

MEETING SUMMARY

A GATHERING ON SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS IN THE FOLK AND TRADITIONAL ARTS

Wheelwright Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico

March 13-14, 2003

Organized by the Fund for Folk Culture

Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Summary prepared by Elaine Thatcher

In attendance:

Tom Aageson, Museum of New Mexico Foundation, Santa Fe, NM
Obo Addy, Musician, Co-Founder, Homowo Foundation, Portland, OR
Phyllis Barney, North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance, Silver Spring, MD
Robert Baron, New York State Council on the Arts and FFC Trustee, New York, NY
Jane Beck, Vermont Folklife Center and FFC Trustee, Middlebury, VT
Barry Bergey, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC
Hal Cannon, Western Folklife Center and FFC Trustee, Salt Lake City, UT
Charlie Carrillo, Santero, Santa Fe, NM
Julie Dalgliesh, The Bush Foundation, St. Paul, MN
Kurt Dewhurst, Michigan State University Museum, and Chair, FFC Board of Trustees, East Lansing, MI
Leticia Evans Frank, Fund for Folk Culture Trustee Advisory Council, Santa Fe, NM
Melissa Franklin, Pew Fellowships in the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Juan Gutierrez, Musician, Founder, Los Pleneros de la 21, New York, NY
Theresa Harlan, California Arts Council, Sacramento, CA
Theresa Hoffman, Basketweaver, Director, Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, Waterville, ME
Maggie Holtzberg, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Boston, MA
Joyce Ice, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM
Barbara Lloyd, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
Tim Lloyd, American Folklore Society, Columbus, OH
Marsha MacDowell, Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, MI
Laura Marcus, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, NM
Peter Mattair, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, NM
Kathleen Mundell, Cultural Resources, Inc., Rockport, ME
Dolly Naranjo, Potter; Coordinator, School of American Research, Santa Fe, NM
Nancy Meem Wirth, Potter, FFC Trustee, Santa Fe, NM
Betsy Peterson, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, NM
Frances Phillips, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, San Francisco, CA
Lori Pourier, First People's Fund, Rapid City, SD
Sophilene Shapiro, Dancer, Choreographer, Co-Founder, Khmer Arts Academy, Long Beach, CA
Holly Sidford, The Urban Institute, Brooklyn, NY
Willie Smyth, Washington State Arts Commission, Olympia, WA
Claude Stephenson, New Mexico Arts, Santa Fe, NM
Elaine Thatcher, Heritage Arts Services, Logan, UT
Cipriano Vigil, Musician, El Rito, NM

This meeting is the first of a series of four gatherings organized by the Fund for Folk Culture. This gathering is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The second gathering, scheduled for June 2003, will focus on support for small organizations and the role informal and unincorporated activity plays in the field of public sector folklore. The third meeting will be held in October 2003 in Albuquerque during the annual meetings of the American Folklore Society in partnership with AFS. It will be a series of conversations focusing on career paths for folklorists. The fourth meeting will be in November 2003 in Santa Fe and will address how to reinforce links between cultural conservation, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development.

The gatherings will result in working papers and other publications, and are part of a larger group of publications to be distributed broadly this year by the FFC. The first report, *Culture and Commerce: Traditional Arts in Economic Development* was authored by Urban Institute staff members and is an assessment of the FFC's Partnerships in Local Cultures program (supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation) which encouraged economic development strategies in support of rural local cultural practices and traditions. The second report, co-authored with the Bay Consulting Group for the National Endowment for the Arts, will address issues of private sector support for the traditional arts field. The third publication will be a report on the Fund for Folk Culture's Conferences and Gatherings granting program, which was underwritten by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Status of the Discussion on Funding for Folk Artists

Folk artists do not fare well in public or private support, and the discussion of the needs of folk artists has been limited. Notable efforts in this area include meetings convened by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—meetings on apprenticeships, the needs of craftspeople, and funding for world classical performance traditions, among others. When the Fund for Folk Culture was created, a report was commissioned on support for traditional artists (1991). And in 1995, NEA published *In Our Hands*, which reported on the status of the folk arts apprenticeship programs at that time.

This Fund for Folk Culture-convened gathering is an opportunity to once again examine financial and other kinds of support for folk artists by looking at the topic in two ways: Building a Life (feeding oneself spiritually as an artist) and Making a Living (how folk artists can feed and shelter themselves and their families).

The Urban Institute's Study on Support for Individual Artists

In 2000, the Urban Institute initiated a new study, "Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists." Thirty-eight national and local funders are participating in the project. Holly Sidford, Senior Associate at the Urban Institute, presented a progress report on the work, with a particular emphasis on results having to do with folk and traditional arts. The analysis of the research is not yet complete, therefore all findings presented in her report were preliminary.

The research goals were to (1) document and analyze existing programs, (2) use a holistic approach to understand and document support systems, (3) catalyze action to bolster support, and (4) create long-lasting tools for the field. The study has six components:

1. Case studies on how it works for artists in nine urban areas and a composite rural profile. The nine urban sites were Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. A rural profile was created as a composite of many rural areas. Included in the profiles was information on the roles of artists, funders, academic institutions, cultural and community groups, and media.
2. Creation of an online database of information on grants, programs, services and publications for artists - now available to artists in all disciplines and all states and useful to funders, policymakers, and researchers as well as artists. The database includes information on programs and services of more than 3,100 organizations. It is called NYFA Source, and is available at www.nyfa.org.
3. Polling and other research, consisting of a national opinion survey, national interviewing, and publications on related issues. This included 500 interviews in each of the nine urban centers and 1,000 national interviews. The research probed issues such as how people were personally involved in the arts, their perceptions of artists compared to other professionals, their personal contact with artists, past and present, and their perceptions of artists' contributions to society.
4. A review of literature on existing research and data.
5. Communication and constituency-building.
6. Recommendations for action.

Preliminary Findings

Thus far, the preliminary findings have yielded information on how a healthy support system for artists would look. Such a system would include strong policy and practice in six key realms, where new policies and actions will be needed:

1. Training and professional development
2. Material supports
3. Markets /demand
4. Information
5. Validation
6. Community /networks

Training and Professional Development

The case studies show that existing systems are not adequately training artists to navigate the world of work or to live successfully as artists in society. Facts documented in the case studies show that (1) as folklorists already know, training for folk and traditional artists often occurs outside of formal institutions, and apprenticeships and mentorships are important to sustaining traditions and bring financial support and recognition to master artists; (2) some American Indian artists and immigrant artists have lost access to their cultural traditions and to materials necessary to create artwork, though in some cases, fellowships have enabled these artists to develop the skills to master their traditions and develop them; and (3) community based cultural centers, grassroots groups and community radio stations help nurture traditional artists and connect them with opportunities for professional development. However, many of these groups are endangered or becoming less accessible to traditional artists.

The database information on training shows that in general, award programs are not targeted to specific career development points. Out of 1,835 cash award programs, only 139 (6%) address training primarily (apprenticeship/ professional programs). Out of 2,845 service programs, only 280 (10%) address artists' training needs.

Material Supports

The study shows that folk artists, more than any other type of artist, lack access to grants and other financial support. Contributing factors are fewer grants programs, inadequate information systems, inappropriate grant application criteria, and inadequately-informed panelists. The study also shows that public support programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts and Expansion Arts programs and state arts agency programs, have been of vital importance to folk and traditional artists. In addition, the place-based nature of some traditional art forms makes them very sensitive to environmental conditions, and the work is endangered by loss of habitat or loss of access to natural materials. Compounding the problems is the fact that infrastructure for folk arts is weaker than in some other disciplines: means of communication are limited (especially in rural areas), venues are lacking, and informed presenters are few. The study also notes the large numbers of traditional artists who hold multiple jobs, don't support themselves through their art, and don't see themselves as "artists." This has positive and negative dimensions. The positive is that the art has a holistic, embedded quality in the lives of artists and communities. The negative is that traditional artists are significantly undercounted in surveys and censuses, and there is less advocacy for their work.

The database indicates that award programs for folk artists, numbered at 197 as of February 2003, are significantly fewer than for any other type of artist—the highest number of programs are for writers/literary artists (1,034), multidisciplinary projects (908), and visual artists (751). The nearest to folk arts in the number of awards programs are performance art/ interdisciplinary arts at 208. These figures are based on award programs that are explicitly, but not necessarily exclusively, open to artists in the discipline listed. There are only seven states (New York, California, North Carolina, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington) that have more than six award and service programs especially for folk/traditional artists.

