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Germaine Shaw Williams, BA, MAM, MA
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Readers	Joe W. Trotter	4/8/15
	(Director of Dissertation)	Date

	Judith Schachter	4/8/15
		Date

	David Pankratz	4/8/15
		Date

Approved by the Committee on Graduate Degrees

	Richard Scheines	4/10/15
	Dean	Date

(RE)CULTURING THE CITY:
RACE, URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND ARTS POLICY
IN CHICAGO, 1935-1987

by

GERMAINE SHAW WILLIAMS, B.A., M.A.M, M.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the College of the Marianna Brown Dietrich College
of Humanities and Social Sciences of Carnegie Mellon University in Partial
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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The silver trump of freedom had roused my
soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now
appeared, to disappear no more forever.

Frederick Douglass, *The Life of Frederick
Douglass*

It was not Death, for I stood up,
And all the Dead, lie down—
It was not Night, for all the Bells
Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

Emily Dickinson, (510)

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ABSTRACT

“(Re)Culturing the City: Race, Urban Development, and
Arts Policy in Chicago, 1935-1987”

Germaine Shaw Williams
Carnegie Mellon University

This dissertation examines the intersection of race, urban development, and arts policy in Chicago between 1935 and 1987. Maintaining a focus at the city level, it considers how activists, politicians, civic leaders, and bureaucrats operated within three policy environments presented by the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project (1935-1943), an interregnum period of dispersed domestic cultural policymaking (1944-1963), and the early years of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities (1965-1985). In the interplay between cultural activism, federal policy implementation, and the arc of urban development in Chicago, recognition of the arts as a key component of the local economy deepened, an extensive infrastructure formed, and refinements of the meaning of cultural democracy advanced.

Chapters focus on the development of Work Progress Administration community art centers as a component of the relief

policy framework; the implications for municipal arts policy of Mayor Richard J. Daley's concern for stimulating the local economy and attracting affluent whites to the city; the extension of a state-wide system of support for the arts in Illinois; and the Harold Washington administration's efforts to institutionalize the arts as a part of city government via a vision of cultural democracy that emphasized multiculturalism, access, and free exchange.

The dissertation considers the role of government in supporting the arts sector's orientation towards cultural democracy, defined by valued diversity, open participation, and the right to be heard regardless of race and class background.

A NOTE ON PERMISSIONS

Several images in the dissertation have been deleted because the author could not obtain permission to reprint for reproduction on microfilm.

Brief descriptions of these items and their sources have been substituted in their place.

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INTRODUCTION

In post-war Chicago, African Americans pursued equal access to cultural resources alongside struggles for parity in housing, education, and employment. This dissertation examines the intersection of race, urban development, and arts policy in Chicago between 1935 and 1987. I am interested in how government actors rationalized support of the arts, conceptualized and implemented new mechanisms of support, and incorporated support of the arts into broader change agendas. I seek to understand how nongovernmental actors pursued interests and exerted influence within changing policy environments. Maintaining a focus at the city level, I consider how activists, politicians, civic leaders, and bureaucrats operated within three national policy environments presented by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (1935-1943), an interregnum period of dispersed domestic cultural policymaking (1944-1963), and the early years of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities (1965-1985). In each, expressions of deep anxiety about the status of the nation's, state's,

and/or the city's cultural life spur action. In the interplay between cultural activism, federal policy implementation, and the arc of urban development in Chicago, recognition of the arts as a key component of the local economy deepened, an extensive infrastructure formed, and refinements of the meaning of cultural democracy advanced.

For this study, I draw on studies composed of a diverse set of methodologies, analytical frameworks, and fields of study. Key among them are African American urban history and the multifaceted field of cultural policy studies. Since the 1980s, historians of the African American urban experience have demonstrated the dynamism of black community life. Joe Trotter's influential *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945* (1985), examines the disruptive nature of new class structures as the rise of an urban industrial class spawned a new middle class and uprooted the position of the older black elite in Milwaukee. Trotter argues that "black unity continued to be undermined by several internal divisions Although middle-class organizations adopted a stronger pro-labor stance, the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie remained the most salient division

within the black community.”¹ Trotter’s emphasis on class formation draws attention to changes in intra-group relations while also complicating our understanding of black-white relations. Though social pathology and spatial segregation persist as prominent modes for discussions of black life, Trotter’s work opened the way for others sensitive to the implications of class-formation on black community life.²

In considering the postwar period, the underclass debate brought to the fore historical studies focusing on the impact of public policy on black urban life.³ In *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960*, for example, Arnold Hirsch uses the lenses of urban renewal and public housing policy to depict an expanding black community under siege by white violence and racist, state-sponsored urban planning. He concludes: “Each of the various white groups or interests agreed on the fundamental undesirability of racial succession .

¹ Joe William Trotter, *Black Milwaukee : The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 213.

² For examples, see: Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way : Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests : Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Richard Walter Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It : Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, *Blacks in the Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

³ Michael B. Katz, ed. *The "Underclass" Debate : Views from History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), *passim*.

.. and each believed that the process had to be controlled to protect their self-defined interests.” Hirsch brackets the question of black self-determination in favor of in-depth analyses of state action and business interests and returns to the “ghetto” to conceptualize black urban life.⁴

Similarly, historian Thomas Sugrue’s *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* emphasizes the morass of the economic and spatial strictures Rustbelt cities suffered in the postwar period. Blacks able to venture into historically white areas, according to Sugrue, “set into motion a process that over the long run would leave inner-city neighborhoods increasingly bereft of institutions, business, and diversity.”⁵ By the 1970s and 1980s, Sugrue describes a process of deproletarianization as undermining the internal diversity and vitality of black communities, grimly concluding:

What hope remains in the city comes from the continued efforts of city residents to resist the debilitating effects of poverty, racial tension, and industrial decline. But the rehabilitation of Detroit and other major American cities will require a more vigorous attempt to grapple with the enduring effects of the postwar transformation of the city, and creative responses, piece by piece, to the interconnected forces of race, residence, discrimination, and

⁴ Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), xvi, 171-172.

⁵ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis : Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 207.

industrial decline, the consequences of a troubled and still unresolved past.⁶

Exactly how African American communities grappled with the impact of this change is left largely uninvestigated.

In contrast, anthropologist Steven Gregory forefronts activism in analyzing the impacts of broad-scale structural shifts in the nation's economy in *Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community*. Gregory counters the structural dislocation model with a construct of community-building sensitive to changes in institutional and social relations. Gregory labels the interpretations of black life premised narrowly on ghettoization, social dislocation, or the "culture of poverty" arguments as denials of the complexity and steadfast struggle for life and place that took place in communities facing the most significant challenges. Where Hirsch's and Sugrue's studies emphasize public policy, structural economic change, and the force of white violence, Gregory connects the weakening of institutional resources and political power in Corona to the positive flow of federal resources to urban poverty. Gregory explains:

⁶ Ibid, 271.

Through the antipoverty program and newly created institutions of decentralized city government, activists were incorporated into state-managed and state-funded arenas of civic participation where interrelated social and economic problems were addressed as discrete and depoliticized categories of bureaucratic service provision.⁷

Ironically, this cooption left African Americans in low and middle-income communities in an especially weakened position as the debilitating effects of deindustrialization emerged in the 1970s. Gregory argues that Corona can be designated a “black community” because it is in racial terms that community activists responded to external “practices of racial discrimination and subordination.”⁸ This approach also allows a description of how—even as joblessness, poverty, crime, drugs besieged these communities—the residents fought vigilantly to disrupt narratives that conflated race, crime and space, and reconstituted grass-roots activists networks to challenge blight designations.

Cultural policy studies have attracted scholars interested in describing how the state supports collective identities across fault-lines of race, class, gender, politics, economics, and space. In “Invoking

⁷ Steven Gregory, *Black Corona : Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 10-11.

⁸ Ibid, 16, 136.

