORS

32% "I make a living as an actor."



NON-AEA ACTORS

20% "I receive some income as an actor."



CRAFTSPEOPLE

31% "I have an inner drive to make art."



PAINTERS

40% "I have an inner drive to make art."

2007

AGING VISUAL ARTISTS

24% "I have an inner drive to make art."
Median age 73

2000

RDS JAZZ MUSICIANS

32% "I make a living as a musician."
NOLA and NY 40%



2004

NJ DANCERS

39% "I make my living as a dancer."





Challenges for the NEA

- Diluting the importance of artists by using “cultural workers”
- Multi-categories
- Is funding for NEA research on artists/the NEA appropriation based on census numbers?
- Are census numbers being used to justify funding for artist research?
- Central resource for artist research of many kinds? potential for CPANDA?
- **What’s the point of collecting research on artists?**

Thank You!



Research Center for Arts & Culture

Teachers College, Columbia University

525 West 120th Street Box 78

New York, NY 10027

www.tc.edu/rcac | 212-678-8184

