

Strategies for Survival (1986)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

Strategies for Survival (1986) is an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness in 2023, funded by the BC History Digitization Program at the University of British Columbia.

Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists was organized by the Vancouver Artists' League, as a component part of *Vancouver: The Place, Vancouver: The People*, a City of Vancouver centennial project for 1986.


































Find the rest of the project linked at unitpitt.ca



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	QUOTE
	INTRODUCTION (2023)
	DOCUMENTS AND ACCESS
	DAY 1, SPEAKER 4
	BIOGRAPHY (1986)
	INTRODUCTIONS (1986)
	A DISCUSSION OF THE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES
	HISTORY OF FEDERAL ARTS FUNDING
	PUBLIC FUNDING OF THE ARTS
	PRIVATE FUNDING OF THE ARTS
	FUNDING CUTBACKS
	FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS
	ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS
	INSERT
	WOMEN ARTISTS
	MULTI-CULTURAL ARTISTS
	REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS

				
			00:00:00	
			00:00:21	
			00:00:49	
			00:02:00	
			00:02:50	
			00:03:55	
			00:06:07	
			00:08:01	
			00:18:31	
			00:22:27	
			00:30:31	
			00:36:31	
			00:42:52	
			00:48:29	
			00:50:36	
			00:59:19	
			01:03:51	
				

A CLOSING THOUGHT

CLOSING REMARKS (2023)



[The [TABLE OF CONTENTS](#) is linked at the end of each section.]

01:07:34

01:10:20



[The [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS](#) is linked at the end of each section.]

05: Judy Moran (USA)

QUOTE

...small arts organizations are having to expand their boards to include people from the business community. In some cases, concerns about attendance are already affecting curatorial decisions regarding less-well-known artists. Grant proposals have a greater chance of being funded if attendance figures are high, even in small organizations.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

00:00:00

Judy Moran, USA:

...small arts organizations are having to expand their boards to include people from the business community. In some cases, concerns about attendance are already affecting curatorial decisions regarding less-well-known artists. Grant proposals have a greater chance of being funded if attendance figures are high, even in small organizations.

[Tone.]

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

INTRODUCTION (2023)

Strategies for Survival (1986), is an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness, re-presenting the partial proceedings of *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, June 9, 10, and 11, 1986.



[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

00:00:21

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

Welcome to *Strategies for Survival (1986)*, an archives project produced by UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness, re-presenting the partial proceedings of *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, June 9, 10, and 11, 1986.

[Tone.]



[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

DOCUMENTS AND ACCESS

For expanded access, this document presents textural and lightly edited transcripts of the presentation.

On the right is the timestamped textural transcript, with all the *ums*, *ahs*, pauses, and grammatical idiosyncrasies of the spoken word, meant to be read with the audio, linked [here](#).

This column on the left provides the lightly edited, easy-to-read transcript. This can be read with or without the audio, and subject headings from the original conference papers, or added for this project, are linked in the table above; matching the timestamps at right.



[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

00:00:49

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

If you've already listened to the 2023 introduction (track 00, linked [here](#)), you may wish to skip ahead in this text [to [00:02:00](#)] and then skip ahead in the audio to match the timestamp.

[All the timestamps are linked in the table above.]

If you haven't listened to the introduction, or any of the other recordings, you'll want to know that this is a multi-part project, presenting archival audio recordings alongside textural and lightly edited transcripts, for expanded access.

On the left of each transcript document is a lightly edited, easy-to-read transcript that, in some cases, directly excerpts the original conference papers; this can be read with or without the audio.

(By the way, if you're listening to the audio recording, and wondering, "where are the transcripts?" you can find links to those documents in the audio description!)

This column on the right presents the textural transcript, with all the *ums*, *ahs*, pauses, and



edited transcript



textural transcript



grammatical idiosyncrasies of the spoken word, to match the archival audio as close as possible—it may be difficult to read this side of the page without the relevant audio recording, [linked [here](#)].



[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]



05: Judy Moran (USA)

DAY 1, SPEAKER 4

Judy Moran, an artist from the United States, and co-director of New Langton Arts in San Francisco, was the final speaker on the first day of the conference. Unfortunately, the cassette tapes found in the UNIT/PITT archives don't provide a complete document of her presentation—a missing cassette tape would have covered the final few sections of her paper and her Q&A. To complete the paper, titled "A Discussion of the Arts in the United States," the last eight pages are inserted from the copy in the UNIT/PITT archives, and a number of sections—skipped over in her presentation—are inserted in brackets in this text.

1986 + 1986 / 2023

[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

00:02:00

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After the tone, I'll read Judy Moran's biography from the original conference papers. After another tone, we'll join the conference, and part-way through a third tone will mark the start of the supplementary reading; there is no recording of the Q&A.

[\[Tone.\]](#)

1986 / 2023

[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

BIOGRAPHY (1986)

JUDY MORAN U.S.A.

Judy Moran is an installation and performance artist from San Francisco.

She has obtained a B.A. from UCLA and an M.A. from San Francisco State and her work in installation has shown extensively throughout California and in other states

Since 1979, she has been co-director in charge of programming at New Langton Arts, an artist run centre in San Francisco. For the last ten years they have provided a showcase for innovative, non-commercial work in the fields of literature, music, video and visual art.

Moran has worked extensively with the National Association of Artists' Organizations in the U.S. as a regional representative (83-85) and is currently Vice-President on their Board of Directors.

She also has worked as a consultant for National Endowment for the Arts and has a good working knowledge of artist centres and artists conditions in the U.S.

00:02:50

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[Return to the [TABLE OF CONTENTS.](#)]

edited transcript

[Tone.]



textural transcript

[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]

00:00:00

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05: Judy Moran (USA) →

INTRODUCTIONS (1986)

Marion Barling, conference host:

—[Jillian Elliot?], who has been very active in the community arts in the Coquitlam area. She has also sat on the board of directors for the BC Assembly of Arts Councils, and has also been very active in the arts at the regional and provincial levels. I am going to ask her to introduce our next speaker, who is Judy Moran from the United States of America.

[Jillian Elliot?]:

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I'm very pleased to be here this afternoon and introduce [pause] this representative from the United States.

[Speaker pauses.]

Judy Moran is a resident of the San Francisco area. She is currently co-director in charge of programming [pause] at New Langton Arts, an artist-run non-profit gallery, which has become a leader in the presentation of innovative arts of the highest quality. She received her education in

00:03:55

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[Jillian Elliot?]:

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I'm very pleased to be here this afternoon and introduce [pause] this representative from the United States.

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

California: a BA from UCLA, and an MA from San Francisco State University.

She is an installation and performance artist, and has exhibited her work widely throughout United States. She has played an active role in arts organizations, including the National Association of Artists Organizations, and the Bay Area Artist Organizations, and has acted as a consultant for the National Endowment of the Arts. She is at present vice-president of the National Association of Artists Organizations. She has an extensive knowledge of artists' centres, organizations, and conditions in the United States. I know she will have a lot of information for you today.

I ask you to welcome Judy Moran.

[Audience applauds.]



[The tape cuts briefly here, but returns quickly.]

[Return to the [TABLE OF CONTENTS.](#)]

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[Audience applauds.]



[The tape cuts briefly here, but returns quickly.]

[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

A DISCUSSION OF THE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Judy Moran:

It's an interesting time to consider the arts in the United States. Art has once again become a marketable commodity, and the art business is booming. Coincident with this reaffirmation of the art marketing system are impending cuts in both public and private donations to the arts. Emerging and difficult arts across the country have depended heavily on donated funds, particularly art which, because of form and/or content, is non-commercial. Both artists and art organizations adapt in ways that may further discourage the emergence of truly diverse and exciting work. This threat to emerging and underfunded arts is the main point of my discussion.