Culture: The Messy Side of ‘Cultural Politics,’” anthropologist Virginia R. Dominguez argues for the need to engage these issues head-on the article downplays highbrow/lowbrow dichotomies, and suggests a need to move “toward asking what is being accomplished socially, politically, discursively when the concept of culture is invoked to describe, analyze, argue, justify, and theorize.”⁹ The article clarified my thinking about the various purposes attached to arts activities and the sector as a whole. Such lines of inquiry build upon classic studies by Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu. In *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, Williams describes the trajectories of developments in Britain’s cultural sector as “a complex and radical response to new problems of social class” spawned by the advance of industrial capitalism.¹⁰ Bourdieu likewise provides an exegesis of types of capital—economic, cultural, and social— and their intercourse, concluding that “the more the official transmission of capital is prevented or hindered, the more the effects of the clandestine circulation of capital in the form of cultural capital become determinant in the reproduction of the social structure,”

⁹ Virginia R. Dominguez, "Invoking Culture: The Messy Side of ‘Cultural Politics’," in *The Politics of Culture: Policy Perspectives for Individuals, Institutions, and Communities*, ed. Gigi Bradford, Michael Gary, and Glenn Wallach (New York: The New Press, 2000), 22.

¹⁰ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), xviii.

shedding an especially useful light on the nature and rationale of investments in the arts by individuals, institutions, and governments.¹¹ In specific regard to the relationship between the state and cultural production, anthropologists Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin build on Williams' and Bourdieu's insights to pose three key questions: "1) What is the relationship between professionals in cultural industries and the state?; 2) What happens to media when state interests are complex and contradictory?; and 3) How effective are state media outlets in influencing the behavior/thinking/experiences of audiences?"¹² The frameworks of these scholars help to make historically-grounded comparisons of cultural development, exchange/commerce, and policy that inform my consideration of the development of arts policymaking in Chicago.

The renewed interests in historic preservation, the rise of heritage tourism, and the growth of multicultural community-based political agendas produced a special effect in Chicago throughout the late 1970s and 1980s as African Americans engaged in a process of

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education" in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241-258.

¹² "Introduction," in *Media Worlds : Anthropology on New Terrain*, ed. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 1-25.

image reconstruction that was part of dealing with the social and economic crisis faced by many Rustbelt cities. In considering the significance of urban revitalization efforts nationally during the period, in urban historian Jon C. Teaforde concludes:

The age of doomsayers had passed, and everywhere urban boosters trumpeted the new positive message that central cities could be fun and profitable. Even signs of blight and social disorder could be repackaged in positive language favorable to the city. The vandalism of New York City's subways by spraycan-wielding youths was proclaimed 'graffiti art,' a blossoming of indigenous urban culture rather than a symptom of decay and lawlessness.¹³

This retooling of the city's image, attempted in the midst of severe losses in American manufacturing, suburbanization, metastasized urban decay, and inflamed racial tensions, was claimed by urban boosters of many varieties as having real consequences for the revitalization of urban communities and economies. The revitalization that could be signified by the arts was thus made a fruitful strategic investment in the future of the city. In *Culture and the Public Sphere*, cultural policy analyst Jim McGugan notes "a growing awareness of the spatial dynamics of cultural and social life" in cities around the globe faced with complex

¹³ Jon C. Teaforde, *The Rough Road to Renaissance : Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985*, Creating the North American Landscape (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 254.

challenges associated with de-industrialization, inner-city decay, and gentrification (or race-based population displacement) that made new broad-scale investments in arts and culture-based urban redevelopment, cultural tourism branding, and commodifying of culture viable components of larger revitalization strategies.¹⁴ While cultural planning has a long history, these were distinctly new connections being drawn between the arts and the revitalization of postindustrial cities.

A generation of cultural and intellectual historians has written about urban culture from the standpoint of elite artists and civic elites. Focused on the *fin-de-siècle* in Europe and New York City, these studies are useful in their attempts to describe connections between creativity, politics, and societal change. For example, Carl E. Schorske presents the short-lived rise of Viennese liberal culture in the 1860s as a context for a fuller consideration of the rise of “psychological man” towards the century’s end. “Strangely divided into ill-reconciled moralistic and aesthetic components,” the liberal culture of the 19th century, “provided the fin-de-siècle intelligentsia with the intellectual equipment with which to face the crisis of their time.” For Schorske the assimilation of

¹⁴ Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996), 2-3.

these two tendencies resulted in an *haute bourgeoisie* liberal culture that was “a culture of sensitive nerves, uneasy hedonism, and often outright anxiety.” The outward symptoms Schorske explores as evidence of the internal instability of liberal culture are the aesthetic sensibilities in the arts and the cultural building spree undertaken by the bourgeoisie.¹⁵

In *Mystic Chords of Memory*, cultural historian Michael G. Kammen asks: “when and how did the United States become a land of the past, a culture with a discernible memory (or with a configuration of recognized pasts)?”¹⁶ In developing an answer to this critical question, Kammen laid-out a history stretching from concerns for the homogenization or Americanization of tradition to a professed interest in the democratization of tradition. Cold War anxiety and a sense of historical discontinuity, according to Kammen, helped “traditionalism kept pace with modernism, at least in the realm of national taste and the uses of leisure”; this in turn contributed to what Kammen termed a

¹⁵ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna : Politics and Culture*, 1st Vintage Book ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 9-10; Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect : A History of Intellectual Life in New York, from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time*, 1st ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1987); John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900 : A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture*, 1st ed. (New York: Weindenfeld & Nicolson, 1988).

¹⁶ Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory : The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 7.

“heritage syndrome” in which Americans of many hues emphasized and ritualized the roots of their identity.¹⁷

Anthropologists concerned with nationalism and national identity offer methodological approaches that enrich our understanding of the interaction of politics and cultural policies. In *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, for example, Richard Handler considers the 1976 victory of the French-Canadian nationalist movement as more than political. Handler concludes: “It was instead a national victory, a victory of the Quebecois people in its ongoing struggle for independence and statehood. Their celebration expressed more than mere partisan joy—it marked their belief in the coming of age of a collectivity and their pride in belonging to that collectivity.” Both embedded in and as a result of the victory of the Quebecois politically came efforts to solidify cultural victories. Handler observed the construction of a national identity through the “continual ‘objectification’ of what is imagined to be Quebecois culture.” In fairs, festivals, folklore exhibits, monuments, and governmental departments devoted to cultural affairs, the Parti

¹⁷ Ibid, 626.

Quebecois constructed new narratives of national identity, rooted not in bounded “authentic” objects, but in new political agendas.¹⁸

Two major concerns drive much of cultural policy research today: a concern for efficiency, on the one hand, and a concern for equity on the other. In his 1983 article, “Cultural Policy Studies: What They are and Why We Need Them,” sociologist Paul DiMaggio argues that cultural policies regulated the “market place of ideas” by influencing barriers to entry and the chances for survival and adoption of ideas, values, styles, and genres. He delineates direct and indirect cultural policies: *direct* creating, encouraging, mandating, or forbidding production and distribution of materials embodying specific ideas or values (e.g. civic education, government films, school curricula, censorship of pornography); and *indirect*, affecting the market for cultural production, either through neglect or more commonly unintentionally (e.g. FCC regulation of broadcasting technologies affecting access of producers).¹⁹ A need to avoid wastefulness drives DiMaggio’s call for increased attention to cultural policy issues.

¹⁸ Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, New Directions in Anthropological Writing (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 4.

¹⁹ Paul DiMaggio, “Cultural Policy Studies: What They Are and Why We Need Them,” *The Journal of Arts Management and Law* 13, no. 1 (1983): 241-248.