The national polling results show that of the 70% of people who are aware of artists in their area, 89% think individual contributors should support artists, and 78% think that community organizations and businesses should do so. Further, nationwide, more people think that local artists should receive government funding than think they should not: 64% think local government should support local artists; 56% think state government should do it; 49% think the federal government should do it; and 30% do not support funding for artists at any level of government.

Markets / Demand

The case studies show that commercial markets provide opportunities for traditional artists but also threaten traditions. Tensions arise between perpetuating a tradition, marketing work, and integrating the art into community life. Additionally, creating and sustaining markets is difficult. Local demand may not be sufficient, travel to larger markets is expensive, and market prices do not reflect standards and values of traditions. Cultural tourism is both an opportunity and a threat. Traditional artists rarely have voice in shaping cultural tourism policy, which often disregards traditional values. Culturally-owned marketing mechanisms (such as Native American cooperatives) are important efforts to control representation.

The database shows that most award programs and many services are intended to help artists make art, not market it. Relatively few programs address both supply and demand issues by bundling cash grants with marketing, distribution, or presentation services.

Information

Because many traditional artists don't identify themselves as artists for census, IRS, and other systems, it is difficult to know how many there are. Census undercounts impact information and policy. Additionally, the complexity and diversity of rural and immigrant communities (home to many traditional artists) contradict the homogeneous image of such communities that fuels policy. Many policy areas—including communications, immigration, transportation, environment, health, and education—have impacts on traditional artists. These have been insufficiently studied and understood.

The above-mentioned challenges to identifying the artist population and thus to the ability to sample it are part of the difficulty in developing databases on traditional artists. Further, there are inconsistent reporting procedures across agencies, including inconsistent terminology and lack of clarity about program guidelines. There is also wariness about making certain information public: sensitivity about artists' privacy, budget information, and demographic information is an issue. Finally, there is a lack of resources for collecting information—staff and other resources are needed to collect and maintain information.

Validation

For traditional artists, art and culture are a way of life, integral to other community functions. It can be difficult to separate artmaking from life, although this is often required for funding. Further, stereotypes about traditional arts and artists limit understanding of the complexity and diversity of these artists and their art forms. Folk and traditional arts raise issues related to “innovation” vs. “tradition;” “collective genius” vs. “individual genius;” “professional” vs. “amateur”—which pose difficulties for mainstream validation systems. NEA played an important role in validating traditional artists; the weakening of the agency in the past decade has diminished this role.

The database information shows that traditional and folk artists, design artists, and choreographers have far fewer opportunities for validation through award programs than artists in other disciplines. Additionally, the very large number of very small grants suggests that they are intended more as gestures of validation than serious support.

Community / Networks

Many traditional artists, according to the case studies, receive essential support from their communities, and community members participate actively in the art forms as creators, audiences and advocates. Networks and associations are other important sources of support, reducing isolation, providing access to information and resources, and connecting artists with technical assistance and advocacy. In rural areas, there are numerous but scattered alliances; a unified approach might increase resources and enhance advocacy.

Potential Lines of Action

As an early result of this major study, the Ford, Allen, and Howard Gilman Foundations are supporting planning for a possible implementation stage focusing on the above six lines of action. They are exploring the potential for a major ten-year collaborative effort with local and national components. The goal is to effect systemic change in the condition and capacity of artists (not only folk artists), enabling them to create artwork, build social capital, and contribute to democratic values at home and abroad.

In the short term, there are likely to be initiatives focusing on increasing direct support through fellowships, awards, and commissions. There will also be efforts to increase material supports such as insurance, live-work space, training, and information services.

For information on the Investing in Creativity study, there is a website, www.usartistsreport.org, and the national database, NYFA Source, can be accessed at www.nyfa.org.

This study is drawing conclusions that folklorists have long known, but have not documented well. One of the values of the study is that it documents some of the challenges in supporting folk arts, thus opening the door for action from funders.

Discussion and Comments

Following Sidford's presentation, several issues were raised by meeting participants.

There was concern that the results of the research are out of balance because of the heavy focus on artists in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. Sidford asked the group if any of the study's preliminary conclusions seemed wrong for rural artists and the general consensus was that it was a matter of emphasis, and rural artists share challenges faced by all rural residents, including difficulties with access to transportation, information, networks, etc.

There was a question of whether the study addressed the problem of artists losing government benefits such as Social Security, disability, and welfare payments if they apply for and receive grants. Sidford said this may have been an issue raised in some of the interviews with artists but it had not been noted as a major theme.

New organizations have more trouble finding seed money and other support for operations, making it hard for them to survive. These organizations can give artists support in becoming entrepreneurs, in creating their own destinies. The study did find that small organizations created by artists are fragile, and resources are few. Having a track record with funders is crucial, and new organizations are not well recognized by funders.

Artists with disabilities need to collaborate with organizations that are doing work with the disabled. Sidford noted that on cross-sector issues such as insurance and affordable housing, artists have made progress when they have formed alliances there has been progress in areas where artists have formed alliances with other organizations. The fact that artists think of themselves as separate hinders their ability to align with other causes and effect bigger change.

This study comes at a critical time for state agencies that are looking at putting fellowship program on hiatus due to large budget shortfalls. The Urban Institute will be able to print special runs of the study results and can probe the data in different ways to assist organizations in solving specific problems.

The Mystic Seaport Museum and its museum store's role in encouraging the growth of a market for maritime art were mentioned. We should not ignore market activity as a source of support for artists.

A recent study in the quilting field showed that there are 20 million quilters in the U.S., mostly in rural communities. The overwhelming majority would not call themselves artists. Sidford pointed out that the study's opinion poll revealed that 20% of adults in the U.S. consider themselves artists. That figure is reinforced by recent General Social Survey results, which show the annual social survey that shows that 30-35 million people are involved in some art form as professionals or serious amateurs. The gap we have created between amateur and professional puts us where we are today: millions of people value art in their own lives, but don't believe artists contribute to communities. There is a need to help people understand creativity. The fact that we are surrounded by buildings designed by someone was brought up as an example.

There are many studies that have been done, but we are not making good use of their results. The RAND study of a few years ago showed that millions of people participate in the arts. Do we use it for coalition building? What can we do with the Chicago Center for Arts Policy publication, *The Informal Arts*? All this information is useful, but we don't know how to use it. The difference in the Urban Institute study is that it views artists as a critical group—most research is on institutions, but individuals are the ones who make the art.

Discussion Session One: Building a Life as a Traditional Artist

Folk arts as a field seems to excel in teaching and training, and maybe that has to do with the special nature of folk arts. Betsy Peterson, after serving as a panelist for the Pew Fellowships in the Arts, noted that (1) teaching was mentioned frequently in the applications—this was an open-ended program, but several applicants mentioned wanting to teach; (2) several artists talked about their role in tradition. They had a strong notion of being a participant in a larger cultural tradition. Some talked about what they had to offer to the tradition at this point in their career—what they could give back. But it wasn't just about art—it had to do with their participation in the larger community. This seems to be a particularly prevalent sentiment among folk artists. Some artists feel that they are stewards for the tradition. Some programs, like apprenticeships, have emphasized this aspect of traditional arts. But what else is important? Have we focused on this too much? Apprenticeship grants are the most dominant model of support. This may suggest that either we're doing something right or we're putting too much energy into one form of support. A wide-ranging discussion followed Peterson's introduction.

Apprenticeship Programs: Assets, Liabilities, Impact

Some of the strengths of apprenticeship programs include, at least in some states, the fact that the money can be used for support costs like babysitting and travel, giving support not only for the art, but for helping to create the conditions in which the art can be created. Apprenticeships also engender publicity and recognition among “authorizing authorities” like legislatures.

The Maine Indian Basketmakers' Alliance, now considered a model program by many, has funded over 100 apprenticeships. When the Alliance started, there were 55 artists, and now there are 115. Apprenticeships have been the driving force behind Alliance programs and its ultimate incorporation as a nonprofit. The Alliance took over the basketweaving portion of the state apprenticeship program in 1999. The Maine Arts Commission still funds apprenticeships, but the Basketmakers' Alliance funds basketweaving apprenticeships, awarding 21 last year. The grants are only \$800, but many of the basketweavers are on Social Security, so the amount is small enough not to cause benefit loss. The Alliance developed an intermediate master category, and they get even less money to teach.

In rural states like Maine, there is very little infrastructure in folk arts. The apprenticeship is a way, over time, of building infrastructure in a state. It's a window into communities. When you're looking at apprenticeships, you have to look at the rural issue. The Maine Basketmakers' Alliance now not only has more practicing artists, but it also has its own gallery.