The arts in the United States comprise a multi-billion-dollar complex, running the gamut from enormous urban opera companies to small

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The arts in the United States comprise a multi-billion-dollar complex, running the gamut from enormous urban opera companies to small community-based art centers. It's impossible to

community-based art centers. It's impossible to convey, with any accuracy or authority, a portrait of such a dynamic, constantly evolving system without simplification and generalization. What I'm attempting to do in this discussion is to give an overview of the basic funding picture—

[Judy pauses.]

—and some of the many ways artists have reacted to it and try to help shape it. I know more about artists' organizations than about any other aspect of the arts, so my discussion will include a lot of thoughts about them in particular.

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[Return to the [TABLE OF CONTENTS.](#)]

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A little bit about the history of ah— ah— federal arts funding.

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[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]

05: Judy Moran (USA)

HISTORY OF FEDERAL ARTS FUNDING

An investigation of funding reveals basic attitudes toward the arts in the United States. Since the [late] 19th century, the arts (especially the so-called fine arts) have existed in a network of wealth and power [in this country. Older institutions, such as museums, presenting traditional art forms, have funding roots that go back prior to public funding. When income tax laws allowed for deductions to charitable institutions, foundations were established.] There was an elite group of wealthy individuals, almost exclusively in New York City, who controlled what art was collected, exhibited, reviewed, and ended up in the history books. [The fine arts were the almost exclusive province of this elite group and the rest of the population had little access to its institutions and even its ideas. What scattered regional activity existed was considered amateurish and seldom had any impact on the fine art clique in New York and other urban centers.]

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00:08:01

An investigation of funding reveals basic attitudes toward the arts in the United States. Since the 19th century, the arts, especially the so-called fine arts have existed in a network of wealth and power. There was an elite group of wealthy individuals almost exclusively in New York City, who controlled what art was collected, exhibited, reviewed, and ended up in the history books.

By the 1950s, private philanthropy could not keep up with the needs of the arts activity which was occurring. For this and other reasons, a movement for public funding of the arts began gaining momentum mid-century and culminated in the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts. Ah— that's N-E-A, an agency of the federal government, in 1965.

In Gary O. Larson's book aptly titled, *The Reluctant Patron: the United States Government and the Arts*, he says, quote:

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In Gary O. Larson's book aptly titled, *The Reluctant Patron: the United States Government and the Arts*, he says:

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Operating in both [the] public and private arenas...with legislative schemes interacting with private plans both for and against a new federal arts effort, the movement chronicles the growing organization of the arts community in America, a gradual coalescence of artists' unions and boards of trustees, arts associations and service organizations, eliciting in turn a response in the public arena.

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—unquote.

The relationship of the government to the arts is complicated, largely because the arts have been inevitably caught up in partisan politics and philistinism. Prior to the establishment of the NEA, government involvement with the arts had been minimal. The first substantial government arts program was really an unemployment subsidy for artists during the Great Depression in the 1930s. It was part of a large federal relief program called the Works Projects Administration—WPA—established by President Franklin Roosevelt. The artists' relief aspect of the program, which comprised two percent of the total WPA budget provided living wages for over forty thousand artists. Some of the work produced by artists

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been inevitably caught up in partisan politics and philistinism. Prior to the establishment of the NEA, government involvement with the arts had been minimal. The first substantial government arts program was really an unemployment subsidy for artists during the Great Depression in the 1930s. It was part of a large federal relief program called the Works Projects Administration (WPA), established by President Franklin Roosevelt. The artist's relief aspect of the program, which comprised 2% of the total WPA budget provided living wages for over 40,000 artists. Some of the work produced by artists in this program was highly controversial and blatantly left-wing. Conservative politicians, along with some traditional arts groups, targeted these programs for attack, saying the government was funding pro-Communist activity. In their zeal to undermine the New Deal, as Roosevelt's programs were called, right-wing politicians found an easy target in the arts. Thus began the practice of conservative political interests categorizing certain arts activities as "communist," ie., un-American, and a threat to the safety of the citizenry. Controversial and difficult art by living artists was often put into this category by red-baiting politicians and others

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In the 1950s, the House Un-American Activities Committee, a Congressional subcommittee, systematically interrogated citizens, including artists, suspected of what the committee had determined was pro-communist activity. Many jobs were lost as a result, and many lives were destroyed.

Thus, during the forties and fifties, Congress was extremely timid about its involvement with the arts. Basic fears, including the fear of supporting what might be labelled *anti-American*, *obscene* or *bad art*, carry through even to this day.

The first involvement of the federal government with the arts after the unheralded demise of the WPA in 1943 (when the only WPA art activity consisted of a few artists working for the defense effort during the war decorating service clubs and producing air-raid manuals), was an exhibition organized by the State Department, (the foreign policy department of the executive branch of the government) of work from the art collections of the business community. The work was experimental and raised a storm of controversy, although it had been well received within the mainstream

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The use of government funds to purchase experimental work—some by artists with definite leftist leanings—was attacked by Republicans in search of an easy Democratic target, by conservative newspapers on the lookout for federal extravagance, from academic painters threatened by the embracing of modern art, and disgruntled artists who had been overlooked. The attack took the line that the work had been overly influenced by radical European trends associated

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“

The Hearst newspapers termed the artwork as “junk,” “lunatic delight,” and said the collection, “concentrates with biased frenzy on what is incomprehensible, ugly and absurd.”

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Calling the exhibit a, quotes: disgrace to the United States, but typical of an administration infected by Communists, the Illinois Republican



edited transcript



textural transcript



05: Judy Moran (USA)



continue into the fifties. Calling the exhibit a 'disgrace to the United States' but typical of 'an administration infected by Communists,' the Illinois Republican described the 'sinister aspects of the alleged art exhibition.'" Gathering steam in a renewed attempt to attack New Deal liberal politics he continues,

“

“the Communists and their New Deal fellow-travelers have selected art as one of their avenues of propaganda. Their game is to use every field of information and entertainment in an effort to shatter all that conflicts with despotic Communism. When the taxpayer's money is used to buy pictures painted by Communist artists, we not only distribute their propaganda, we also put money in their pockets, and thereby enable them to influence their efforts to make America Red Communist.”

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(Interestingly, the Communist press also banned the exhibit as serving the selfish interests of the

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

bourgeoisie.)

[Laughter from the audience.]

Larson further observes in his book:

“

“Art, neither wholly necessary, nor completely comprehensible, and already tainted by its association with the New Deal would often serve during the next several years as a political scapegoat, judged not on its merits but on its alleged political associations.”

”

Not surprisingly, under the conservative administration now in power under President Reagan, and with a concurrent political shift to the right in the United States, the arts are again being used by politicians as a target. The federal program in place for them to attack is the National Endowment for the Arts. Rather than using old-fashioned red-baiting rhetoric, Republican Congressman Tom DeLay and two other congressmen from Texas—who are Christian fundamentalists—are charging the NEA

[Laughter from the audience.]

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edited transcript



textural transcript



05: Judy Moran (USA)



with funding pornography, funding projects of “questionable artistic value,” and charging the agency with a “wide array of abuses” including cronyism, in awarding grants.

The congressmen pored through enormous files of poetry submitted by poets applying for fellowship grants over the years to locate a handful of poems which could be circulated, with the offending language [highlighted], to their fellow congressional representatives. While their attempts to limit reauthorization of the NEA to two years failed—it will be up— come up again for reauthorization again in five years—appropriation of funds for the NEA is coming up soon for discussion and the Texas triumvirate will most likely use this as another opportunity to attack Federal funding of the arts.

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“And be assured, those of us who have concerns about certain activities at the National Endowment for the Arts will be following closely the progress NEA makes in addressing these problems.”

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edited transcript

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

The Congressmen feel the NEA should be directing most of its money to “the symphony and the ballet.”