In their work *Cultural Policy*, policy analysts Toby Miller and George Yúdice attempt to bring together the critical analysis of cultural studies with an agenda of progressive social change to pursue engaged cultural initiatives from a bottom-up perspective. The pair identify social movements as primary loci of power, authorization, and responsibility and mount powerful critiques of scholars and policymakers who give primacy to the social reproduction aspect of cultural policy rather than its potential for social order transformation. Miller and Yúdice's work advances Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality" and the historical trajectory and the extensiveness of the state's concern with developing and managing cultured subjects.²⁰

Chapter one focuses on the development of community art centers as a component of the relief policy framework of the Federal Art Project and its intersection with structural changes in Black Chicago's civic life. I argue that the South Side Community Arts Center emerged out of a precarious multi-racial, multi-class alliance to become the first modern nonprofit arts organization in Black Chicago. The chapter draws on speeches, working procedures manuals, narrative and

²⁰ Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002), passim.

financial reports, program data, and oral histories with artists and administrators to trace the confluence of forces that defined a critical era of development in the nonprofit sector in Black Chicago.

Chapter two considers the implications for municipal cultural policy formation of the environment created by systems of patronage, personal favor, and the maintenance of racial hierarchies. Through engagements with a network of civic-minded corporate elites, many of whom populated the boards of Chicago's legacy arts organizations, Mayor Richard J. Daley defined a new era of civic support of the arts that would become a national model for arts-based economic development. Operating on a core shared interest in drawing back to the central city middle-class whites who had fled the city for suburban neighborhoods, I argue that Daley deputized an elite group of civic-minded corporate executives to fashion and implement an expansive vision for how local government could invest in the arts as a means of stimulating the local economy and helping to recast negative perceptions of Chicago. The chapter draws on municipal records, ordinances, City Council meeting minutes, correspondence between city officials and arts leaders, planning studies, oral histories to examine the foundation of active municipal support of the arts in Chicago.

Chapter three explores the extension of a state-wide system of support for the arts in Illinois. The chapter focuses on the rapid development of the Illinois Arts Council as a state agency and the development of its populist approach to subsidizing the arts. A key consideration is IAC influence on the development of Chicago's cultural landscape through its coordination of special events, grantmaking, and provision of technical assistance to the states arts organizations. National and state planning studies, administrator correspondence and oral histories, legislation, newspaper reports, and program and organizational histories are used to chart the shifting concerns surrounding state support of the arts.

The final chapter examines the Harold Washington administration's approach to municipal support of the arts. In stark contrast to the cultural work of Richard J. Daley that focused on the city's elites, Washington's team used a broadbased process to develop *The Chicago Cultural Plan*, a coordinated vision for advancing arts and culture as economic engine and key quality of life asset. The plan and the Washington administration's investments institutionalized the arts as a part of government and pursued a vision of cultural democracy that emphasized multiculturalism, access, and free exchange. The chapter

draws from campaign and departmental records in the Municipal Reference Collection at the Harold Washington Public Library, including annual reports to city council, press releases, meeting minutes, budgets, program descriptions and applications, and other materials.

CHAPTER ONE

“An unusual cooperation of civic and artistic forces”:

Arts-based Relief Policy and the South Side Community Arts Center

Introduction

In the summer of 1943, the direct federal funding that supported the work of the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC) evaporated. With the close of the Work Progress Administration Federal Art Project, the SSCAC, one of only a few “Negro Arts Centers” ever established, was left to fend for itself after having opened its doors only two years earlier. The FAP’s focus on the development of community art centers converged with a civic landscape undergoing tremendous change in Black Chicago. This chapter presents SSCAC as a valuable case study of policymaking that illuminates key forces at play in the evolution of the nonprofit cultural sector in the United States. In the interplay between the development and implementation of federal cultural policy and local efforts to create and sustain a modern nonprofit cultural organization, the history of SSCAC provides insight into the institutionalization of

notions of cultural democracy; the development and national promulgation of a distinctly new form of public institution; and the etymology of the diversity witnessed in the cultural sector today. The discussion in this chapter focuses on the development of community art centers as a component of the relief policy framework of the Federal Art Project and its intersection with structural changes in Black Chicago's civic life. I argue that out of a precarious multi-racial, multi-class alliance of patrons emerged the first modern nonprofit arts organization in Black Chicago and a set of important terms that would guide the sector's growth through the 1980s.

Civil Society and the Arts in Black Chicago

The growth of the industrial working class population fueled the development of Black Chicago's civil society by dramatically expanding the numbers and kinds of civic and social organizations to which African Americans sought to belong. According to sociologist St. Clair Drake, through participation in protests, demonstrations, and other activities, secular and sacred institutions connected Black Chicago to influential national networks and organizational frameworks. "Lodges and

churches, with membership including Negroes in the East and South, and particularly in the border states,” Drake contends, “helped to give form to a separate social structure in Chicago, for not only did white people encourage Negroes to organize their own institutions, but Negroes from other areas were equally as active in founding and sustaining such churches and associations.”¹

In *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, historian Allan Spear notes that by the end of the 1910s, the institutional basis for African American social life had shifted away from the lodges, fraternal organizations, and mutual aid societies that had defined the city since the antebellum period. The influx of southern migrants into Chicago’s Black Belt in the 1910s dramatically changed the centrality of these long-established organizations that maintained exclusive, homogenous memberships. Between 1900 and 1944, the black population in Chicago grew ten-fold, from 30,150 in 1900 to 337,000 in 1944. Voluntary orders such as the Good Samaritans, the Prince Hall Masons, the Knights of Templar, the Odd Fellows, and the

¹ St Clair Drake, *Churches and Voluntary Associations in the Chicago Negro Community* (Chicago, IL: Work Projects Administration, 1940), 45.

Knights of Pythias emphasized family lineage, personal networks, and organizational positions of Chicago's first generation of "Old Settlers," advancing their social, economic, and political interests.²

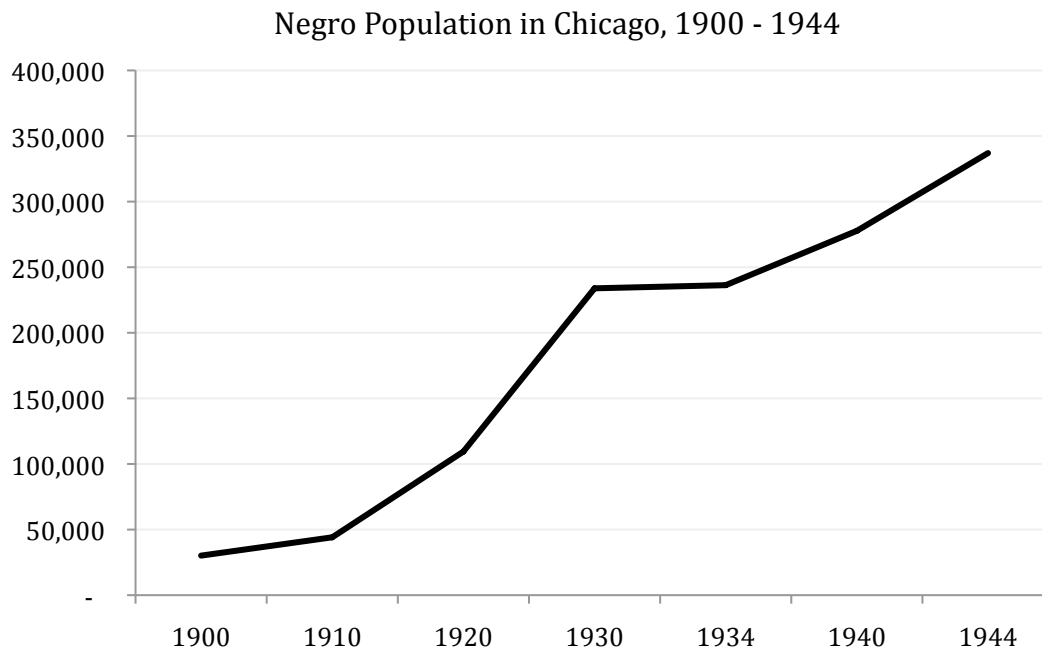


Figure 1.1. Source: St. Clair Drake and Horace Roscoe Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 8. Figure created by author.

² Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago; the Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago,: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 97-110. While it is true that migrants faced much that was new in navigating the challenges of industrial wage-work, segregated slum housing, the health effects of overcrowded tenement living; they did not face these challenges empty-handed. Various scholars have demonstrated the ways that migrants maintained strong and sustained connections with their places of origin and forced others' adjustment to their presence as much as they acclimated to urban living in the North. See Kimberley L. Phillips, *AlabamaNorth: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999).

Engorged by new arrivals in the 1910s and 1920s (see figure 1.1), Spear argues, Chicago's Black Belt presented "urban problems that demanded urban solutions." Black mutual aid societies, long positioned as bulwarks against crises for black families, also diminished in importance as their functions were taken over by the growth of businesses, social agencies, and service providers. According to Spear, the growth and development of organizations in Black Chicago like the YMCA, settlement houses, and other social and cultural organizations, challenged the primacy of the church and old-guard lodges, voluntary orders, and represented a distinctively new "urban pattern of behavior." Spear concludes that African Americans migrating to live in Chicago's Black Belt faced new sets of challenges that could not be solved by the civic institutions they may have known in smaller, rural communities in the South. While Spear ultimately characterizes inter-racial relations in Chicago during the period between 1915 and 1920 as "more a time of continuity than change," this new spectrum of social clubs and societies catering to the disparate tastes of a transformed black population reflects unprecedented intra-racial social differentiation.³

³ Ibid, 97-110.

Before the establishment of the Federal Art Project, opportunities for African American artists outside of commercial performing arts venues and houses of worship were limited in Chicago, hemmed in by the black elite's genteel pomp and circumstance that structured the events of many clubs and societies, on one hand, and the race line, on the other. A survey of the *Broad Ax* of reporting from the 1920s on the activities of Chicago's various clubs demonstrates the significant degree to which clubs used the arts to engage members and the wider public. For example, at the opening of a new location in a building formerly owned by the prestigious Appomattox Club, the Red Caps' Club presented a rich musical program featuring the performances of an overture by Delaware's Orchestra; two solos, one violin and the other vocal; and the "Famous Excelsior Trio," featuring the dramatic soprano Madam Bertha Dickerson Tyree. The Red Caps' Club formed a Literary Club that often presented art music performances. Meeting programs opened with detailed reports on various aspects of the club's benevolent work followed by one or two musical performances before turning to a featured speaker and closing with a final music piece. At a meeting with a "forceful and well received" keynote address by Robert Sengstacke

Abbott, founding editor of the *Chicago Defender*, a pair of vocal solos and an “excellently rendered” saxophone solo bookended the evening.⁴

When the National Association of Colored Women convened members in Chicago for its annual meeting, an exhibition of art and crafts was mounted at Wendell Phillips High School in the heart of Black Chicago featuring the work of national member clubs. Chicago’s Ida B. Wells Club Women’s Club, Gadamus, Imperial, American, Evergreen Juniors, American Rose, Young Matrons, the East-side Woman’s Club and others from around the country submitted examples of hand-embroidery, crocheted bedspreads, hand-beaded and painted lamp shades, and various examples of water-color and oil paintings.⁵

The Post Office Boys Phalanx Club attracted a capacity audience to Forum Hall on 43rd Street and Calumet Avenue to hear various speeches from several candidates for municipal offices, headlined by Chicago’s postmaster Arthur C. Leuder, who was pursuing the Republican

⁴ "Grand Opening of the Red Caps Club, 3441 S. Wabash Avenue. The Building Which Formerly Belonged to the Appomattox Club," *Broad Ax*, February 3, 1923, 2; Frank Taylor, "The Red Caps Club Continues to Be on the Map in the Musical World," *Broad Ax*, November 24, 1923, 1.

⁵ Eudora Burton, "The Art and Artcraft Which Has Been on Exhibition During the Sessions of the National Association of Colored Women at the Wendell Phillips High School Has Never Been Surpassed at Any of Its Meetings," *Broad Ax*, August 9, 1924, 2.

nomination for mayor. Reporter King Jefferson, summarized the event's success this way:

Mrs. Lettitia Meyers, one of the patronesses of the Cultured Arts in Chicago, conducted the musical end of the program, and added new laurels to her career and versatility by presenting one of the most brilliant displays of talent ever witnessed in Forum Hall. Mr. Solomon Bruce gave a captivating exhibition of dramatic art and expression, by his fascinating literary recitations. Miss Lode Bode transported the gathering to the Land of Beulah by the witchery and mastery of her instrumental performances: On the whole, the Post office Boys' Phalanx Club's meeting, staged in honor of Chicago's efficient postmaster, terminated a certified success, commendably and creditably executed.⁶

As notable as the "rhetorical grandiloquence" of the candidates was, the extensive cultural presentations were exceedingly important to the event's success.

General exclusion from Chicago's white-owned art galleries and major art schools also limited opportunities for African American visual artists in gaining formal training or exhibiting their work professionally to the general public. Though the Art Institute of Chicago included works by a handful of African American former students in several early

⁶ King Jefferson, "The Meeting Held Last Sunday Afternoon at Forum Hall by the Members of the Phalanx Club," *Broad Ax*, November 13, 1926, 2.

exhibitions, through the 1930s, its prestigious art school enrolled a precious few artists of color. Those fortunate enough to be admitted often struggled financially and had to withstand occasional taunting by white classmates. Archibald Motley, who attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago between 1914 and 1918, recalled being physically assaulted by white students from the South. Though harangued by some of his white peers, Motley received significant support and encouragement from key white faculty members. After graduation, he found that he had to paint streetscapes and compositions rather than portraits because white clientele refused to work with him and few blacks had resources to provide sustainable pay for commissioned portraits.⁷

Similarly, painter Charles White remembered the most difficult aspect of his educational experience at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago being the challenge of sustenance. Though awarded a full-tuition scholarship, he struggled to afford materials and often had to walk the sixty blocks from his home on the South Side to classes in downtown Chicago. White recounted constantly “hustling” for materials

⁷ Dennis Barrie, "Oral History Interview with Archibald Motley, 1978."

and working as a valet and cook and a high school art instructor to try to make ends meet.⁸

Born in Decatur, Illinois, African American sculptor Ida McClelland Stout graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1926. A student of Czech American sculptor Albin Polasek, over the course of her career, Stout won major prizes and commissions and had her work included in several exhibitions between 1916 and 1926 at the Art Institute of Chicago. Stout received The Chicago Woman's Aid Prize in 1923 for "Portrait of Mr. George Spears" and The Mrs. John C. Shaffer Prize in 1926 for "Fountain Figure, Charitas." Major commissions were made with the Mary W. French School in Decatur, Illinois; Hillyer Galleries at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts; and the Chicago Daily News Fresh Air Sanitarium for Children in Lincoln Park, Illinois. Though with seemingly powerful academic credentials and

⁸ Betty Hoag, "Oral History Interview with Charles Wilbert White, 1965." In this interview, White also conveyed the difficulty he had as a teenager in a predominately white high school. He recalled: "Up until my junior year I had been designing most of the sets for the school plays and drawing all the posters and things and I began to get interested in and curious about acting, and this was just unheard of in that school, none of the Negro students were ever allowed to act. They could participate in the broader entertainment of the school, you know, the band performances or something like this, but not in the school drama."

early successes, Stout lived in a dilapidated tenement on Chicago's South Side.⁹

In the face of these barriers, African American artists in Chicago used social networks to advance their skills and create their own opportunities for public exhibitions. As a very young man with interests in art, Charles White joined the Arts & Crafts Guild, a small African American membership group in the Bronzeville neighborhood. Started by painters George E. Neal and William McGill, the Arts & Crafts Guild was composed of working people, largely under age forty, who were interested in becoming artists but did not have access to a formal arts education. The group met every Sunday afternoon at each other's homes. Neal, a very talented painter, attended the Art Institute of Chicago for a couple years without graduating. He would guide the group of community artists in painting lessons, sharing the formal knowledge and skills he received while a student at the Art Institute. According to White, the guild met this way for a couple years before developing a scheme to deepen their collective learning:

⁹ The Art Institute of Chicago, "Thirty-Fourth Annual Exhibition by Artists of Chicago and Vicinity," (Chicago, IL: 1930); Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

So this went on for a couple of years. Then we decided that we had to find some better way to equip ourselves other than just through one person. We felt that there was enough talent in our organization to warrant other people going to art school, or having an opportunity to go. So, what we did, we devised a way. We said, "We'll use every means possible, even having little parties, every means possible to collect enough money to send one of our members to the Art Institute of Chicago to take at least one class a week" [The member taking the class] would bring back information to us so that we could become further trained. So, what we did, we had a little competition and one of the members would win and we would send him to the art school and to whatever class we could afford. . . . we just went on for a number of years, and that's how some of the people got their education.¹⁰

The Arts and Crafts Guild met from 1932 to 1938, holding ad hoc exhibitions of their work at the Wabash Avenue YMCA, in church basements, and wherever they could find temporary space. During its existence members included Margaret Taylor, Eldzier Cortor, Bernard Goss, Charles White, William Carter, Joseph Kersey, and Archibald Motley, Jr.; all would figure prominently in the development of the South Side Community Art Center.¹¹

¹⁰ Hoag, *Oral History Interview with Charles Wilbert White*.

¹¹ Anna M. Tyler, "Planting and Maintaining a 'Perennial Garden,' Chicago's South Side Community Art Center," *International Review of African American Art* no. 11 (1994): 31.

Relief-based Arts Policy and the Community Art Centers Movement

Promulgation of the community art center model as a part of the Federal Art Project was notably conducted by Holger Cahill, the Federal Art Project's founding director, and the community art center is Cahill's most far-reaching accomplishment. The movement for the community art center movement is where Cahill succeeded in transforming his concerns with mass education, elevation of the distinctiveness of American craft and design, and preservation of handwork skills into a philosophy of cultural democracy.¹²

Situated within the Second New Deal established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 7034, the Federal Project Number One employed thousands of artists and hundreds of arts administrators across the country as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Operating between 1935 and 1943, the WPA's Federal Project Number One included the Federal Theatre Project, the Federal Writers Project, the Federal Music Project, the Historical Records Survey, and the Federal Art Project. These programs provided

¹² Jane De Hart Mathews, "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy," *The Journal of American History* 62, no. 2 (1975): passim.

relief to cultural workers and artists of all types including, graphic designers, muralists, painters, writers, actors, theatre directors, historians, folklorists, and arts administrators. In addition to these, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) (1933-34), the Department of the Treasury's Section of Painting and Sculpture (1934-42; renamed the Section of Fine Arts in 1938), and its Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) (1935-38), provided governmental support to arts initiatives and organizations during the period. Roosevelt conceded the need to support artists as workers affected deeply by mass unemployment and came to believe that through their creative work the country's artists could buoy the nation through the economic depression by affirming American freedoms and representing a "democratic spirit."¹³

Individuals from around the nation had appealed to Roosevelt to support artists as a part of relief efforts. In Minnesota and New York, state level programs already provided work-based relief to artists and would serve as models for the broader national effort. With the passage

¹³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Dedication of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, May 10, 1939" <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15761> (accessed April 1, 2015); George H. Field, *Final Report on the Wpa Program, 1935-1943* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1943); Francis V. O'Connor, "The New Deal Art Projects in New York," *American Art Journal* 1, no. 2 (1969).

of the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935, the Federal Project One consolidated existing smaller arts-focused projects operating within the relief effort, added new program components, and established a complex national bureaucracy to administer the first nation-wide governmental investment in the arts in the history of the country.¹⁴

The Federal Art Project was the most significant component of Federal Project Number One, financially and in terms of reach. Of the nearly \$40 million invested in Federal Project Number One's various component programs nationally over nearly a decade, the Federal Art Project received 90 percent and reached ten times more individuals than the Federal Theatre Project, the Federal Writers Project, the Federal Music Project, or the Historical Records Survey. At the end of the 1938-39 fiscal year, Congress turned administration of arts programs over to individual states. In Illinois, between 1936 and 1938, more than \$440 million in total expenditures were made for all WPA

¹⁴ "Organization Charts, circa 1938," Administration of the National WPA/FAP, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

projects, including \$9.5 million to Federal Project Number One programs.¹⁵

Expenditures for Federal Project Number One by Major Units and Fiscal Years for Illinois						
In 000s	Fiscal Years Ending June 30 th					
Unit	Total All Years		1936	1937	1938	Jul. 1938 -Mar. 1939
Art	1,153	12%	167	389	282	315
Music	3,255	34%	518	1,208	782	745
Theatre	3,490	37%	516	1,231	98	760
Writers	980	10%	165	279	246	288
Hist.						
Survey	<u>586</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>199</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>223,948</u>
Total	\$9,465	100%	\$1,418	\$3,308	\$1,520	\$2,333

Figure 1.2. Source: Paul R. Kerschbaum, "Memorandum to James J. McTigue, May 6, 1939," HR 76 Records of Investigation, Works Progress Administration State Series, 1935-1944

Inclusion of the Federal Art Project in Federal Project Number One's visual arts branch did not go unchallenged. Though support for the program resided ostensibly in acknowledging artists as unemployed workers who were equally affected by the impacts of the Depression as those in other labor categories, Cahill, in his capacity as the Federal Art Project's director, had to act as translator and steadfast advocate. He lobbied representatives on either end of the political spectrum for

¹⁵ Victoria Grieve, *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 92.

national investment in American artists, many of whom had little interest in the country's arts organization and artists. Using the key phrase "preservation of skills," Cahill was able to translate the benefits of work articulated throughout other WPA labor programs to the work-lives of professional artists. Cahill connected the experience of artists as unemployed workers to the health of American culture writ large:

The artists [*sic*], like so many other people today, has reached a point where he can no longer work with any degree of security. Like all other professional and skilled workers, the artist wants a job to do. He is highly trained to do that job, but unless he has a public which is sympathetic to his work, he cannot make his contribution to American culture.¹⁶

In the initial conceptualization of relief for artists, Cahill fought hard against having artists work on "force account," a commonplace control system on most non-construction projects in which timekeepers regularly monitor hours worked. Because some artists worked independently in their studios and at vastly different paces, Cahill worked with WPA director Harry Hopkins to put in place a policy where

¹⁶ Holger Cahill, "Government Support of Art, a Radio Talk, undated," p. Reel 5290: Frame 1087, Lectures and Speeches by Cahill, 1930-1945, Holger Cahill Papers 1910-1993.

artists contracted to produce an agreed upon number of works in a given week.

Making the case for the artist as worker, Cahill connected the broad-scale decline of American culture to industrialization's degradation of the status of average American workers. In a 1957 interview, Cahill recalled his impact on Hopkins in explaining his views on the potential for the project to advance American culture. Drawing from his work with John Cotton Dana and academic research on the national losses of advanced handicraft and decorative art traditions in India and China, Cahill argued for a proactive investment in American traditions. Cahill believed that these nations lost key aspects of their distinct cultural identity to market forces and disinvestment. He recalled saying to Hopkins:

Today practically without painters, without any of the old craftsmen, anything of the old artisans. They don't make the same porcelains they used to make. The thing has gone down and down and down and down. They might recapture the tradition, but it might be a matter of hundreds of

years. . . . This is the sort of thing that can happen to a culture. It can happen to us.¹⁷

According to Cahill, this idea moved Hopkins a great deal more than he had initially imagined. Cahill's discussion of the health and status of American culture sparked Hopkins to become an impassioned advocate for the deeper cultural impact promised by the program. Defending the need for a labor program for artists at a meeting of state program directors, Hopkins famously exclaimed: "Hell! They've got to eat just like other people!"¹⁸