In California, the existence of an apprenticeship program also assisted in the development of a Native basketweavers community. Once formalized as a nonprofit, the community has been able to impact policy in areas like pesticide use in natural environments where basket materials grow. In addition, there has been a direct benefit to ceremonial life—the Karuk tribe brought back a dance because they were able to weave the necessary objects. It's not about a commercial market, it's sustaining the community.

Apprenticeships are fraught with frustrations for some master artists. For one thing, they are poorly funded. A well-established master artist, in some art forms and markets, can make more in a half hour of work than a full day in the apprenticeship program. Charlie Carrillo, santero and anthropologist from New Mexico, has had hundreds of apprentices in a variety of venues and funding situations. But the result has been that all the work in the Hispanic art markets starts to look like his work. If the same masters keep offering apprenticeships, the art form may be diminished by repetition of certain styles and neglect of others. There's also too much paperwork, even when the program is streamlined. For very traditional people, it doesn't work.

While apprenticeship funding is inadequate as a primary source of income, it can be an important supplement to other income, enabling masters to work with promising students that they encounter in other teaching situations. A master can personally transfer the tradition, along with his/her approach, understanding, and background knowledge. Cambodian dancer/choreographer Sophiline Shapiro commented that in Cambodia, the art of classical dance is taught in the Academy of Fine Art, where a teacher has a class of 20-30 students. To create one good student, the teacher has to spend extra, unpaid, time in her home with the student. Similarly, Shapiro's school in the U.S. is open on Saturdays to all comers. Some of these students—ones who are good enough to leave the class, and who show dedication and love for the tradition—end up practicing in her living room. They need special attention. That is when the master-apprentice grant is needed.

Where fellowships are available, master artists may apply for these rather than apprenticeships. This frees them to create instead of teach. If they apply for apprenticeship grants, it is often because there are youth at risk, and the masters feel it is important to have the co-involvement of youngsters who are isolated or being pulled away from tradition.

With an apprenticeship grant, where there is one master and one apprentice, you expect mastery out of the apprenticeship. It is different than a workshop. How do workshops play into a master artist's economic life?

Variability of Cultural Environments, Artistic Needs, and Uses of Support Systems

Dolly Naranjo described how people in Santa Clara Pueblo learn pottery making—it is a process integral to life. Children are included in clay-gathering expeditions, where they not only get to play, but they also learn the locations of the deposits and the methods of gathering. They are asked to do the “dirty work”—mixing the clay with their feet, thus learning the proper

proportions and “feel” of the mixture of sand, water, and clay. They carry wood for the firing. By the time they are adults, they know the entire process. About 2,500 people live in Santa Clara, three-quarters of whom are involved in pottery-making. Interestingly, the state arts agency’s apprenticeship program gets almost no applications from Santa Clara. They are not needed.

Naranjo went on to say that Pojoaque Pueblo sponsors classes in pottery, jewelry, basketry, beading, and sculpture. Many masters teach these classes, and many Pueblo people in the area will take the classes. However, Naranjo expresses doubts about how well the workshops function. Class members seem to be experimenting: she wonders if they ever reach the point where they can make a living in those art forms. Naranjo herself has taught classes, but her experience is that the only ones who can afford to take them are non-Native. She does teach Native people, but she does it without expecting payment. The ideal situation is a community that is together and enclosed in a still-traditional mode, that has the traditional mentality of sharing that gift, of not expecting to be paid for the gift. That ideal is probably not transferable to other communities unless they are together and closed in an extended family unit.

Obo Addy agreed that the community process was similar in Ghana when he grew up. But when artists leave their home countries and come to America, apprenticeship funding helps master artists teach people so that they learn in the right way. He cited influences like American popular music that make it difficult to teach truly traditional music. Plus, uneducated presenters frequently hire people who claim to be traditional African musicians, but they use western instruments. Even in Ghana, traditional music such as he performs is not found—the old musicians have passed on. But once the music is changed, then it’s not a tradition any more. Addy does not worry about people replicating what he does—he wants them to replicate it (not do it wrong). If it is to be called traditional, it should be traditional. If a traditional artist also performs non-traditional music, as Addy does with his African jazz group, it should be made clear that it is not traditional.

It is clear that different art forms and different environments affect how a program should be designed. In New Mexico, where Hispanic and Indian traditional arts have healthy markets, awards, ribbons, and accolades may help, but teaching takes time away from being a practicing artist who can earn a good living from his/her art. In other areas, such awards mean a great deal to artists who would otherwise not have any outside recognition for their arts—there is no other public forum for recognition. They don’t expect to earn a living from their arts, so they appreciate the attention and validation that awards bring. Apprenticeship grants validate the informal process of learning, give recognition to the master, and help to perpetuate the art form. But such awards do not address the issue of artists not being able to earn a living from their arts.

Other Sources of Support and Problems of Sustainability

Rolex now has a master-apprentice program in the fine arts, funded at \$50,000. Folklorists should think about whether funding on that scale is possible. Now everything is about branding and emotions, connections. The emotions that surround apprenticeships have to do with elders, family, etc. We should be going to major institutions like the American Association of Retired

Persons (AARP), which funded the Veteran's History Project at the Library of Congress for \$3 million.

In Oregon, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Refugee Arts Program works with the community, not through apprenticeships, but through classes and gatherings like a multi-ethnic sewing circle. People were often cut painfully from their communities. After-school classes were developed which helped with what youth are doing after school. It helped keep them out of gangs. The social service people in the agency saw the value of the arts. There may be other funding sources because of how traditional arts function in a social context.

Sustainability of funding programs is a concern. The National Endowment for the Arts has provided almost all of the support for apprenticeships around the country, mainly through state arts agencies. The NEA Infrastructure money that funds apprenticeships and folklorist positions is leadership money—the only discretionary money in the agency—and it is getting more competitive. Leadership funds are not meant to be set-asides for long-term support of anything. Every new Chairman looks at leadership money for his/her initiatives—it is the only money that is discretionary. The federal apprenticeship program has been very successful. Apprenticeships could also be successful in states, using state or local funding, but little has been done to try to secure such funds. Perhaps there needs to be an incentive for states and locals to take over funding of the program. If the leadership money is diverted to other programs without warning, many apprenticeship granting programs may not be able to continue. We have not to this point provided the incentive for states and locals to take over the programs. How can something that is ongoing be built?

A related issue is whether people even know that their apprenticeships are funded with NEA money. Does the agency get credit for these apprenticeships? If not, then the funding may be in danger due to lack of advocacy.

Much has been asked of the apprenticeship program over the years, with some successes, some failures. One of the areas that the apprenticeship model does not adequately address is the natural environment and its relationship to folk arts.

Interview Session with Artists

Panel discussion with Obo Addy, Charlie Carrillo, Juan Gutierrez, Theresa Hoffman, Dolly Naranjo, Sophiline Shapiro, Cipriano Vigil. Hal Cannon served as moderator.

Hal Cannon introduced this session by relating a story about unforeseen consequences of cultural intervention. In the late 1960s, the staff of the museum shop at the Heard Museum were reminded that they weren't focusing on the work of local native people, so they went to a Yaqui group to arrange to buy crafts for the shop. They taught the Yaqui women how to do batik. The women adapted the art form to their own interests and experience by using Yaqui themes in their work. A dozen years later, the women were invested in their craft, feeling that they were at the height of their artistry, but the Heard was not buying batik anymore, and the market had dried up.

Cannon then asked the artists on the panel to consider two questions: What is the role of creativity in folk arts? What is the social contract behind the work we do?

Obo Addy shared a story of his father, a holy man, teaching by example in Ghana. A man who was being transferred to the area with his railroad job asked Mr. Addy to protect him from another medicine man by killing the other man or otherwise stopping him. Addy said, “We don’t kill people,” and gave the man some instructions: “Now I’ll tell you how this man kills people. Whatever this man does, don’t let him shake hands with you or hug you. Have your children walk in front of you. Then have your children pretend like they’re tricked, and throw these things (talismans that Addy had made) in front of the man.” A week went by, and Addy didn’t hear from his client. He began to worry that his plan didn’t work. Then the client arrived with the man he had previously feared. The medicine man had never seen this kind of medicine, so he came to learn from Mr. Addy. “We went back to his house, and my father told us what things, talismans etc, to put in a big hole, and we buried them. And my father made him a new one that would not kill.” His father’s belief was that 85% spirituality and 15% common sense is the formula for success. “That is what my father used, and that man became his friend.”