What impact this conservative effort has on the NEA itself remains to be seen. Conservative shifts are already apparent in the literature program of the NEA. The Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank with considerable influence in the current administration, has recommended elimination of the Expansion Arts program at the NEA which it describes as a circus. The Expansion Arts program funds multi-cultural and rural art activities. Activities supported by this program are attacked on the grounds that they are promoting social change and do not qualify as legitimate art projects.

[Someone laughs briefly in the audience.]

er

[In the debates that continued over federal funding in the forties and fifties, certain arguments were clarified on both sides of the issue. Lloyd Goodrich, an art historian and curator at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York, became chairperson of The Committee

”

—unquote.

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[Someone laughs briefly in the audience.]

Gradually, support for the ah— federal arts in the fifties— federal arts funding in the fifties grew. Ah— under the administration of President Kennedy ah— in ah— the early sixties, the arts

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

on Government and the Arts, a consortium of arts organizations, established in 1948. He saw three historical impediments to federal patronage: the pioneer/puritan spirit that viewed art as a luxury, decentralization which viewed education and culture as more properly handled by the States and local governments, and the big availability of large amounts of private capital, which had been the primary art support since the 19th Century. Conservatives viewed federal arts programs as essentially welfare programs.

Those in favor of government support of the arts had five main arguments which developed during several years of testimony given at congressional hearings: Americans had failed to measure up to Europeans in terms of art support, art was an important part of the sales campaign against communism, government funding would save what some saw as the dying of art activity in the hinterlands and others saw as supporting a national renaissance of art activity, a need for decentralization of the arts, and that the arts had inherent economic problems

even became fashionable, and were positioned— positively aligned with his administration. And finally, when the art supporters, who'd worked long and hard for federal funding, joined with academics who voiced a need for a foundation for the humanities to count— counterbalance the National Science Foundation, Congress established the National Council for the Arts in 1964, and in 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the— the National Endowment for the Arts.

[Judy pauses.]

Next, I want to talk a little bit about ah— ah— public funding of the arts.

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[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]

that needed outside support. The arguments against federal support of the arts were that it would be too costly and encroach on States' rights.]

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Gradually, support for federal arts funding in the fifties grew. Under the administration of President Kennedy in the early sixties, the arts even became fashionable, and were positively aligned with his administration. And finally, when the art supporters, who'd worked long and hard for federal funding, joined with academics who voiced a need for a foundation for the humanities to counterbalance the National Science Foundation, Congress established the National Council for the Arts in 1964, and in 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[Judy pauses.]

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

PUBLIC FUNDING OF THE ARTS

The twenty year period of the existence of the National Endowment for the Arts has seen a tremendous surge of artistic activity nationwide. Approval of the arts by the federal government encouraged support in other levels of government and in the private sector as well. When the NEA was created in 1965, only Michigan and New York had state arts agencies, although twenty-five other states were in the process of setting them up. By fiscal year 1970, 44 states, and by 1974, all 50 states and six territories had art agencies.

For the first time, in fiscal year 1986, the aggregate total of legislative appropriations to state art agencies is far greater than the total NEA budget. (NEA: \$165,660,000; States: \$201,413,382)

[Jonathon Katz, executive director of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, says, “While there is a tendency to focus on the money available from state arts agencies, their contributions go beyond money to

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The twenty year period of the existence of the NEA has seen a tremendous surge of artistic activity nationwide. Approval of the arts by the federal government encouraged support in other levels of government and in the private sector as well. When the NEA was created in 1965, only Michigan and New York had state arts agencies, although twenty-five other states were in the process of setting them up. By fiscal year 1970, forty-four states, and by 1974, all fifty states and six territories had art agencies.

For the first time in fiscal year 1986, the aggregate total of legislative appropriations to state art agencies is far greater than the total NEA budget. The NEA budget ah— this year was around a hundred and sixty-five million, and for the states it was two hundred million.

Ah—

Of course, in terms of total state budgets, the arts allowance have remained ah— extremely small. For example, the highest percentage spent on the arts of a total space— ah— state budget, this year, is

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

their advocating the arts as a vital aspect of American life, providing a forum for cultural planning, making the link between the arts and education systems, facilitating the improvement of management and technical expertise, and fostering private sector art support partnerships.”]

Of course, in terms of total state budgets, the arts allowance have remained extremely small. For example, the highest percentage spent on the arts of a total state budget, this year, is 0.2911% in Massachusetts, with the lowest being 0.0234% of one percent in Wisconsin.

The third level of public funding of the arts is on the local level. Three kinds of organizations serve an umbrella function for all the arts, art institutions, and art communities in a particular locale. One is the city arts agencies, such as the San Francisco Art Commission, which coordinates city-funded events and organizations. Another is the private, non-profit arts council, such as the Winston Salem Arts Council in North Carolina (the first in the United States), and the third is

point-two-nine-one-one percent in Massachusetts, with the lowest being point-oh-two-three-four of one percent in Wisconsin.

The third level of public funding of the arts is on the local level. Three kinds of organizations serve an umbrella function for all the arts, art institutions, and art communities in a particular locale. One is the city arts agencies, such as the San Francisco Art Commission, which coordinates city-funded events and organizations. Another is the private, non-profit arts council, such as the Winston Salem Arts Council in North Carolina—the first in the United States. And the third is the local arts center. There are approximately twenty-five hundred local art agencies today with an aggregate budget this fiscal year of four hundred and fifty million dollars, most of which goes to institutions.

As encouraging as it has been to see such a growth and public support of the arts, it is important to remember how small the total budgets— budget amounts are, relative to other government programs, and how inadequately arts activities—and particularly individual artists—are supported by public money.

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

the local arts center. [These local organizations serve primarily three purposes, although not all organizations do all three. They provide services to the artists, art organizations and the public, they program and present art events, and they raise money for redistribution from both public and private money.] There are approximately 2,500 local art agencies today with an aggregate budget this fiscal year of \$450 million, most of which goes to institutions.

As encouraging as it has been to see such a growth in public support of the arts, it is important to remember how small the total budget amounts are, relative to other government programs, and how inadequately arts activities, and particularly individual artists, are supported by public money.

Public funds have consistently generated much higher spending on the arts in the private sector, particularly important in cities and counties outside of New York City. In this way, the NEA has had a democratizing influence on the arts, because grants from the NEA to arts organizations (not to individuals) require matching funds. Recipient organizations have had to develop

Public funds have consistently generated much higher spending on the arts in the private sector, particularly important in cities and counties outside of New York City. In this way, the NEA has had a democratizing influence on the arts, because grants from the NEA to arts organizations—not to individuals—require matching funds. Recipient organizations have had to develop the skills to raise additional funds in their ah— communities.

The Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities, and their report to President Reagan in 1981 stated, quote:

we have learned that public support generates private giving, helps set standards, and spurs innovation by the recipient. Public support has been important for the major cultural institutions. But equally important, it has tended to encourage smaller groups, to help creative movements survive, and to aid individual scholars and artists

05: Judy Moran (USA)

the skills to raise additional funds in their communities

The Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities, and their report to President Reagan in 1981 stated:

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“[The recent history of private support for the arts has grown from an estimated \$205 million in 1964, the year before the establishment of the Endowment for the Arts, to \$2.7 billion estimated in 1979, a twelve-fold increase. This compares with a gain of approximately \$100 million in the nine years preceding its establishment... Given the inherent distinctions between public and private support and the relatively small share of support generated from the public treasury, it has been enlightening to the Task Force to study the interweaving of public and private support.] We have learned that public support generates private giving, helps set standards, and spurs innovation by the recipient. Public support has been important

—unquote.

President Reagan’s response to this report seemed to be that the private sector should shoulder more and more of the arts support, something it clearly is not able—or willing—to do. He views the role of federal funding as leveraging private donations. But the assumption that there’s a bottomless well to be leveraged is proving painfully untrue for smaller, experimental organizations.