Through Cahill, the influence of Progressive Era cultural theorists shaped the Federal Art Project in critically important ways. The work of both John Dewey and John Cotton Dana shaped Cahill's worldview and he drew from their examples throughout his career. It was through the lens of Dewey's *Art as Experience* that Cahill perceived negative cascading impacts of industrialization and commercialization on artists as workers—and on human experience generally. Dewey's articulation

¹⁷ Joan Pring, "Oral History Interview with Holger Cahill, 1957," p. Reel 5285, Frames 390-418, Biographical Materials and Personal Papers, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

¹⁸ Bruce Bustard, *A New Deal for the Arts* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration in association with the University of Washington Press, 1997), 7.

of a philosophy of art that centralizes human experience rebuked the commoditization and fetishizing of works of art and positioned mass access to arts experiences as an essential and ordinary part of life. In one of his purest passages, Dewey concludes:

The times when select and distinguished objects are closely connected with the products of usual vocations are the times when appreciation of the former is most rife and most keen. When, because of their remoteness, the objects acknowledged by the cultivated to be works of fine art seem anemic to the mass of people, esthetic hunger is likely to seek the cheap and the vulgar. . . . The forces at work are those that have removed religion as well as fine art from the scope of the common or community life. The forces have historically produced so many of the dislocations and divisions of modern life and thought that art could not escape their influence. We do not have to travel to the ends of the earth nor return many millennia in time to find peoples for whom every-thing that intensifies the sense of immediate living is an object of intense admiration.¹⁹

In a similar way, John Cotton Dana's influence on Cahill is found in their shared orientation to the experiences of working people, concern for acknowledgment of a "uniquely American aesthetic, and the possibilities

¹⁹ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 2005), 4-5.

of finding beauty in ordinary life.”²⁰ Dana posited access to beauty as a class equalizer; beauty could be achieved in objects and in environments by attunement to individual creativity, rather than the distinction of “cost or prestige.”²¹

Throughout his career, Dana actively attacked the opulent elitism of arts organizations like New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, which glorified the tastes for European masters of its wealthy founding patrons. Dana’s curatorial vision, in contrast, highlighted the design accomplishments of commonly accessible household goods. Between 1922 and 1929, Cahill worked under Dana at The Newark Museum, a critical period of Dana’s national influence. In 1926 *The Survey* magazine published an article by Dana in which he espouses the distinctiveness and significance of American industrial design, writing: “the fact is that it is precisely in industry that the most native and original art expression of America has come.”²² Dana and Cahill collaborated on a series of articles published in *Forbes* magazine that

²⁰ John Cotton Dana, *Libraries: Addresses and Essays* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1916), 72.

²¹ *Ibid*, 73.

²² John Cotton Dana, “A Museum of, for and by Newark,” *The Survey*, no. 55 (1926): 615.

elaborated and extended their view of American art. Dana's interest in the American Arts and Crafts Movement informed his curatorial approach, as did his work directing public libraries in cities with large populations of mining and manufacturing laborers. In a 1902 speech, Dana delineates the objectives of his ideas about the interplay between individual development, handwork, design principles, and cultural organizations:

To bring thorough work into better esteem; to make a little more dignified the plain, honest work of our hands; to increase the interest in his days' labor taken by the artisan; to spread a knowledge and appreciation of good design; these, as I like to understand them, are the objects of the arts-and-crafts movement, now so widespread. To a manufacturing community this movement will be of especial value. It will lead to more and better trade and technical schools, to more practical and more effective work in drawing and art study in the public schools. It is part of that wonderful renaissance of art now taking place in this country which is so interesting and so encouraging. Of such a movement the library will be one of the natural centers. In its beginnings, especially, its resources will be of the greatest help. Out of the union of those interested in this field—architects, artists, artist-artisans, patrons of art—will grow in time the museum of art and handicraft which every manufacturing city greatly needs.²³

²³ John Cotton Dana, "The Meaning of the Public Library in a City's Life: Address at Dedication of the Trenton Public Library," *The Library Journal* 27, no. 8 (1902): 756-757; Nicolas Maffei, "John Cotton Dana and the Politics of Exhibiting Industrial Art in the Us, 1909-1929," *Journal of Design History* 13, no. 4 (2000): passim.

Cahill believed these centers could be a means for connecting average citizens to American art traditions and artists, and encouraging them to become makers themselves.

In a 1936 speech titled “Art for the Few or the Many?” given to the American Association of University Women, Cahill directly set forth his aim to democratize Americans’ experience of the arts through the work of FAP:

The ability to appreciate art is not the exclusive birthright of certain groups of people. It is largely the product of experience. In the past, unfortunately, this experience was limited to comparatively few individuals whose privileged economic and class status offered them the opportunity to understand and enjoy art. And it was for these individuals for whom the artists of the last century worked and not for the masses of people. The numerous art movements from Impressionism through Cubism to Surrealism were largely snob developments, however contributive they may have been artistically. If artists who were on the bandwagon of these movements attracted small audiences it was certainly not the fault of the multitudes of people who had no voice in the matter and whose interest was not invited. The Federal Art Project which I have had the privilege to direct during the past thirteen months has made a strenuous effort to heal this breach between that artist and the people.²⁴

²⁴ Holger Cahill, "'Art for the Few or the Many?,' Speech Delivered to the American Association of University Women, 1936," *Lectures and Speeches by Cahill, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993*. Cahill was heavily influenced by the ideas of John Cotton Dana with whom he worked at The Newark Museum through the 1920s. Dana was an iconoclast in the museum field, going against elitist conventions of museums as “sacred spaces” and advancing their potential for experiential education. See

Cahill's vision was to expand the general public's firsthand knowledge of art and provide productive opportunities for artists to advance their skills.

Cahill sought to institutionalize his vision of cultural democracy through the community art center. WPA-sponsored community art centers provided physical space for average Americans, in cities and remote areas, to participate actively in art-making through courses of instruction from professional artists and to learn about art through regional and national traveling exhibitions and lectures. These were immediately popular and developed rapidly across the country. The first WPA-sponsored community art center opened in Raleigh, North Carolina in December 1935 and by 1938, fifty-two additional centers had been established in cities such as Sioux City, Iowa; Spokane, Washington; and Sacramento, California. Under Cahill's direction, the Federal Art Project produced an extensive work procedures manual (which one state administrator referred to as "the Bible"); convened regular meetings of state directors; held special conferences, addressing

Victoria Grieve, *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

issues faced at the state and regional levels; and personally conducted periodic site visits across the country.

In these documents, Cahill set forth purpose and procedures and requirements for participation in the program. The documents established a dual purpose for each center: 1) providing employment to artists in their own profession in activities for which they have been trained and 2) fostering the cultural growth of a community through opportunities for education and expression in fine arts for both adults and children.²⁵

Cahill envisioned the community art center as offering multifaceted programs that make art as relevant to community life as public libraries. He instituted an official "General Plan of Organization and Operation" to be followed by all centers across the country and provided detailed guidance on the types of experiences that the art center should offer its surrounding communities and audiences.

Programs were not to be limited to reviewing art exhibitions passively; rather centers were to offer active instruction in crafts, techniques, and

²⁵ "Working Procedures, Community Art Centers F3.4, 1934," p. Reel 1107: Frame 221, Federally Sponsored Community Art Centers, Printed Material, 1910-1985, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

media of the arts and the application of art principles in home and community planning. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of effective design in everyday surroundings and activities, positing, as had John Cotton Dana at The Newark Museum, that “one of the functions of the fine arts [is] to bring order and design into the visual aspects of the environment created by human society.”²⁶ Relief-based arts policies, especially with respect to the art center, were a vital factor in the daily life of the community.

Race and Class in the Community Art Center Movement

As with other relief programs, race shaped the implementation of FAP’s community art center program. By the late 1930s, a convergence of forces, including civil rights activism, pushed against explicit racial discrimination and opened greater access to relief programs for African Americans over time. White administrators routinely denied African Americans full access to early relief programs, a practice that compounded the impact of racial discrimination in other sectors.

²⁶ Ibid, Reel 1107: Frame 221.