Cipriano Vigil grew up in a traditional village in northern New Mexico, surrounded by all the traditions of his people—retablo painters, santeros, etc. He became a musician. In 1974, he started writing grants to NEA to make a documentary about dying traditions. He tried for thirteen years without success and gave up. He began teaching traditional music in the community college, and he eventually got an apprenticeship grant—as the apprentice. He learned in his grantwriting attempts that he was not writing what the funders wanted to read. Once he learned the “new language” of grants, he began having more success. He commented that many folk artists don’t speak or read English well and asked why grant applications and guidelines are not issued in Spanish.

One of the things he learned as a teacher and college administrator was that such work drained him of creativity. Once he gave up being chair of the fine arts department, he began writing songs and performing again, and now that he’s retired, he feels free. He is hoping to find someone to do grantwriting for him.

Juan Gutierrez commented that much of the day’s discussion had to do with policy and people in powerful positions who make decisions that affect folk artists’ lives and communities. Each person has their own intentions and resolve to do something for their tradition, each contributing in their own way. Folk artists feed from what’s happening in the community. The government has to help communities be healthy in order for those communities to function and for people to create. Learning in Puerto Rico is much like learning in Santa Clara Pueblo—youngsters learn by watching adults. But people like Juan who moved to New York felt displaced and lost. He actively searched for masters in the plena tradition. Those masters were part of the community, and as long as the community was functioning well, they could produce their art.

Dolly Naranjo discussed how a traditional craft accommodates tradition and innovation:

“When we were small, we were always told that there was a water serpent in every pond, river, or lake that provided us with water. The serpent took care of the water and would

continue to create the water so we could live. If we ever saw the water serpent, we either might be blessed, or the serpent might be offended and leave the water source. And another story says that a long, long time ago when the Santa Clara people came, we were lost in the mountains. We were starving and dying of thirst, and we didn't know how to find the place where we belonged. A bear came into the camp, and people were afraid. It stayed around, but didn't hurt anyone. We decided to follow the bear, and it took us to the Rio Grande Valley where there are fields for planting. The name of our Pueblo is Singing Water, or the Trail of the Wild Roses. We consider the bear our brother. A lot of the black pots have a hand print on them, or sometimes a hand with shortened fingers, and it's a bear paw. We have these stories incorporated into our pottery. Those jars are water jars. The serpent is on the black and red pots, and you'll see lightening coming out of his mouth, and that's asking for rain. His back has the stairstep cloud design, and that's asking for water.

“But pottery has changed incredibly in the last thirty years. There are techniques borrowed from outside. The serpent can be seen on pots that are red AND black, or even brown. Sometimes the serpent and the bear claw and the handprint can be seen on other jars. There are also very exciting pots with George Bush, with Osama bin Laden. Pottery has moved to that extreme. But there is the fact that we still go out to the same deposits and gather our clays. We polish with stones. We coil our pots. We fire our pots in certain ways. Those traditions are stable. Yet we feel the ability to bring out our individual creativity to express ourselves in different ways. We're not all very traditional people. My pots have to reflect me, within that tradition.”

Theresa Hoffman has a degree in geology, and her tribe hired her as the geologist to survey the land they got from the state in a big land claim case. But she became distracted by the things of her culture—language, basketry—and the fact that they were disappearing. “When I was a kid, everybody had signs out—everybody made baskets. We are woodlands people, and we have fashioned the wood for our ceremonies and baskets.” She took a language class from someone who was a basketmaker, and that started her on the road to becoming a basketweaver herself. Her family had six generations of brown ash basketmakers. “I soon realized that I would not speak our language well, but I could be a basketmaker. I inherited all my tools from my grandmother.” Tourists bought Penobscot baskets for many years, but now few people were interested in making baskets. You have to cut down a tree and hand-pound it to pull the splints off. The apprenticeship program came along and helped Theresa and others learn basketweaving. “I administer the Basketweavers Alliance now because I feel it is important. I learned I am a good community organizer. I'm a very good basketmaker—I could make a lot of money. But I know there'll be a time for that. My teacher was older. That's when I'll be famous, too. Now my work is best spent in our communities, not in the larger markets. I have gifts that keep me in Maine.” Finally, Hoffman pointed out that Penobscot basketweavers have always been innovative and contemporary. Even the old pieces show innovation. “People were making brand new baskets a hundred years ago that no one had ever seen before.”

Charlie Carrillo considers his carving work a ministry. He says he can't justify what he does as a profession.

“I was working as an archaeologist back in the 1970s and ended up in the village of Abiquiu. It’s one of the oldest villages in northern New Mexico. I was doing research on traditional material culture, and I found information on saints and the church. My parents always said, you can’t make a living as an artist. And this stuff wasn’t considered art—it was life. I started making *santos*, and I found myself becoming more and more drawn to the tradition. I had been raised as an urban New Mexican Catholic, very traditional. I missed a lot. So I reclaimed a lot in the 1970s. One day I quit my job at the university, and I started making *santos* full time—18 years ago. At Spanish Market, there are 400 artists. 190 of them are *santeros* or *santeras*, and 160 of them have been my students. I’ve worked in the Artist in Residence program. I lost count after 17,000 students in 12 years. I got burned out doing that.”

Carrillo addressed the issue of stereotypes of folk artists as uneducated and backward:

“Ten years ago, I was sitting at Spanish Market, and two women came and stood in front of my table, and one said, “Where are all the Injuns?” Her friend said, “Oh, it’s the wrong weekend. What we have here is when all them Mexicans come down from their little villages to sell their crafts. Here’s one right here.” And she said to me in slow English, “Do you speak English? Did you ever go to school? How far?” And I said, slowly, “As far as my Ph.D.” I said, “How the hell did you get to New Mexico? Next time, do a little research. You’ve just embarrassed yourself and everything you represent.”

Carrillo has given up the idea of depending on any grant funding for a living. “It was painful to deal with those papers, and justify this and that. Even with the help of (NM Folk Arts Coordinator) Claude Stephenson, it’s too hard.” He said that traditional artists cannot make a living on their art alone. “Thank goodness for my work as an anthropologist—I speak around the country.”

He realized nearly twenty years ago that if he was going to compete with the galleries—a one-page ad in *Southwest Art* costs \$5,000—he was going to have to market himself. “The key to any situation is if you cannot market it, it will not be bought. The key to the success of any arts is if we can’t market objects by and for the artists, no matter how much money we pour into programs, they will never be sold to the public. I learned to spend \$10,000 a year in marketing. And when I do that, I do well. You have to spend 20% of your desired income in marketing.”

Sophiline Shapiro says that her creativity comes from a desire to test herself. Because Cambodia has had so many rulers and political systems, the nation has not had a chance to develop well. She feels that Cambodian classical dance has come to a point of readiness for expansion of repertoire. In her work, she has worked on three ways of preserving Cambodian dance: (1) apprenticeships, (2) documentation, and (3) expansion of the repertoire.

She choreographed *Othello* as a Cambodian classical dance with issues for today—racial issues, progressive and conservative issues:

“In Othello and in Cambodian mythology, women’s characters seem to fall victim to men’s foolishness. The Ramayana is an epic story in Cambodian culture. The female character was forced to walk across fire to prove her purity. Desdemona, by losing her scarf, proved herself impure and ended up dead. These were issues I wanted to explore. I could test myself as to how much I know these two cultures, and as choreographer, I am stepping into a role of leadership.

“What are the best models of leadership in the arts? In Cambodia, in master-apprentice sessions, teachers are traditionally very aggressive, yelling, pinching, poking, to help the student get the proper position. But I want to do it differently, without turning learning into punishment. This is a different method I would like to use. Exploring this method, I am providing an example of ways of working in the art. And working in Othello, I learned of my own traditions that I never heard of. I learned that in our tradition, characters are not allowed to die on stage—it’s bad luck. We negotiated with our advisors, and I have Othello and Desdemona become a sculpture in the end. It’s like being dead, but it’s acceptable. Like the Cambodian people, they can look to the future, but they have to move on. Desdemona died as an innocent person, like the people in the killing fields. Why can’t Othello see the truth in her? She looks into eternity as a sculpture. The lesson is we should listen to each other, even authority figures need to listen.

“Doing Othello makes me realize I am a traditional artist, but in funding, I find I’m not traditional enough for some, and not cutting edge enough for others.”

Cannon concluded the session by pointing out that there is a vast diversity of intention that artists bring to their work, and funders need to respond to this. Being innovative and creative is a very powerful tool, but it doesn’t always produce the desired results.

Discussion Session Two: Making a Living as a Traditional Artist

Funding: Adapting to Artists’ Needs

The artists’ interview panel sent a clear message in terms of the distinction between the funders’ world and the reality of the artists’ world. “If it could be in Spanish, I could write it.” There is also a need for funders to understand artists’ intent. But there is a disconnect between the artist’s intention and doing the paperwork to get the resources.