[A page is turned audibly.]

Now I want to talk a little bit about private funding of the arts.

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[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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[A page is turned audibly.]

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[Return to the [TABLE OF CONTENTS.](#)]

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

PRIVATE FUNDING OF THE ARTS

Private funding of the arts consists of individual donations (the largest percentage of private funding for the arts), private foundations, and corporate support. With a history of art support going back to the 19th Century, the ties between private funding and more traditional fine arts organizations, such as symphonies, ballets, and museums, are very strong. Wealthy art patrons frequently have sat on boards of both foundations and corporations, and due to tax laws, have been able to contribute large amounts of money to the arts.

In 1981 more than \$4 billion was budgeted for cultural activities, from both public and private sources. Of this amount slightly more than \$314 million (8%) came from federal sources, [about] half of that from the NEA. Approximately \$300 million was provided by local governments, and about \$110 million from state agencies. The rest—\$3.28 billion—came from private sources: foundations, corporations, and individuals. The American Association of Fundraising Counsel, Inc., in their *Giving USA Annual Report* for 1984

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Private funding of the arts consists of in— individual donations—which is by far the largest percentage of private funding for the arts—ah— private foundations, and corporate support. With a history of art support going back to the nineteenth century, the ties between private funding and more traditional fine arts organizations—such as symphonies, ballets, and museums—are very strong. Wealthy art patrons frequently have sat on boards of both foundations and corporations, and due to tax laws, have been able to contribute large amounts of money to the arts.

In 1981 more than four billion dollars was budgeted for cultural activities, from both public and private sources. Of this amount slightly more than ah— three hundred and fourteen million—which is about eight percent—came from ah— federal sources, half of that from the NEA. Approximately three hundred million was provided by local governments, and about a hundred and ten million from state agencies. The rest—three-point-two-eight billion—came from private sources: foundations, corporations,

found that private arts funding increased in 1984 to \$4.64 billion, up 10.2% from the previous year. This increase occurred primarily because of increased giving by individuals. Corporations tended to give significantly more money to the arts, but in smaller doses—the average foundation gift was considerably higher than the average corporate gift. The Foundation Grants Index shows an overall drop in total funding for cultural activities, from \$277.30 million in 1983, to \$229.02 million in 1984.

Private money for the arts tends to be conservative. Most of this enormous outpouring is going to large, more traditional arts organizations. Almost none is going directly to artists, and a relatively small proportion goes to small arts organizations. The private sector has trouble distinguishing art organizations from small businesses. They tend to see donations as seed money to start the organization on the road to total self-support. They need to realize that art organizations are rarely self-supporting, and the effort that is spent in trying to conform to a business model takes time away from the organization's artistic concerns. Unfortunately,

and individuals. The American Association of Fundraising Counsel, Incorporated, in their *Giving USA* annual report for 1984 found that private arts funding increased in 1984 to four-point-six-four billion, up ten-point-two percent from the previous year. This increase occurred primarily because of increased giving by individuals. Corporations tended to give significantly more money to the arts, but in smaller doses. The average foundation gift was considerably higher than the average corporate gift. The Foundation Grants Index shows an overall drop in total funding for cultural activities, from two hundred and seventy-seven point thirty million in 1983, to point-two-two— two-nine-oh-two million in 1984.

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

the art world seems to be better adapting to the business world, than the business world is adapting to the needs of the art world.

The relationship between the arts and corporations grows more complex as arts organizations come up with new ways to work with the private sector. Corporate support for the arts has traditionally included donating grants from corporate foundations, and purchasing art for collections that often rival the collections of the best museums. Now, corporation lobbies are housing galleries and museum branches, such as branches of the Whitney Museum in New York City.

In 1987, American corporations will spend close to \$1 billion on the arts. In an article in the June issue of *Art in America*, Brian Wallis discusses the involvement— involvement of corporations with museums:

“

“To the extent that this increase in corporate support has coincided with the expansion of multinational corporations, it should be noted that a large proportion of this sponsorship

organizations are rarely self-supporting, and the effort that is spent in trying to conform to a business model takes time away from the organization’s artistic concerns. Unfortunately, the art world seems to be better adapting to the business world, than the business world is adapting to the needs of the art world.

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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Wallis goes on to say that this relationship serves both institutions well, in their mutual promotion of themselves as harbingers of liberal humanism, that is, abstract individual human values beyond concrete political realities.

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

“The contradictions of this moral program are nowhere more apparent than in the conflicts of its humanitarian pretences with the neo-imperialist expansion of multinational capitalism. In a demonstrative, public way, sponsorship of art exhibitions helps to conceal these contradictions, by providing both the museum and the corporation with a tool for enriching individual lives, while suppressing real cultural and political differences. For promoting art ‘treasures’ while masking private corporate interests.

”

This association of fine arts with the best interests of the wealthy is not new, in fact, it has been zealously guarded by both since the late 19th century.

In this more conservative era, business can afford to be more straightforward about its own interests.

In recent testimony for the House Subcommittee on Select Education, which oversees the NEA, Timothy Porter of AT&T, spoke frankly about the position of corporations regarding art support:

“

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He goes on to say:

“The limitations on corporate philanthropic funds, on business geographical presence, and on the professional staff devoted to guiding contributions, necessarily requires focused and targeted programs. Meritorious in and of themselves, such activities cannot do justice to many areas of the country, to many emerging forms of art, and to the many needs of artists and audiences...Corporations cannot insure access to culture in those areas which lie outside of their business focus. Corporations cannot insure support of new developments in the art...[C]orporate giving is more likely to reflect the consensus-blessed and the proven, more likely to reward those with a track record than those struggling

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edited transcript

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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The House Subcommittee hearing was held because Representative Pat Williams from Montana in Congress was concerned about the fact that Impressionist paintings, which were exhibited in a well-attended blockbuster museum show touring the United States recently, were severely attacked and unappreciated when they were first painted one hundred years ago. Williams wanted to know from the art community in San Francisco—and he’s going to be holding these hearings around the country—where the Impressionist show was exhibited, what the federal government was doing to help or hinder emerging art. Porter admitted—the guy from AT&T—in his prepared testimony, that, although AT&T generously sponsored this current show of Impressionist paintings, it is unlikely that it would support a group show of work by young unknown artists painting in a style that would:

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

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I’ll talk a little bit about cutbacks and funding.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

FUNDING CUTBACKS

Non-federal funding for the arts, which has expanded so dramatically over the past 20 years along with the growth of the NEA, is showing signs of leveling off. Naturally, those at the bottom of the funding hierarchy, ie., small arts organizations and artists, will suffer the most. Even within the NEA, most of their budget goes toward larger institutions, so any cuts across the board will hurt the smaller-budgeted organizations far more than the large ones. However, even the large organizations which do survive, as shown, may have to compromise drastically in order to obtain non-public funds. The same requirement may make an impact on small arts organizations who wish to survive as well. Increasingly, small arts organizations are having to expand their boards to include people from the business community. In some cases, concerns about attendance are already affecting curatorial decisions regarding less-well-known artists. Grant proposals have a greater chance of being funded if attendance figures are high, even in small organizations. More attention and money are now directed toward

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promotion, with staffs now including publicists and development directors. More time is spent on large fundraising events, which frankly are designed to appeal to the wealthy, and include elaborate party with art celebrities. Some non-profit organizations also have tried establishing profit-making wings, with mixed success.