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Figure 1.3. Source: Table of Contents from "[Manual of Basic Principles and Techniques for Community Arts Centers] No date," p. Reel 5296, Frame 438, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

Trotter notes that “African Americans faced discrimination not only in industrial, agricultural, and relief programs but in federal housing, Social Security, regional planning, and youth programs as well,” and received no legislative protections until the late 1930s when a “growing significance of the black vote; the emergence of a new and more egalitarian labor movement; and the radicalization of the civil rights struggle” began to turn the tide.²⁷

The tenor of local race relations and the actions of administrators in district offices greatly determined the terms and conditions African Americans faced in accessing cultural resources within the Federal Art Project. For example, the first WPA-sponsored art center, which opened in December 1935 in Raleigh, North Carolina, offered segregated programming to African Americans through a partnership with Shaw University, a historically African American institution founded to educate freedmen after the Civil War. Under the direct control of the art center’s white project supervisor, the “Negro Extension to [the] Raleigh Art Center,” was composed of a small gallery and several classrooms on

²⁷ Joe William Trotter, *The African American Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 442-443, 460.

the university's campus with courses taught by white teaching artists. The extension program would host exhibitions from the Raleigh Art Center along with "several shows of work by negroes...for the negro gallery alone." This model of white institutions sponsoring segregated "extension" programming for African Americans was followed by the Children's Art Gallery in Washington, D.C. and the LeMoyne Federal Art Center at LeMoyne College in Memphis, Tennessee. In Florida, several racially segregated extension programs operated with federal funding, including the Jacksonville Negro Art Gallery; the Jordan Park Negro Exhibition Center in St. Petersburg; the Pensacola Negro Art Gallery; and the West Tampa Negro Art Gallery.²⁸

In Alabama, white state administrators outright refused to provide technical assistance to African Americans seeking to establish community art center in that state. The Alabama State advisory was an active board consisting of representatives from Alabama Polytechnic

²⁸ John Franklin White, ed. *Art in Action: American Art Centers and the New Deal* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 170-184; D.S. Defenbacher, "Raleigh Art Center Report, 1936," p. Reel 1107: Frame 229-240, Community Art Centers Reports, circa 1935-1941, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993; "Children's Art Gallery—Washington, D.C.: Extension Class for Negro Children," p. Reel 1107: Frame 745, FAP Division: Arts Teaching, 1936-1939, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993; O'Connor, "The New Deal Art Projects in New York," 58-79.

Institute, the Birmingham Public Schools, the Museum of Natural History at the University of Alabama, Alabama College, Springhill College and the Library Board in Mobile, the State Art Commission, and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.²⁹ Cahill recalled a period of rapid expansion of African American arts centers throughout the South during the period December 1935 through roughly April 1936. However, while conducting site visits in the South, he visited Alabama and found administrators sloughing-off and disengaged from efforts to establish new centers. When Cahill asked one of the administrators if they had heard of any efforts to start an African American arts center the administrator replied, "Frankly, I didn't." Inquiring with another white administrator, Cahill was told the same thing, that African American art centers would have been of no interest given that white centers had already been established. Cahill's recollection captures his frustration: "Well, this was the thing that we had to go up against all the time," he recalled.³⁰

²⁹ "Advisory Committees, Alabama, Circa 1939-1940," p. Reel 1105: Frames 0409-0414, General Subjects, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

³⁰ Pring, "Oral History Interview with Holger Cahill, 1957," p. Reel 5285, Frames 390-418.

In contrast, the Harlem Community Art Center was established distinctly as a “Negro Art Center,” with African American project supervisors and artists, though the quality of its programming ultimately attracted people across racial lines. Operating for less than two years between November 1937 and March 1939, the Harlem Community Art Center became an internationally-known venue for African American art with visitors recorded from throughout the United States and from England, Scotland, the British West Indies, China, Japan, France, the Netherlands, Palestine, and Germany. The Center built on the cultural activism work that founder Augusta Savage had done for many years as a member of the Harlem Arts Workshop, the Harlem Artists Guild, and with her popular Savage School of Arts and Crafts, where classes were offered for adults and youth since 1932. The Center also extended the vibrant history of African Americans’ cultural and political activism emblemized in the Harlem Renaissance, which had been suppressed by economic depression. Savage was one of the first African Americans to contest racial discrimination in the hiring of African Americans in FAP.³¹

³¹ "A Community Art Center for Harlem Commemorative Brochure, circa 1938,"

Many notable artists taught classes at the Center and many who took classes there went on to have exceptional careers as professional artists. In a 1939 report to WPA officials, the Center's second executive director, Gwendolyn Bennett, calculated that in less than two years more than 70,000 people attended activities with nearly 2,500 registering for art classes. Bennett argued that the Center had "become not only a cultural force in its particular locale, but a symbol in the culture of a race...a necessary stimulant to the development of Negro culture in American."³²

A few art centers worked explicitly to improve racial relations. In Cleveland, an interracial community art center was established to supplement the programming of Karamu House, an African American cultural center founded in 1915. Although by the time of the Depression, it was already recognized for its renowned theater group, it was not until Karamu House received funding from the WPA/FAP that it established a strong, visible presence in Cleveland. Taking its name

Administration of the State WPA/FAP: New York; David L. Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

³² Gwendolyn Bennett, "The Harlem Community Art Center," in *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the Wpa Federal Art Project* ed. Francis V. O'Connor (Greenwood: New York Graphic Society Books, 1974).

from a Swahili word meaning “center of community,” Karamu House was an interracial hub designed to address the cultural needs of poor blacks and whites living in one of the city’s worst slums. The community art center focused on printmaking and provided many Cleveland artists with their first exposure to a range of printmaking processes. Federal funds enabled Karamu House to hire well-trained teaching artists and provided exhibition opportunities for the artists and students alike. Similarly, in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1941 near the end of the FAP program, The People’s Art Center established itself as a distinctly interracial art center to be a “pulsating testimonial to the artistry and realism of the democratic way of life.”³³ The board membership, staff, and student body remained integrated throughout the Center’s history. The Center welcomed “teacher and student, adult and youngster, male and female, Negro and white, Catholic and

³³ "Founding Statements and Histories, n.d.," Folder Series II, The Mabel B. Curtis Files Regarding the People’s Art Center, 1941-1968.