In one of the programs of the First People’s Fund, fellows have to work through certain things to get a loan. The Fund created a microloan program that made funding more accessible. The Fund constantly has to redefine what it is doing. Funders talk about marketing for artists, but if they are not working within artists’ reality, funders can’t help them. For the First People’s Fund’s \$5,000 fellowship (Lori Pourier calls it “the little MacArthur of Indian country”) the nominator is very important, and there is no budget to complete. It is very difficult for Indian people to talk about themselves in the context of funders’ language. The nominator is valuable in helping them

tell their story. Younger ones help the elders. How can funders continue to tweak and refit their awards so they will work?

At the NEA, applicants used to have to make choices between innovative and traditional categories. But the categories are different now. Those choices don't always have to be made now. Folk arts projects can apply under Creativity and still get a Folk Arts review.

Even with the lack of grant dollars right now, categories of folk and traditional art should be preserved in government, from federal to local. At least the category is there, even if you can't fund a lot. By having that category in all agencies, traditional arts are recognized as important and significant in our society.

Isn't it part of state folklorists' jobs to help people apply to programs? You can get advice from program officers. There are folks willing and wanting to help. But the need is greater than there are folklorists to assist. In any given state, one staff member in a state agency or private non-profit is often overworked or so overwhelmed with requests for assistance that they cannot give adequate help to artists writing grants.

Certain programs are not a good fit for the communities, like the Pueblos and other Indians in New Mexico. You can spend the day talking to people, passing out guidelines, but they don't apply. However, New Mexico Arts' community fieldworker program, in which community members are taught how to do fieldwork, is extremely popular in the Pueblos, because it meets their needs.

Most folklorists were trained to believe that the farther you went from the source location of an art the less traditional it was, but now we have people scattered all over. They're looking for gatherings, virtual or occasions. They need to come together. The idea of community is being redefined. How we respond to communities is changing. Deep communities may not need folklorists in the same way these new, dispersed communities do. We need to think about how we do our work.

A couple of years ago, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission had an informal conference for artists to meet with presenters and discuss needs. One thing that was brought up was the complications of applications. Musicians asked why they need to apply—they felt that they do their work, so funders should just fund them. But there is a benefit to writing proposals (though perhaps they could be made simpler)—answering those questions helps the artist clarify his/her intentions about the work. It deepens their understanding of their own role in the work and community. Funders have to have records. The Public Corporation for the Arts in Long Beach invites two representatives of the applicants to attend the panel meeting and explain their applications. That works for a local funder. But it is a way to help artists, to let them come in person rather than write so much.

In Oregon, grant forms have been translated into Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese. But people in the IRCO refugee program were not literate. So fieldwork was done with each applicant, and the fieldworker presented the artists to the panel.

The Cambodian dance version of Othello was funded by the Irvine Fellowships for Dance Program for startup funding. But follow-up funding is needed to make things happen beyond that one performance.

An Environment Friendly to Folk Artists' Needs

A Common Space

Community is crucial. In Albuquerque, all the ethnic communities have a common desire: they want a gathering place where they can be a community—a big room for gathering, small rooms for language classes, and a kitchen. The Filipino community is very institutionalized. They have created community. So rather than looking at individual artists, we need to look at ways to invest in environments that allow artists and communities to flourish. Physical space is one thing people want—a place to gather. The other thing they want is some sort of venue for showcasing their traditions to themselves and the community around them.

Some groups create their own network, like bluegrass festivals. What everyone is missing is an environment. There is an economics of environment—Santa Clara pots come out of a place with clay, but in Maine, the Penobscots pound trees into baskets. The economic environment comes out with the art. Obo Addy can't teach here the way he learned in Africa.

In California, folk arts grantees at a conference said they would like to do a home base tour, to travel to one another's home communities and visit each other informally. Each group would host the visitors following the protocol of the host communities. It was an exciting idea.

Refugee artists also say over and over that they need gathering places. Bosnians sit at Starbucks in Portland, Oregon. IRCO has a sewing circle project for people from different cultures, and they are also developing a multicultural arts day. But the refugees still want a community space.

All of Sophiline Shapiro's Cambodian dance programs end up being presented in restaurants, because there is no community space. For classical or spiritual traditions, that is degrading. The group has one time slot in a public space on Saturday mornings, but the rest of the time, they teach and rehearse in living rooms. Artists need spaces where they can come and work.

There is an irony here. So many cities and counties are building community centers now, where they want to have a common meeting place. But they're set up on an economic model where the rental rates are so high that people can't afford them.

Groups also want their own spaces. But what about the cost of paying for rent on a space month after month? It can become divisive. We need more models of how this can work. There is a disconnect between the idea of building and responding to community and the diverse nature of communities.

The Western Folklife Center grew out of the gathering of poets in Elko. The staff at some point decided they would never be taken seriously until they had a building. A historic building was

donated to the Center, and it has been a major financial burden, nearly sinking the Center over and over again. You need major infrastructure to keep the lights on, to keep activities going. Now the Center is finally reaching the critical mass where it will work. Small businesses are never encouraged to buy a building. You should be as flexible as possible at first. It is way down the line when you get a facility, at least in a business model. The underlying motivation about being able to gather is true—it's just that the answer is too easy.

We tend to use a Eurocentric model, and we impose it on other cultures who didn't use those models to create that environment for being productive. Rather, it might be ritual space, community space, sacred space, plaza space. Folklorists often don't understand people the way people understand themselves.

The Ability to Gather

That gathering place in the community is essential. It's how artists learn from each other. From there, so many things happen. You nurture that, and eventually you will have a network of all the communities that get together, and they will begin to communicate with each other, share ideas and traditions. That triggers motivation. Younger people might get together and develop their own thing.

When you do cultural assessment work, you find that everyone wants a space. But getting a space before people have talked about what they want and who they are is like getting married without knowing your partner. Communities also have a responsibility to work with what they have and then develop their own ideas about how to develop the space. The notion of a gathering is a way to do this. It can be people just getting together to share food. The group then must decide what the space should be like. There's a real frustration, though, when you find that sometimes there isn't even \$500 to give a group to have a gathering. A gathering model is needed as a partner to the apprenticeship model. The Pew gathering money made a difference. It can help set other things in motion.

New technologies may help. In Michigan, there is a Latino arts listserv. The information sharing—food, dance, music, grants opportunities—has been incredibly enabling for people in communities all over the state.

The Bush Foundation has found that all artists, not just folk artists, need help with applications. The foundation holds information meetings around its region, and people are encouraged to call the staff. The staff also constantly talks about how to design the application process so that it benefits the artist. Bush also hosts quarterly gatherings with all its fellows. They are social, laid-back events with no agenda. They happen in living rooms and studios. The artists share work, they talk about life. When the final reports come in, the thing the fellows talk about most frequently is the gatherings. They value them. One thing that is constantly in the mix of the evaluation process is how much help should the foundation give, how many gatherings should it have, how much of everything—at what point are you taking support away from the artists by spending money on these other things?

In New Mexico, there used to be musicians who were called *resolaneros*. They would gather on the sunny side of a house, by the biggest wall. They would practice the repertoire, and train young people coming into the tradition. And people would say, next week at my house. *Resolanas* were movable gatherings of musicians learning from one another. The work was in public—the training, the making of mistakes, was in public. Now it's all in the studio, a private room.

An Ecology of Folk and Traditional Arts

The commons is changing—it is becoming the mall, which is owned by some entity, not the community, and you are limited in what you can do. It's not the kind of gathering place it used to be. But there are movements like Slow Foods, where you have people who know where their food comes from all the way up the chain, and the Slow Foods movement is expanding to include local support and sustenance between restaurants, markets, and places to stay. There's a way to insert artists into this through networking.

The Folk Alliance is situated where artists meet the public, like attracting foodies to the Slow Food conviviums. The Folk Alliance can provide one kind of space. You need the layer of the cultural groups, but you also need the layer of people who come to the venue, providing a way to get the art out to audiences. Such people need to be educated in the tradition, but they can be great partners and advocates for traditions. The Folk Alliance has trained people in how to make a CD, how to get an agent, how to be a booking agent. One hundred seventy booking agents have been trained there. People need to get their art out, and there are people who can be compared to the Slow Food aficionados, who are passionate about it and can help. Slow Food started in Italy, when the European Union started. There were people concerned about mass production and its impact on artisanal bakeries, cheesemakers, etc.—preserving traditional foodmaking. It is localized. We don't have the same kind of language that the ecology movement has to talk about the ecology of folk arts. We need to borrow language from Slow Food and ecology to talk about needs and an ecology of folk arts.