When Ronald Reagan became President, he was intent on cutting federal subsidy to the arts and returning arts activity to the states. Every year since his inauguration, Reagan has proposed 50% cuts in the NEA budget. Due to an outcry from the art community, Congress has continued to increase the NEA budget, although the increases have been smaller. In 1986, Congress appropriated only a \$2 million increase, due to a rampant overall federal budget deficit in the United States, which has doubled during the Reagan administration to a whopping \$2 trillion, reductions in federal spending on the arts seem inevitable. Reagan's recommendation for the total NEA budget is \$144.9 million, a 12.5% reduction. Ironically, Reagan is proposing a 4% increase in the budget for military bands, bringing that total to \$154 million. As Representative Thomas

directed toward promotion, with the staffs— with staffs now including publicists and development directors. More time is spent on large fundraising events, which frankly are designed to appeal to the wealthy, and include elaborate party with art celebrities. Some non-profit organizations also have tried establishing profit-making wings, with mixed success.

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textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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This cut in federal support of the arts, while arguably not enormous, will have negative effects in arts funding at all levels, both public and private, far beyond any dollar amounts.

Robert Lynch, Executive Director of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, feels that while local funding for the arts will continue to expand, federal cutbacks will affect public funding at both state and local levels. Not so much because of the loss of the revenue to them from the NEA, [but] because a cutback will be seen as a signal on all levels to reserve public funding to the arts. Lynch and many others feel the NEA is a symbol and has taken a leadership role in arts funding in the United States.

Research has shown that replacement of federal funds and funds is unlikely. Although most art organizations receive totally only about 5% of their budget from the federal government, it is a significant imprimatur.

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This cut in federal support of the arts—while arguably not enormous—will have negative effects in arts funding at all levels, both public and pri— private, far beyond any dollar amounts. Robert Lynch, Executive Director of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, feels that while local funding for the arts will continue to expand, federal cutbacks will affect public funding at both state and local levels. Not so much because of the loss of the revenue to them from the NEA, because a cutback will be seen as a signal on all levels to reserve public funding to the arts. Lynch and many others feel the NEA is a symbol and has taken a leadership role in arts funding in the US.

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

“Members of the business community believe that if the government doesn’t think support is important, they don’t think it is either,”

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says Anne Murphy, director of the American Arts Alliance. Adds Frank Saunders, staff vice-president of Philip Morris, Inc., a major donor to the arts:

“

“We value NEA’s judgment. And on more than one occasion we have relied on its involvement in deciding to sponsor one or another particular show.”

”

I want to add an aside that in the Sunday San Francisco *Chronicle*, it said that Philip Morris was dropping its art funding in the San Francisco Bay area because of recent legislation which has restricted smoking in public and working places.

Overall corporate support for the arts may have peaked. Admits Richard Contee, president of the Dayton Hudson Foundation:

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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“The business community is unanimous in saying we can’t pick up the slack even if everyone gave to the maximum.”

”

Because of reductions in federal spending on social programs, there’s increasing pressure on private money to shift their charitable contributions from the arts to social services. The Exxon Corporation, the largest corporate philanthropist, has shifted more than \$3 million from arts and public television to health and social welfare. And as for Philip Morris:

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“Whether, over time, we’ll continue with strongly with the arts is a big question,” said Barbara Reuter, the company’s former contributions manager, “with the Reagan administration asking companies to do more in the social services, it will be hard to justify cultural programs.”

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

Timothy Porter from AT&T continues:

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“At best, corporate support for the arts will increase only marginally if at all in the near term, given such competing and compelling claims on philanthropic budgets. Risky adventuresome support of new art is likely to be the first casualty.”

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What all this means is that art organizations are going to have to compete even harder for diminishing art support in the foreseeable future.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

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I'll talk a little bit about funding for individual artists.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

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et



05: Judy Moran (USA)

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FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Funding for individual artists has always been the smallest part of the total arts budget in the US. The main hindrance to wider distribution of funds for individual artists is the fact that potential funders consider funding artists directly as extremely risky. What any recipient artist might produce is unknown and difficult to control. Tied to this, I suspect, is an underlying belief that giving money to artists constitutes a welfare program, and more profoundly, that art making should follow a Social Darwinist-business model. In other words, artists should compete in the marketplace, where “the best” will survive.

Grants for individual artists are extremely rare and usually based on past work, which means artists that tend to get grants have already established a track record. Aside from the NEA, which grants individual artists fellowships based on a peer panel selection system, only a very few states (New York, Massachusetts and Minnesota) some local public art agencies, and a handful of foundations, grant money directly to artists. Most other money

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[The cassette sound is briefly interrupted here.]

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that goes to artists is tied to more controlled programs, such as commissioned work, which is approved in advance of construction; residencies where there are live-in requirements for artists; or touring programs.

Very few artists actually can support themselves by their artwork, almost all must hold some kind of job to pay the rent, as we all know, and these jobs often have little to do with art. With the cost of living so high, artists can no longer get by with minimum employment. Most art teaching positions were filled years ago, and with faculty tenure and declining enrollment in art schools, new positions are extremely rare. Some artists get by with a variety of jobs mixed with touring gigs, residencies, part-time teaching, and lectures, and some artists even become art administrators.

[Some laughter from the audience.]

Recently, some artists have also opened their own commercial galleries, such as in the East Village in New York, again with ah— mixed success. Some ha— have connected themselves with nightclubs, in terms of ah— ah— doing de— decorating and installations, performances.

Minnesota—some local public art agencies, and a handful of foundations, grant money directly to artists. Most other money that goes to artists is tied to more controlled programs, such as commissioned work, which is approved in advance of construction; residencies where there are live-in requirements for artists; or touring programs. Very few artists actually can support themselves by their artwork, almost all must hold some kind of job to pay the rent, as we all know, and these jobs often have little to do with art. With the cost of living so high, artists can no longer get by with minimum employment. Most art teaching positions were filled years ago, and with faculty tenure and declining enrolment in art schools, new positions are extremely rare. Some artists get by with a variety of jobs mixed with touring gigs, residencies, part-time teaching and lectures, and some artists even become art administrators.

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

What this means, of course, is that artists themselves are underwriting the emerging arts in the United States.

Like smaller arts organizations, artists themselves will have to compete harder for whatever money is available. With fewer venues for showing work by emerging artists competition will increase for the few slots that are available. Artists are already packaging themselves along a corporate model. Performing artists are making promotional videotapes and hiring agents. Those agents who successfully adapt to a business model may best survive the leaner years. As with artists' organizations, the energy and money that goes into self-promotion takes away from the art-making itself. Also, those artists who are unable to package their work attractively, may fall through the cracks. And I added, more and more artists may have to depend on spouses and trust funds to survive. Again, experimentation and research in the arts may take a backseat to the struggle for survival.

[Of course, many artists who began their careers presenting work in artists' organizations during the past fifteen years

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Some visual artists have moved very rapidly, as of late, into a successful career with a gallery. And

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

have moved on to galleries and museum shows. A few artists have even moved on to commercial television, recording contracts and the movies. Obvious examples are Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass and Whoopi Goldberg.]

Some visual artists have moved very rapidly, as of late, into a successful career with a gallery. And, of late, some young artists' paintings are selling for enormous prices, to the dismay and even disdain of much of the art community:

“

“There is a much discussed boom in the art world right now which bears little resemblance to the collecting and funding sprees which attracted media and government attention in the mid-1970s...[F]ewer artists are selling larger amounts of their output for much higher sums than before, resulting in a fast-paced and competitive market system that is a far cry from the affable cottage industry that the art market resembled only five years ago.”

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Dan Cameron, in his article “Mary Boone and the Sandinistas” in *Art Magazine*, goes on to say essentially, all the hoopla is merely sour grapes. He admits that the overwhelming finan— he does admit that the overwhelming financial success of an— notorious artist like Julian Schnabel, has had

Sandanistas (sic)" in *Art Magazine*, goes on to say essentially, all the hoopla is merely sour grapes.

He does admit that the overwhelming financial success of a notorious artist like Julian Schnabel, has had "a demoralizing influence" on struggling artists and probably has ended the aspirations of many.