The Santa Clara environment described by Dolly Naranjo is so nurturing of tradition that they don't need apprenticeships. That is why they don't apply for them. But that is why other communities need apprenticeships. We need to think about something that hasn't been created yet, a new thing that will create an environment that hasn't been invented yet.

Perhaps we could look to ecosystems for models. The origin of the word *ecos* is house or home. Not just a home, but what can grow on the sunny side of the house or in a home? What is the ecology of a community, what makes things grow? There is always the overriding matrix of the outside environment, and the need for a person who can function there as well as inside.

We need to find ways to articulate these new models and paradigms. We've never been successful in bringing about a common awareness of issues that are central to our common life—the social contract. We are in an era of exceptional change. The recording as an object will change. The relationship between artist and community will change drastically. We have lots of information on how artists and audiences interact. The live performance is going to become more

important. Natalie Merchant has decided to drop her recording contract, and she's doing a new album based on Lomax collections on her own label. She says, "If I do it myself, I only have to sell 200,000, and I can make the same amount of money." There will be a tremendous shift, and we have a lot to offer, the added value we can give is information, design, thoughtful recordings. There are dimensions of product that we have that aren't in the market today. It is an opportunity. We should not think of ourselves as this marginalized field.

Cultural Brokers

In Michigan, there has been a series of tribal mini-gatherings around the state—some people might call them focus groups. Their purpose has been to identify what is needed to help strengthen Native artists for competing under existing market conditions. The thing that came out as the single biggest need for Native artists in Michigan was to have a culture broker—they called it an ombudsman—to deal with majority culture, to translate, to be a liaison between agencies and communities. They feel that if one person could be the go-to person to help them through the bureaucracies, it would be wonderful.

Case Study. Successful Collaborations: Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance

Kathleen Mundell and Theresa Hoffman presented a case study of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance (MIBA) and characterized it as a good example of a supportive environment for folk artists, founded in 1993 with 55 members. There are four recognized tribes participating in the Alliance: the Penobscot, Micmac, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy. Of those founders, 36 survive, and the average age is 63. The Alliance now has 115 members. Basketry is made from what the makers call brown ash (technically, Black Ash). The men help the process by cutting down trees and pounding them until splints are released. By the time a basket is completed, four to five people have been involved—from the men who gather trees and pound them, to the women who braid sweetgrass and finally both men and women weave the baskets depending upon the style -work or fancy.so forth. The tribes don't always work together in groups, but through Theresa's community organizing, people have gotten together. Intertribal workshops focus on the basics of basketry, and families teach specific skills. Some of the workshops have been funded by NEA and the Fund for Folk Culture. The target population is adults who can then pass knowledge and skills on to their children. Youth mentors are paid to help teach and MIBA recently added a language component to the workshops where the use and teaching of the tribal languages is also encouraged along with teaching basketry.. MIBA collaborates with other American Indian basketweavers associations, of which there are now four. Basketmakers from different tribes use totally different materials, but they encounter many of the same problems—getting youth involved, access to materials, and marketing. In Maine, the tradition has always been linked to economic development, though during the 1960's the Passamaquoddys were considered the poorest people east of the Mississippi .delete the rest-in the last census.

At the time Kathleen Mundell started working with the basketmakers, there was no apprenticeship program, and the Maine Arts Commission had never given a grant to the tribes or an inter-tribal non-profit like MIBA. The state's apprenticeship program started in 1990. Master artist Madeline Shay told Mundell that "the tree was dying"—that young people weren't interested, and makers couldn't get good prices for baskets". The apprenticeship helped teach people to make baskets, but there were more problems, there was more work to be done. However, the basketry apprenticeship program, which was eventually taken over by MIBA, remains the sourdough starter of the program, the basis of the tradition. At the time the program started, few people applied for apprenticeships. There were three basketmakers. But the first three apprenticeships created a ripple effect. Now there are more basketmakers, and there is much sharing among tribes and makers. Theresa Gardner's Indian Corn basket—originally a Passamaquoddy style—is now also done by other tribes. The first basketmakers' gathering was in 1993. Four gatherings were held, one for each tribe, then they all got together for a large gathering. The process took eighteen months, and the gatherings created a grassroots coalition.

The Maine folk arts program had several models to consider as support for basketweavers was developed. One was the McKissick Museum's work in 1986, in which natural resource agencies and natural resource group alliances were part of the scheme. The California Indian Basketweavers Association and Sara Greensfelder provided another model, as did Jim Ostler, who worked with the Zuni tribe. He came and spoke, talking about the reality that young people could actually earn a living making crafts. This was a new idea for the Maine basketweavers.

Recognition for individual basketmakers was the next step. Two makers received National Heritage Fellowships. This had tremendous impact on the basketmaking community. The Maine Arts Commission also gave six fellowships to basketmakers. All this recognition helped.

Another component was marketing. A logo and an identity for the work were developed. A woven bookmark became the logo. It is used on posters, tags, etc. There was also a brochure on basketmakers, a kiosk in the airport, and a poster. The largest marketing project was an 86 page *Wabanaki Guide to Maine*—a cultural tourism effort highlighting the art and culture of the four tribes. This helped position MIBA as an important cultural organization in Maine, a group not just interested in basketmaking, but also in cultural preservation.

MIBA uses what might be called "ethnographic marketing"—telling the story of the artist in a compelling way to make people want to buy the work. It is a way of encouraging people to buy things because they're supporting the tradition, giving them a sense of responsible consumerism in that you are what you buy. You need to look at the consumer more, and think about how you can connect to consumer culture in this way.

MIBA has had no help from sources like economic development and tourism. Maine is a poor state. Only arts agencies, private foundations and the federal government have provided support. Economic development people seem to be very conservative and unimaginative, thinking only in terms of things like building corporate parks, not looking at innovative models. They don't see the potential of this type of work—they think of it as "niche" stuff that is too small to make a significant impact. But the opening of the Wabanaki Arts Center Gallery, where MIBA is selling

the work of more than 3 dozen basketmakers and other traditional artists, has had a lot to do with downtown revitalization and getting people to travel to Old Town.

MIBA is just beginning to reach into tourism circles. Last year's funding was pieced together out of twelve grants, mostly federal.

As a field, we need to work on documenting impacts. It has been difficult in Maine. Basketmakers are very independent, and they keep their finances to themselves. They don't sell together. There is also a strong anti-Indian sentiment in Maine—resentment from the Land Claims—which may account for the lack of state funding. Apprenticeship grants are not even publicized in the newspaper anymore, because some elders have been harassed by Social Security and the IRS. But MIBA is trying to help the basketmakers see that their entire \$800 grant goes into expenses.

Discussion Session Three: Developing a Supportive Environment for Folk and Traditional Artists through Community Building, Collaborative Partnership and Networks

What are the lessons learned in terms of creating a supportive environment for artists?

Ethnographic Marketing

There is a series of gift shops in airports across the country called the Spirit of the Red Horse. They feature outstanding Native American artists and tell the story of the artists as part of the marketing strategy. Postcards are given out that feature artists' work, and their printed stories are given to purchasers. The shops are owned by a woman from Minneapolis, Carol Hall.

A book by Richard Sickel called *Filthy Rich and Other Nonprofit Dreams* is a good source in this area.

There is so much information competing for people's attention. Large corporations are trying to tell their stories and usurping other people's stories to give their products meaning. If folk arts don't have access to profound meaning, who does?

The Southwest Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) and the Spanish Colonial Arts Society have been successful at a form of ethnographic marketing for decades. They both created markets, and it's because of those markets that many Indian and Hispanic artists are successful. Some artists have been participating in the markets for more than twenty years. Spanish Market generates \$30 million in revenue in one weekend. Both were started by non-Indian and non-Hispanic collectors, and both still have their problems—the Spanish Colonial Arts Society has yet to have a traditional artist on its board, for instance—but they provide good models to learn from.

You need to have quality goods, an internal leader with vision and determination, and a broker/ombudsman who is an intermediary with the outside and can help with funding.

Museums can also play a part in the advancement of folk arts. Museums have a role in economic impact. If they had that in their mission statement, that might be more important. A Bulgarian museum has 1100 people with jobs because of it. The Museum of International Folk Art is working on establishing a folk art market for next July. Maybe other museums can step forward in a similar way. MIBA has partnered with the Abbe Museum for 10 years in co-hosting the annual gathering and market of basketmakers in Bar Harbor Maine in July. They have also partnered with the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine for 8 years to co-sponsor the annual winter market in December.

The American Folklore Society has become involved in the World Intellectual Property Organization and has learned of government collaborations involving tourism, economic development, etc., with native and other communities to create systems of intellectual property policy. The best work is in the South Pacific. New Zealand's government has worked with Maori groups to protect Maori art. They've created a "Maori-Made" mark that goes on products. They've also taken authority over meaning in work that is not Maori but is based on Maori culture—they have the "Mostly Maori-Made" mark. There's also the Consortium of the Pacific Community consisting of various islands. It has established the first system of international intellectual property policy.

Sustainability

Touring and marketing mechanisms are almost nonexistent for small traditional performing arts companies. Shows like the Cambodian Othello could have been presented nationally, but there were no producing companies that could/would take on a traditional art form like that. In 2001 there was a tour of the national Cambodian company, and a big producing company managed that tour. But no U.S.-based companies are touring nationally. What can be done?

There may be money for new work, but not to record it or to tour it or to use it to the extent that it could be.

There is energy and bonding at events. When the Washington State Arts Commission (WSAC) helped get the Northwest basketweavers together, Willie Smyth was confident that that bonding would happen, and it did. Now WSAC is gathering Northwest carvers, all men, and he doesn't have that same confidence. It raises the question of sustainability. Will the carvers want to create a nonprofit and write grants? There are some top-end carvers who don't want to participate. They're established.

Funding Issues

There are internal and external problems with perceptions. Obo Addy has had the experience of seeking funding from corporations, only to be told, "We just gave money to African-Americans," as if they only give once. But the corporations and some other funders don't realize the differences between African and African-American arts, and they also don't realize that African-Americans aren't really that interested in African music. Therefore, NEA has been an important

resource for many art forms that run into such obstacles. And artists often spend far more than they can get from funders, because they continue to grow and want to do more. Immigrant communities don't always help their own artists because everyone came to America to make money, and they sometimes want to distance themselves from their traditional culture.

You need to be able to quantify economic impact. It's hard for MIBA to do that at this stage of its development. Maybe they could confer with SWAIA and make a case back in Maine on the basis of potential rather than experience, in terms of total potential economic impact. Then they could perhaps be successful in convincing policymakers to include MIBA in cultural decisionmaking and finding funding for programs. Generally, economic impact studies in the arts do not focus on the folk arts. They need to be more focused.

Discussion Session Four: Breakout Groups

The meeting participants broke into four discussion groups to further explore the issues raised and to develop specific ideas about what a supportive environment for folk arts is: what types of organizations should be involved, what roles, what individuals, money, etc., and what the priorities should be. Two groups dealt with performing arts and two dealt with visual arts. The outcomes from the groups are below. Much of what was produced could apply equally well to both visual arts and performing arts.

Performing Arts: Support Systems

Identified Areas of Need for Artists and Artist Organizations/Communities

- Self promotion (graphic design, web design, language)
- Documentation (high-quality DVDs etc)
- Self-management
- Marketing tools, finding audiences
- Booking assistance
- Funding for repertoire building
- How to interpret their art forms to outside audiences
- How to locate venues
- Money for startups, capacity-building. Unrestricted general operating support is needed by master artists who have started organizations.

- Development support
- Space—not just physical space. It could be a shifting space or a home.
- Ombudsman, agent, translator, or cultural broker in many settings

Artists themselves can address some of these needs, but does it take away from creativity?

Possible support systems that could be developed:

- Grant funds may be made more beneficial by being combined with technical assistance.
- There are some existing models for how to help traditional artists succeed: the National Council for the Traditional Arts has presented roots musicians to mainstream audiences using interpreted tours and national festivals. After appearing in NCTA tours, some artists have moved into another realm altogether. There are also models for how a high-profile culture broker with sufficient influence to assist artists can help: how the Buena Vista Social Club was developed by Ry Cooder, and how Robert Redford created the Sundance Film Festival to help up-and-coming filmmakers. These are ways to create opportunities to be heard. There are also folk arts nonprofits like Cityfolk that can serve as models for new organizations.
- Collaborations that can work toward developing multipurpose spaces such as a wellness center in a Pueblo that would have health, athletic, and art studio functions. In the 1970s, there were models of political activists reclaiming spaces and creating community centers like La Raza. These were shared spaces with multiple purposes.
- In the areas of marketing and validation, the power of listing should not be underestimated. Traditional artists can benefit by being recognized as treasures. We need to work on doing a better job of publicizing state and national treasures and priorities like UNESCO's list. We should get someone to orchestrate that for the states and even develop a national list of treasures.
- For help with nonprofit organizations, building infrastructure, small organizations need help from someone who won't take a percentage of your grant. In the high tech and business worlds, there are spaces and expertise for incubators—nurturing new businesses. People don't have to pay market rates for office or manufacturing space until they are established.

Visual Arts

Identified Areas of Need for Artists and Artist Organizations/Communities

- The community voice has to be the loudest voice in developing an environment. The environment has to be culturally specific and possibly ethnographically determined.
- Leadership development is very important, whether it is someone from inside or outside the group. It may be a cultural broker or ombudsman or liaison, determined by the situation.
- In policy decisions, artists need to be present, and there is a need for a holistic perspective—an understanding of the environment that defines the community in which the tradition is situated and has meaning—that includes spiritual belief, sense of time, communication systems, ecology, and cultural protocols. How can these things be translated into an environment? For instance, visual artists have ecological concerns, and there is the model of California Indian Basketweavers for how to deal with them.
- Presentation and dissemination systems are needed, but they must be culturally appropriate, specific to a community. Exhibits and other standard approaches may work, but new models may be needed. The very definition of community must be dealt with.
- Museums may be able to play a role. It could be a two-way street—museums need community support to survive, but they can also support the community’s needed environment for creativity. They may be partners, provide access to gift shops, create exhibits or provide exhibit space, or provide gathering space.
- There is a need for space that allows for informal connection.
- The apprenticeship model needs to be evaluated and given flexibility so that it can be tailored to a given community.
- Educating the market is an area that needs major work—we need tools to reach out and help promote art forms in ways that are culturally sensitive.
- Our policies need to recognize the dual role of an artist leader in a community—a person may be filling conflicting roles as a leader/administrator and an artist in one person. Sometimes people have to make a choice between the two roles, and we need to recognize the difficulty of that choice.
- Keep it simple. Focus on the art and the artist.
- Diversified funding is needed. There are limited funding streams now. This can jeopardize the field in the future unless we learn how to diversify, including seeking private investment and those that are outside the realm of the arts—Forest Service, USDA, tourism, 1% for arts, lodgers taxes.
- We need to learn how to have a consistent and comprehensive message about the value of what we do. Ad campaigns like Americans for the Arts; framing the message. “Arts” can be a difficult word for the public to connect with—we may want to look for other terms

like Bill Ivey's "living cultural heritage." He used that term for everything the Endowment did.

- **Mentoring.** There are functional models in the apprenticeship program and in business arts mentoring. Perhaps we should combine the two—the Maine program used apprenticeships for arts, but also to teach marketing and professional development. Why can't more apprenticeship programs include those aspects? In business arts mentoring, organizations have to be ready and proceed at their own pace. You can't develop them from the top. Is it better to take people to other organizations to observe, or to have mentors come to the groups? There is a need for targeted technical assistance. We need a link between the funder and the artist—someone to help with grant applications and more.
- **Collaboration.** We need to develop networks, identify existing ones, and make new ones. Museums can be important links for marketing and contact with community and a broader audience.

Final Discussion: Program Design

The wrap-up session ranged far and wide in its topics. While no one coherent program design was formulated, several ideas and themes emerged. In organizing these closing remarks, we decided to come full circle and return to the initial themes identified through the Urban Institute's study, "Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists." In several instances, the comments overlap several categories and their assignment below may be somewhat arbitrary. Several comments listed under "Markets and Demand" could easily have been cross-listed under "Training and Professional Development" or "Material Supports." In part, the overlap underscores how inter-related the issues and topics really are.

Training and Professional Development

We need models of leadership training allowing artists to work for the art form in their community and still be an artist. Artists are central to building the necessary environment. Are you doing your own work or working for the good of the art?

The major responsibility still falls on the artist—s/he needs to be willing to engage and become empowered—"teach them to fish rather than giving them a fish."

What sort of support do leaders/ brokers need that they can't get in any other place? How can it be kept simple?

Material Support: Long term and Flexible Funding

Grant applications are often overly prescribed. It needs to be more open. Artists often have ideas about things that would help them, but there isn't that kind of openness in the process. Getting supplies, recording old songs, whatever. We should worry about these overly prescribed ways of thinking. We are intermediaries. We put a lot of money into improving art, and have we? So few organizations actually give money to art—they give it to structure.