Many young artists are not bothered by the same moral dilemmas of previous generations of artists. In this post-modern art world, art is viewed as as artificial and arbitrary as any other system of communication, so talk of value becomes meaningless. Artists accused of selling out say that it is so difficult to survive, and so few artists will achieve any support at all (and then only for a very brief period of time) that any way an artist can get financial support, and reach the broadest audience for his or her work, is legitimate.

The career of Keith Haring can be looked at in this light. Just seven years ago, he was sprawling his cartoon figures on subway walls in New York, after spending a brief time in art school. At 28, not only has his work been shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York, he pals around with Bianca Jagger and Yoko Ono; has a line of T-shirts,

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The career of Keith Haring can be looked at in this light. Just seven years ago, he was sprawling his cartoon figures on subway walls in New York, after spending a brief time in art school. At twenty-eight, not only has his work been shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York, he pals around with Bianca Jagger and Yoko Ono; has a line of T-shirts, watches, inflatable dolls, and other personalized items; all of which are available at his pot— at the *Pop Store*, his dime store which opened in Soho last month. Like his predecessor,

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

watches, inflatable dolls, and other personalized items; all of which are available at the *Pop Store*, his “dimestore” which opened in Soho last month. Like his predecessor, Andy Warhol, Haring has managed to straddle the world of art and commerce. And this is a quote from Keith Haring:

“

“At one point, artists were supported by the church, then the state, and then with the rise of modernism, by collectors and corporations. My idea is to break down these barriers. Information gets transmitted so quickly now that the way people perceive art has changed. You have to take that into account.”

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

edited transcript

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—unquote.

Next, I’d like to talk about— a little bit about the history of artists’ organizations in the United States.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS

Artists have struggled for survival throughout the modern era in the United States. When artists could not get their work shown in more established settings, they have traditionally resorted to finding ways to exhibit the work themselves. The Alfred Stieglitz gallery, 291, opened in New York in December 1908, succeeding *The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession* which had been Edward Steichen's studio in 1905, in an adjacent building.

Commercial galleries, which had served as the primary institution for exhibiting newer artwork prior to the alternative space movement, developed in the late 19th century, as the industrial age destroyed the traditional art patronage system, in which the power elite supported artists to proselytize their dominance, as Mary Delahoyd points out in her essay for the New Museum catalogue, *Seven Alternative Spaces*:

“At this point the artists assume the new role

00:42:52

Artists have struggled for survival throughout the modern era ah— in the US. When artists could not get their work shown in more established settings, they have traditionally resorted to finding ways to exhibit the work themselves. The Alfred Stieglitz gallery, 291, opened in New York in December 1908, succeeding *The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession* which had been Edward Steichen's studio in 1905, in an adjacent building. Commercial galleries—which had served as the primary institution for exhibiting newer artwork prior to the alternative space movement—developed in the late 19th century, as the Industrial Age destroyed the traditional art patronage— patronage system, in which the power elite supported artists to proselytize their dominance. As Mary Delahoyd points out in her essay for the New Museum catalogue, *Seven Alternative Spaces*, quotes:

at this point the artists assume the new role of the antagonist. This art, alienated from

of the antagonist. This art, alienated from its traditional societal role, turned inward to explore the nature of its unique existence and that of the individual making it. The modern era was born.”

”

Delahoyd goes on to argue that the political climate in the sixties made it impossible for artists to continue to work within the modernist tradition and consequently, artists developed new audiences, new means of support, and new kinds of venues. Abandoned urban centers, with large inexpensive industrial buildings, were perfectly suited to the needs of an art community looking for cheap live-work space in which to develop their new ideas:

“

“A new kind of ‘open space’ is now a vigorous—for many the most vigorous—part of the Soho scene. Spaces in empty warehouses, abandoned lofts, even in an urban parking lot, offer the artist a suitable environment for art that would be awkward confined within the

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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This upbeat description, of a movement that heralded the redevelopment of these abandoned urban centers, appeared in a 1973 issue of *Art in America*.

Along with the development of public funding for the arts, which allowed for more experimentation through its support of individual artists and artists' organizations, these non-profit artists' organizations begin developing in cities across the country. Artists' organizations were distinguished from other art organizations, primarily by the fact that artists were instrumental in policy and programming decisions. Artists

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

began taking control of not only their work, but the ways in which it would be seen, and how it would be promoted. Also, the kind of work that artists begin doing in the late 60s required exhibiting spaces that were more flexible. [The work produced at this time was temporary, idea-oriented work that included real-time performances which might go on for several hours, days or longer, site-specific installations, and video. Some of the work didn't even materially exist at all except in the mind of the artist and his or her audience. The work was often messy and difficult to understand. Consequently] there was work that could not be accommodated by galleries, as the work was non-commercial and museums were uncertain how or if to collect much of it. Women and multi-ethnic artists, traditionally excluded from traditional art institutions, also begin to organize, and with an emphasis on regional support through NEA grants to the states and local arts agencies, the beginnings of a true democratization of the arts resulted.

A network began to develop between many of these organizations, leading to a conference

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

in Los Angeles in 1978, sponsored by the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art. Representatives from artists' spaces around the country, and several from Canada, came together, riding the crest of the wave of high energy and enthusiasm that characterized the movement. Inspired by the parallel gallery system in Canada and ANNPAC, which pre-dated the alternative space movement in the US, organizations begin to consider formalizing their network.

It was not until the third conference in Washington, DC, in 1982, after much research in the field, that the National Association of Artists' Organizations (NAAO), was formed as a consortium whose purposes were to act as an advocate for artists' organizations, and to further develop a network of communication and mutual support among organizations, and between organizations and funding agencies and audiences.

[NAAO established guidelines for its membership which were intended to establish standards for the field: (a) Membership organizations are committed and responsible to contemporary artists, ideas and forms

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NAAO, now with over two hundred members, continues to sponsor conferences for the field every eighteen months; publishes a bulletin with pertinent information regarding developments in the NEA, and other relevant news; encourages regional activity through six regional representatives on the board. Current projects include research into a technical assistance program for artists' organizations, and production of four public service announcements, made by

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

and to equal representation of multi-ethnic and women artists. (b) Artists maintain an active central role in policy and decision making in all member organizations. (c) All member organizations give artists primary control over all forms of public presentation of their work. (d) Members are committed to paying equitable honoraria to presenting and exhibiting artists. (e) Support or presentation of an artist's work by member organization bears no relationship to membership policies or fee structure, as is sometimes required by co-operative galleries. (f) All member organizations operate on a non-profit basis.]

NAAO, now with over 200 members, continues to sponsor conferences for the field every 18 months; publishes a bulletin with pertinent information regarding developments in the NEA, and other relevant news; encourages regional activity through six Regional Representatives on the Board. Current projects include research into a technical assistance program for artists' organizations, and production of four public service announcements, made by artists about artists' organizations, to be aired on television.

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Regionally, Bay Area Artists' Organizations, ah— a local ah— group in the— in the San Francisco Bay Area that I've been involved with for several years ah—

[Tone.]

[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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Regionally, Bay Area Artists' Organizations, which has been run for several years by New Langton Arts, has produced two maps of artists' organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area and sponsored an Artists' Space Week which was declared as such by the Mayor of San Francisco.

Artists' organizations have taken a wide variety of forms depending on the community they serve and the specific interests of the artists involved with them. Some existed only for as long as the founders were willing and able to sustain them and others have become relatively large, stable institutions. Most organizations existed in an exhibiting and/or presenting space, but some have sponsored activities in a variety of settings, including public places. Some artists' organizations have adhered to a more traditional hierarchical structure while some have remained very loose. Some organizations have strict curatorial selection policies while some are curatorially completely open. Some

00:48:29

Francesca Bennett:

To fill in the gap of the missing cassette tape, the rest of Judy Moran's paper is read from the copy in the UNIT/PITT archives, but we're missing the Q&A.

er

Maegan Hill-Carroll, from the paper in the UNIT/PITT archives:

Regionally, Bay Area Artists' Organizations, which has been run for several years by New Langton Arts, has produced two maps of artists' organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area and sponsored an Artists' Space Week which was declared as such by the Mayor of San Francisco. Artists' organizations have taken a wide variety of forms depending on the community they serve and the specific interests of the artists involved with them. Some existed only for as long as the founders were willing and able to sustain them and others have become relatively large, stable institutions. Most organizations existed

have become involved with the neighborhood in which they exist and others have remained more aloof.

Artists' organizations have had to move on in most cases from their original buildings, along with artists, as urban redevelopment and its skyrocketing real estate prices are dispersing artists into areas outside the major cities. There is understandable bitterness on the part of artists and art organizations who acted as "urban pioneers" in making dangerous neighborhoods safe for uptown galleries, restaurants, boutiques and other businesses and now are unable to afford to live in these same neighborhoods.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

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[\[Maegan Hill-Carroll, off-mic: "that hasn't changed...that's so depressing," sighs loudly; further commentary is omitted.\]](#)



edited transcript



textural transcript



05: Judy Moran (USA) →

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[Return to the [TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.](#)]



WOMEN ARTISTS

Women have been integral to the artists' organization movement in this country from the beginning. In a publication for the first conference for alternative spaces in 1978, Ruth E. Iskin wrote an essay called "The Contribution of Woman's Art Movement to the Development of Alternative Art Spaces." (14) In it she quotes from an article, "Woman's Art of the 70's," by Lawrence Alloway in which he states:

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“it is a measure of the radical social base of women's art that it should require changes in the distribution system in a way never needed by Minimal art, Pop art, Op art or even Conceptual art, which all flourished happily within the given commercial structure.”

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To accommodate new formats and contents and to create a support community, as

00:50:36

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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“Feminist alternative spaces set an example proving that with energy, intention, commitment and hard work it was possible to create an independent institution which served artists and provided exposure to new art.”

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Several women involved with Womanspace in Los Angeles, the first feminist art space to open in that city, were also involved in the formation of the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, which sponsored the first national conference for alternative spaces. LAICA closely modelled itself after Womanspace, although, as Iskin points [out],



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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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while other alternative spaces serve as a supplement and extension of the traditional art establishment. Women have continued to be significant leaders in the artspace movement, primarily because they were involved in the formation of the field. In other words, because these spaces were not already part of the closed, male-dominated art establishment, women could be involved in initiating them and remain leaders in the field.

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Feminist artists have been very sophisticated in their use of the media and it is through this venue that they have had perhaps the greatest overall impact. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz speak of “feminist media art” in an essay, “Feminist Media Strategies

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

for Political Performance.” In response to violence against women in the media, Lacy and Labowitz formed

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“Ariadne: A Social Art Network, an exchange between women in the arts, governmental politics, women’s politics, and media. The focus was sex-violent images in popular media.”

”

During the three years of its existence, Ariadne produced seven major public performance events, including Three Weeks in May (1977), a large-scale series of events dealing with specific incidents of rape in certain designated areas of Los Angeles; Record Companies Drag Their Feet (1977), a performance designed specifically for television news coverage which launched a successful campaign against record companies for their use of violent images of women in their advertising; and In Mourning and Rage (1977), inspired by the distorted media

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representation of women as victims, which resulted in the telephone company agreeing to list Rape Hot-Line numbers among emergency numbers, the police department changing its public presentation of self-defense, and over one thousand city employees receiving free self-defense instruction. In this way, the media is used temporarily as an alternative art space to reach a wider, non-art audience by transmitting feminist values resulting in concrete community action.

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Unfortunately, feminist art organizations and art dealing with feminist issues have suffered recently because they have been categorized as belonging to a specific historical time and that feminism is seen as a movement whose time has passed along with other political movements of the 60s and 70s. Because the art world feeds on the new, feminist work is being exhibited much less frequently and feminist art organizations are encountering more difficulty in obtaining funding.

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Not only women artists who make art dealing specifically with feminist concerns, but all women artists continue to encounter tremendous discrimination in the art world. A recent survey by the NEA shows that women artists still earn only

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

dealing specifically with feminist concerns, but all women artists continue to encounter tremendous discrimination in the art world. A recent survey by the NEA shows that women artists still earn only 42% of what male artists earn. In the most recent round of individual artist fellowships from the NEA in the Visual Arts Program, only about 15% of the total grant budget went to women artists. The long term impacts of the women's movement in general are debatable, but in the art mainstream, the impact seems to have been minimal. Feminist art is considered passé even by many alternative organizations. The art world feeds on what appears to be new. The art market has always favored the white male, and with the re-emergence of a strong gallery system comes a return to an almost exclusively white male mainstream art world. Art by women just does not sell, goes the argument. Of course, if art by women is not exhibited, reviewed, purchased by collectors and museums, it will never have a chance to compete. Jennifer Bartlett, who has done relatively well in the mainstream art world, says,

forty-two percent of what male artists earn. In the most recent round of individual artist fellowships from the NEA in the Visual Arts Program, only about fifteen percent of the total grant budget went to women artists. The long term impact of the women's movement in general are debatable, but in the art mainstream, the impact seems to have been minimal. Feminist art is considered passé even by many alternative organizations. The art world feeds on what appears to be new. The art market has always favored the white male, and with the re-emergence of a strong gallery system comes a return to an almost exclusively white male mainstream art world. Art by women just does not sell, goes the argument. Of course, if art by women is not exhibited, reviewed, purchased by collectors and museums, it will never have a chance to compete. Jennifer Bartlett, who has done relatively well in the mainstream art world, says, quote:

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

“Although there has been a big positive change toward women in the last 20 years, I think people still prefer their heroes to be men.”

Some activities by women artists in response to the current state of affairs involve the use of the media. In 1984 women rallied to protest the New York Museum of Modern Art’s International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture exhibit, inaugurating the new wing of the museum, and in which only 13 artists out of 169 were women. The women who staged the protest hired a publicist and were successful in getting a lot of press coverage. Soon after, Linda Shearer, former Director of Artists Space, a large and successful artists’ organization in New York, was hired by the Museum as a curator for contemporary exhibitions.

More recently, a group calling itself Guerrilla Girls formed in New York to “combat sexism in the Art World.” They plastered Soho and

—end quote.

Some activities by women artists in response to the current state of affairs involve the use of the media. In 1984 women rallied to protest the New York Museum of Modern Art’s *International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture* exhibit, inaugurating the new wing of the museum, and in which only thirteen artists out of one hundred and sixty-nine were women. The women who staged the protest hired a publicist and were successful in getting a lot of press coverage. Soon after, Linda Shearer, former Director of *Artists Space*, a large and successful artists’ organization in New York, was hired by the Museum as a curator for contemporary exhibitions.

More recently, a group calling itself *Guerrilla Girls* formed in New York to quote: combat sexism in the art world. They plastered Soho and the East Village in New York with a series of posters which stated facts about sexual discrimination in the art world. In April of this year they staged a panel discussion about criticism of women artists and invited all the critics under discussion to attend. Reportedly, only one critic showed up.

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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One of their posters states,

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“I’m a Guerrilla Girl and I’m not angry at the critics who write less than 10% of their one-person show reviews about women artists. I admire and respect Dore Ashton, Edit deAk, Thomas Lawson, Kim Levin, Gary Indiana, Ida Panacelli, Robert Pincus-Witten, Peter Plagens, Carter Ratcliff and Valentine Tatransky and I hope they use their 10% to write about me this year.”