There is a good model in an organization called Creative Capital, which funds cutting-edge artists. It is a collaboration of funders, and artists apply. Funding is based on projects. The unique thing is that the funders stay committed to the artist, providing more funding as needed. They will bring in business consultants, or act as a power broker, matching artists with organizations and businesses. The organization has a huge staff and is about five years old. It is basically a venture capital model with a holistic art and business approach. The important thing is they don't let go of an artist—they stay with them over time.

In medicine, people get five- and ten-year grants. In the traditional crafts like carpentry, apprenticeships are seven years. We all know how difficult it is to find operating money.

The hardest thing I've had to deal with in apprenticeships (unfunded) is to see the artwork as a part of the entire lifestyle, belief system, language system, etc. Apprenticeships are for six months to a year, and you can teach a little of the art, but not how to participate in the culture. They need to be long term so the apprentice can be immersed in the culture. The art is just a small part of it—a manifestation. Even the best artists consider themselves to be always learning. The MIBA program has taken ten years to create.

Perhaps part of the problem with apprentices who don't learn the culture is associated with art forms that are popular, like Hispanic and Indian arts in New Mexico. Sometimes people want to learn the art just to make money, and that dilutes the traditional life and belief system that should support the art form.

Sometimes organizations are victims of their own success. There are always valuable programs that will never be self-supporting. Funders say, "Oh, not those same old workshops again. Boring. Next." Try to look at the long term.

There is an organization in Canada called Factor. It will give small grants to individual artists to make a CD or support a tour. Or they will make it a loan. The concept is to help people get over the next hurdle.

A major problem for small artist-run organizations and projects is the match that is required. Artists often don't have it, so the project may never happen.

Markets and Demand

Structural issues need to be addressed in funding strategies: artists need support for graphic design or web design for promotion. They need widely available models of successful promotional packets. We need more opportunities for showcases for performing artists. Artists

need better access to crafts fairs. And artists need training in how to promote themselves. Additionally, there are larger issues like how the system of presenting works, creating infrastructure for performing artists, and getting artist information to venues.

One participant saw problems with the demand side of the equation in arts distribution: “Many of the efforts in the arts have focused on the supply side, the artist. But over and over, we see problems with the demand side—the audience, the distribution channel. You prepare people to go out and do things, and they have nowhere to go.”

Another did not agree: “I have attended many showcases, and in ten years, much of what was being presented was folk or ethnic music. In the visual arts world, there’s great interest in the handmade. So it’s not a question of demand, it’s the links in the chain.” NCTA focuses on the demand side. Perhaps that is a model we should support.

The Folk Alliance has 400 presenter members of all sizes. They are interested in all kinds of roots music. They tend to be community-based organizations but are not hooked up with the presenting world and other artists. Fine arts presenters as well as folk presenters are looking for this type of artist. Access has everything to do with getting to the venue. A tour put together so people can hopscotch through communities, it can be done. It’s a matter of making the connection. The best example is the Campbell Brothers and Sacred Steel. The Folk Alliance was their second gig outside of church. They’ve successfully grown and taken it to new audiences because they are outstanding artists.

It might be a good idea to take groups of presenters from the Folk Alliance, from Arts Presenters, and from other mainstream booking conferences and work with them to be a part of a program. You could subsidize fees for specific artists to appear in specific venues—the Old Town School of Folk Music for instance. The Folk Alliance, International Bluegrass Music Association, and Arts Presenters all have training available for both artists and presenters. Money should be used for bringing artists to conventions, or for taking teachers/mentors to artists. We also need to consider appropriate types of venues for particular artists.

The Neighborhood Arts Program in Oregon created a roster of artists at the regional arts council. Local nonprofits like senior citizens centers can call artists from the roster. The regional arts council administered the funds. A typical arrangement might be that \$3700 plus expenses would buy three performances and a specific number of workshops.

Information

Developing a Knowledgeable Press and Media

We need to address criticism and journalism as they relate to the traditional arts. There are very few knowledgeable writers in the press who can critique this type of art. If they send out the society reporter, what do you do? Is there a way to provide incentive for good criticism and writing about cultural heritage? Fellowships or awards or workshops?

There has been a big battle at the Columbia School of Journalism over the idea of a new track for training people to write about culture.

The Urban Institute/NYFA database shows an alarmingly small number of such fellowships for journalists. Another thing: the consolidation of the commercial media has diminished the number of people who are doing anything in this area. The Houston Chronicle used to hire five or six people to cover the arts; now they have only one. We're up against corporate America here.

The Washington State Arts Commission used to give a journalism award, but it seemed too self-serving, so it was suspended. Walt Whitman, before he was published, wrote rave reviews of his own work and circulated them

This could be a topic for the American Folklore Society: career options for folklorists. Journalism takes years of training. How do we develop cultural commentators? How do we develop catalysts and community organizers? As of now, there are half a dozen folklorists teaching in journalism schools.

On public radio, there is almost no reporting on culture and on the West. There is a career path there. In theatre, there was an initiative a few years ago to bring writers together who were interested in writing about theatre. The racing world did several years of workshops at racetracks to work on getting better writing about horse racing.

A participant knew a journalist who chose sports over arts. In sports, you're allowed into the locker room. You can do a story on a person's career. In the arts you can't watch the preparation, only the final product.

A good model has been Hal Cannon's pieces on lifestyle programs like The Savvy Traveler.

In the Bay Area, there have been complaints about poor dance writing. There is one critic who gets all the facts wrong. Meetings among writers have been held. Many started in the alternative press, and they learned by going to press conferences and listening to what other reporters asked about the arts. There are no press conferences any more.

Sophiline Shapiro's dance company invited critics to come interview artists. But it's an uphill battle. Critics would rather go to a more mainstream show than a traditional performance.

Charlie Carillo commented, "I've learned to get a fellow artist to write something about an artist and send it to a paper, and ninety percent of the time, they print it verbatim. It's not a press release. It's six or seven pages."

Participation in Policy and Decision Making.

There are so many artists here at this gathering—that's great. Usually artists and trustees are not at the same table of policy discussions. Artists and decisionmakers need to know each other. It's the people in the middle who are there at policy gatherings, but not the other two groups.

As for artists needing to be at the policy table—how about fellowships for artists to serve on boards. There are expenses to get to board meetings, take a day off work, etc. Artists should also receive adequate payment for service on grant review panels. That kind of service provides excellent training for artists.

Tax laws need to be changed. Artists get taxed on grants. We have to start at the Congressional level.

It's all about democracy, which is in crisis. There's shrinking of all kinds of humanistic enterprise. We're turning into a corporate dictatorship. We need to understand policy, and it will take more than just holding an annual arts day. We need direct action and political organizing.

The article Betsy Peterson wrote for Grantmakers in the Arts was good, important work. We need to have a voice. It's about funding, but we need to articulate public cultural policy.

There are some real public policy decisions that have led to corporate consolidation of the media. The FCC is an example—changes have been made in who can own media, what percentage of the market media conglomerates can own. The FCC has five members, including two Democrats, one of which plays traditional music. Recently, one of the Republicans joined with the Democrats on a crucial vote about consolidation. They'll say, "I'm opposed to this, but you have to give me the reason." They need data, white papers, policy studies. We need to get into this arena. The conservatives have had better think tanks than the others.

California has infrastructure networks, to increase visibility for the arts in general. They were to be a tool for artists to learn about advocacy. The timing has been good. The state arts council could call upon these infrastructure groups to be the face of the arts. They have developed their own strategies. The folk arts and the multicultural arts infrastructure groups have taken the lead. They are going to continue with new information. They have even done bill preparation and writing. They have learned cultural citizenship.

Bess Lomax Hawes once said that the most important issue we'll ever face is cultural preservation. We're occupied by an army of marketers. We need to find common cause for peace, democracy, and cultural protection.

Community/Networks

We must not forget gatherings. They can happen at lots of levels. It could be valuable to have common organizations share information. There could be organizational apprenticeships, gathering organizations or organizational leaders.

Theresa Hoffman commented, "I've learned a lot from the other artists here, and none of them are basketmakers. It made me think more broadly about getting together with other artists or artist leaders."

In Scandinavia, they have twinning programs where any two organizations collaborate. Sometimes they include travel to each other's venues. They work over a couple of years and develop their organizations. It is something like peer advisors.

FFC Program Director Betsy Peterson will prepare a working white paper based on the summary of these meetings. It will be less descriptive, more prescriptive, with ideas of how to carry action forward in different areas.