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Other posters state the fact that one major New York City Museum had an exhibition by a woman artist in 1984, that so many major New York galleries have less than ten percent women in their stables and that women artists make a third of what male artists are making.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)



edited transcript



textural transcript



05: Judy Moran (USA)



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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)



edited transcript



textural transcript



05: Judy Moran (USA)



MULTI-CULTURAL ARTISTS

Multi-cultural art organizations existed long before artists' organizations, as we know them today, and they have always been very involved in the life of the community in which they developed. These organizations and the individuals involved with them have largely remained outside of the mainstream art world. This has created problems in terms of funding, visibility and understanding of the work itself which often does not fit the mainstream definitions of contemporary art. Special funding categories have been created to deal with multi-ethnic art organizations on federal, state and local levels. Currently, the NEA is putting strong pressure on state art agencies to take over funding of multi-cultural and regional art organizations.

In California this has resulted in a new state-wide consortium of multi-cultural organizations. Because the NEA encouraged the California Arts Council to fund organizations they felt couldn't compete nationally for funds, and because the CAC

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In California this has resulted in a new state-wide consortium of multi-cultural organizations. Because the NEA encouraged the California Arts Council to fund organizations they felt couldn't compete nationally for funds, and because the CAC was found remiss in funding multi-cultural

was found remiss in funding multi-cultural organizations, a multi-cultural line item was added to the CAC budget in 1984. In lieu of establishing a granting program initially, for which, it was feared, it would be hard to maintain funding for, CAC decided to initiate a plan to assess the needs of multi-cultural art organizations and to institute a management assistance program which could help to make these small organizations more stable and better able to seek funding.

The organization formed to handle the money for this Professional Management Assistance Project is the California Consortium for Expansion Arts. The project aims to provide experience in administration and fund raising, which is so lacking in the multi-cultural arts community, through a technical assistance program. Juan Carillo, manager of Organizational Grants at CAC and instrumental in setting up this program, states that:

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[The page is turned audibly.]

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edited transcript

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05: Judy Moran (USA)

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Funding, of course, is a problem, but it is a problem for all art organizations. Ethnic (sic) have been traditionally excluded from policy making in the arts on all levels and from active participation in the art infrastructure.

As Carillo says,

when there is a call for community response multi-ethnic art administrators are reluctant to step forward due to lack of experience; when someone from an organization is needed for a position in the art community, seldom are individuals sought from small budget, multi-cultural organizations.

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Out of about a thousand applications from art organizations in California, only about one hundred are being defined as multi-cultural—at least fifty percent of the board are ethnic, plus staff and audience must include ethnic

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

least 50% of the board are ethnic, plus staff and audience must include ethnic individuals, and ethnic considerations must be reflected in the organization's policies). Of these 100 applicants, only 2 have a budget over half a million dollars, and only 2 have budgets over \$250,000. The overwhelming majority have budgets under \$100,000. Only a very small percentage of all of the 1000 applicants for organizational grants from the CAC have a minority representative on their boards. Multi-cultural artists and arts organizations are clearly outside the mainstream art world.

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In a further attempt to deal with this chronic problem, a new national organization was formed—The Association of American Cultures (AAC)—at a recent conference in San Antonio, Texas for multi-cultural organizations. Its primary purpose is advocacy on a national level. Their targets are the NEA, the National Assembly of State Art Agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Congress. The board for the AAC consists of members of the steering committee from the San Antonio

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

conference and they plan to meet frequently in cities across the country to help increase their membership nationwide and educate a broad community about multi-cultural activities.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

New York, since the late 1940s, has claimed to be the center of the art world. Every artist in the United States must come to terms with this at some point in his or her career. Though art galleries and the number of artists have increased in other cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas, New York still remains the place where many artists go for validation and support, as difficult as conditions there may be. This is not only because of the comparatively larger number of galleries there and a sophisticated art-going public, but also because this is where the art journals are published and most of the more well-known art critics live and work. In New York, the arts are an integral part of a chic, urban existence. even artists living in other parts of the country who have achieved some recognition at home have often first received critical acclaim in New York. The most unfortunate result of this state of affairs is the internalization of some sort of belief in inherent inferiority by artists

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Compounding the problem is the general lack of sophistication about the arts across the country, particularly outside of a few urban centers. Frank Hodsell, Chairman of the NEA, points out

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“that 61% of the adult population in 1982 did not attend a single jazz, classical music, opera, musical operetta, theatrical or ballet performance; or visit an art museum or gallery...(I)n terms of education, 53% of the adult population have had no instruction in music; 76%,

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that sixty-one percent of the adult population in 1982 did not attend a single jazz, classical music, opera, musical operetta, theatrical or ballet performance; or visit an art museum or gallery, in terms of education, fifty-three percent of the adult population have had no instruction in music; seventy-six percent, no visual arts; ninety-one percent, no theatre; ninety-three percent, no ballet; and eighty-two percent, no creative writing. And the *arts*

no visual arts; 91%, no theatre; 93%, no ballet; and 82%, no creative writing. And the 'arts experiences' of most people are dominated by the commerce of popular music, television, movies and commercial publishers.”

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Knowledge of contemporary art is even more limited.

Two artists, Eve Laramée and Ann Zimmerman, who call themselves The Carcass Sisters, developed a project recently to bring public awareness of newer artistic developments to northern New Mexico, where they live and work. ART/MEDIA was a two month series of events which combined art by regionally and internationally known artists.

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

A CLOSING THOUGHT

As difficult a time as artists have always had surviving, the immediate future does look bleaker, not only in terms of financial support, but in terms of a plurality of ideas and forms. Not only will there be fewer artists, but those who survive will be doing less truly experimental work. Having participated in the last decade in the alternative art world, I feel a sense of loss, along with many of my peers, as we look at the state of the art world today. Brian O'Doherty expresses some of these sentiments in the May issue of Artforum magazine:

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“What has been buried? One of the art community's conceivably noble efforts: the concerted move of a generation to question, through a matrix of styles, ideas, and quasi movements, the context of its activity. Back in the 60s the attempt to dispense with illusions was dangerous and could not be tolerated for long. So

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the art industry has since devalued the effort. Illusions are back, contradictions tolerated, the art world's in its place and all's well with that world...Suffice it say here that the elusive and dangerous art of the period between 1964 and 1976 is sinking with its lessons out of sight, as, given the conditions of our culture, it must.”

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I would like to thank many people who were so helpful in the writing of this paper. Aside from those mentioned in the text, I would like to thank Pat Anderson, Development and Management Consultant for artists' organizations, for information and insights regarding arts funding; Ariel Dougherty, Development Director for Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale, New York, for her thoughts and information regarding women artists; Marie Acosta-Colon, Program Coordinator for The California Consortium of Expansion Arts; Jim Pomeroy, an artist living and teaching in San Francisco; John Kreidler, Program Specialist for the San Francisco

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edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)

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Judy Moran, San Francisco, June, 1986

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

Artists League for inviting me to present this paper at the Strategies for Survival Conference.



[Tone.]

Francesca Bennett:

The paper is signed “Judy Moran, San Francisco, June, 1986,” and ends with footnotes, included in our further readings.

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[Tone.]

[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

05: Judy Moran (USA)

CLOSING REMARKS (2023)

Francesca Bennett, project coordinator:

Thanks for reading. This was just one part of a multi-part project documenting *Strategies for Survival: State of the Arts / The Art of Alternatives: An International Conference for Artists*, organized by the Vancouver Artists' League in 1986—if you're following along, all of the transcripts and audio recordings are linked directly [here](#), or can be found at unitpitt.ca

You may have noticed that, like most archives projects, this one is in progress. If you have any recollections or information that you'd like to share about the 1986 conference, or new thoughts in 2023, send us a message at info@unitpitt.ca



[\[Return to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.\]](#)

01:10:20

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[\[Return to the TABLE OF TIMESTAMPS.\]](#)

edited transcript

textural transcript

05: Judy Moran (USA)