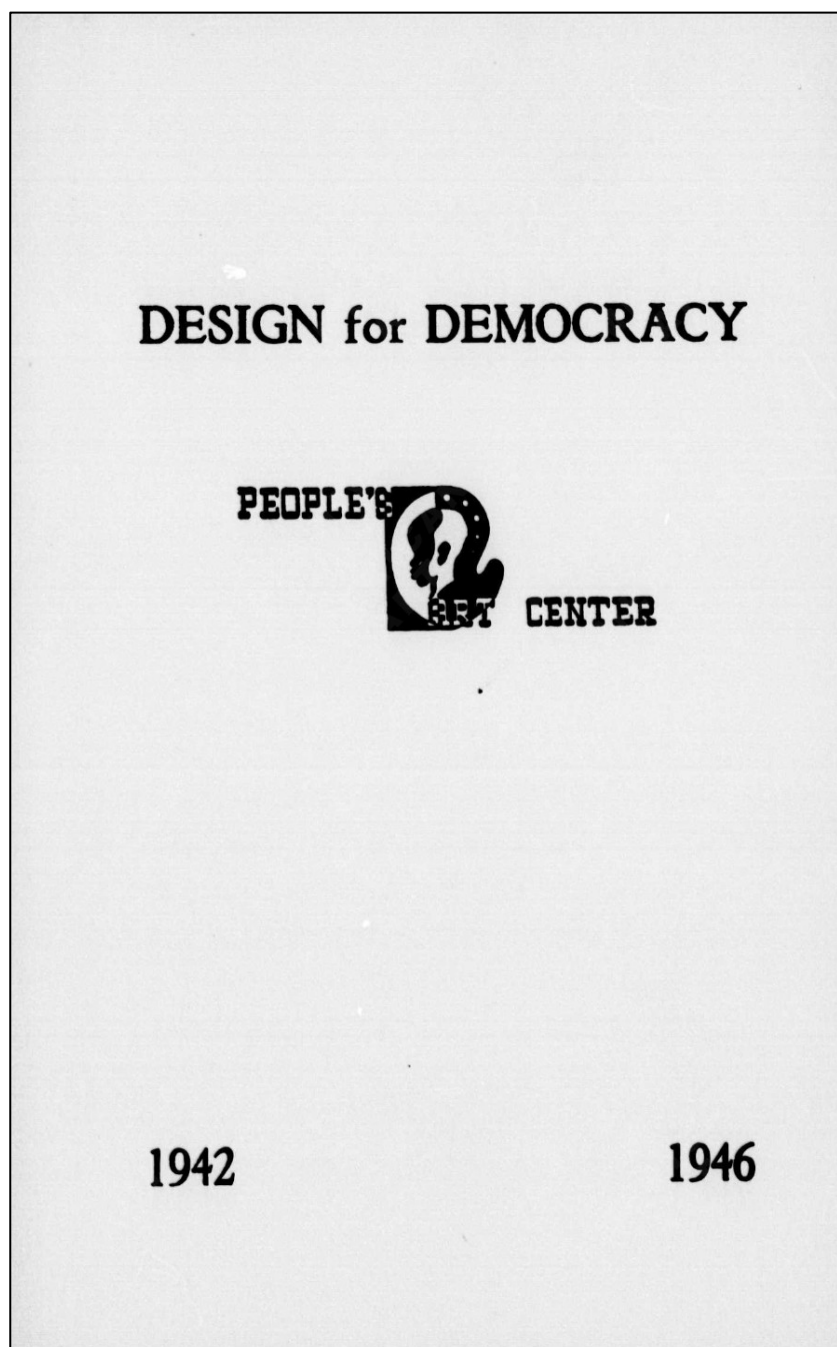


Figure 1.4. Source: "Design for Democracy: People's Art Center, 1942-1945 Commemorative Brochure, 1946," p. Reel 1107: Frame 338-340, Community Art Centers Reports, 1939-1946, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

Protestant and Jew . . . varied racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds fused in a common, creative endeavor."³⁴ It persisted through the 1960s, when dwindling funding sources and mounting racial divisions in the city (and between staff and board factions) forced its doors to close.

Broad-based arts participation and appreciation, for Cahill, offered a transformation of conditions for African Americans and an avenue for defining new contributions to American culture. Cahill, summarized this idea in a speech to the People's Art Center Association, May 5, 1941:

So far as the Negro people are concerned, the situation in the visual arts has never given them the necessary educational opportunities, the culture contacts, or the support in the form of grants, fellowships, etc. The total situation has been wrong for them. I do not hesitate to say, however, that the government art programs, through jobs, and the opportunities (provided for the Negro people) in community art centers, have begun to remedy this situation. . . . But while the problems of the Negro as artist and as appreciator of art are more difficult than those of his white confrère, they are similar in kind. Both need broader opportunities for expression. Both are suffering because of the steady elimination of the arts from community life. And as we make more opportunities for the average man and woman of the

³⁴ "Design for Democracy: People's Art Center, 1942-1945 Commemorative Brochure, 1946," p. Reel 1107: Frame 338-340, Community Art Centers Reports, 1939-1946, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

Negro people to enjoy the art in the community center, so we will provide more chance for the genius of the Negro people to express itself. The two things go together. The Negro artist cannot express the soul of his people in isolation from it. The Negro people cannot produce artists unless it is given opportunities to share in a democratic way in the experience of art. This reciprocal interplay between the artist and the community is one of the most interesting features of the arts centers.³⁵

While the experience of race varied from district-to-district, program-to-program, in the principles of the community arts center Cahill expressed an official FAP position focused on social uplift and racial advancement for African Americans.

SSCAC as Black Chicago's First Modern Arts Nonprofit

The effort to establish the SSCAC began in 1938. In an article marking SSCAC's opening, published in *American Federation of Arts'*

Magazine of Art, Alain Locke marvels at the accomplishment:

Eighteen months ago, when I first saw the house, which is now the Southside Community Art Center in Chicago, it was at the nadir of its career. Even those who planned its redemption could not quite visualize the transformation which culminated in its dedication May 7, [1941] by Mrs.

³⁵ Holger Cahill, "Role of Art in the Community: A Speech Delivered to the People's Art Center Association, 1941," p. Reel 5291: Frame 42-60, *Lectures and Speeches by Cahill, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993*.

Eleanor Roosevelt, to the applause of hundreds of invited guests, thousands of spectators in roped-off streets, a mobile broadcasting unit linking the occasion to a national network audience, and most important of all, an enhanced sense of corporate pride, self-respect and of prospective accomplishment on the part of the mid-West's largest Negro community. The fanfare was warranted, for against great odds and through an unusual cooperation of civic and artistic forces, a well-equipped and publicly supported art center had been established in an area fertile in artistic talent but, paradoxically enough, barren in opportunity for the proper encouragement and development of that talent.³⁶

Locke had been a central and influential operative in the Harlem Renaissance, declaring the cultural coming of age of African Americans as demonstrated by works of a cadre of Harlem's brightest intellectuals and artists. In his *The New Negro: An Interpretation of Negro Life* published in 1925, Locke announces the arrival of a "progressive Negro community," international in scope and marked by a seething creative expression that transcended gestures toward understanding the social problems faced by people of African descent around the world. Locke was actively engaged and supportive of Chicago's efforts to establish an arts center and highlight African Americans' wide-ranging

³⁶ Alain Locke, "Chicago's New Southside Art Center," *Magazine of Art*, no. 34 (1941): 370-374.

accomplishments in the arts. It was Locke who brought the center to the attention of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and helped to secure her presence at its opening celebration. Soon after the center opened its doors, Locke would work with its director to strategize the development of exhibitions for the center. He counseled the director that the center should use very small exhibitions of select works by nationally known East Coast artists to draw audiences and press attention to the center's main galleries that featured local Chicago artists. That Locke would be present and so involved in establishing the creative community at the South Side Community Arts Center is a significant bridge between two distinct periods of cultural flowering that took place in the country's two major black metropolises of Chicago and New York.³⁷

SSCAC became a touchstone in the Chicago Renaissance, helping to launch the careers of artists who made pioneering contributions to American arts and letters in the 1930s through present day. Much like the Harlem Renaissance, the Chicago Renaissance featured artists working in many different disciplines and contexts. However, the

³⁷ Alain Locke, *The New Negro, an Interpretation* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), ix; Lewis, 115-116, 292; Samella S. Lewis, *African American Art and Artists* (New York: University of California, 2003), 119; Alain Locke, "Letter to Peter Pollack, May 22, 1941," Peter Pollack Papers.

Chicago's cultural flowering lacked prominent Lockean coordinating figures and the extenuated elite social hierarchy that defines the Harlem Renaissance. Historian Goldsby describes Chicago's Renaissance as taking place in an environment of "communal, non-hierarchical, non-elite exchanges [that] represented a decisive break from the East Coast tradition of privatized, enclosed, exclusionary dialogue, particularly within African-American literary societies."³⁸ The fertile creative community surrounding the South Side Community Art Center was catalytic for the careers of artists now considered canonical across disciplines—in literature and music, theater, dance, and the visual arts. SSCAC was also a hotbed of political radicalism Mullen describes the center's attachment to the Communist Party of the United States of America's Popular Front as unique in the way it "documents both the mid-century absorption and revision of 1930s American cultural and

³⁸ Jacqueline Goldsby, "New Book to Explore the 'Chicago Renaissance'," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 61 (2008): 29. Goldsby attributes much of this distinction to the work of Vivian Harsh, head of the George Cleveland Hall Branch Library from the 1930s to the 1950s, who established weekly literary forums featuring local and national black writers and poets.

political radicalism into black public space.”³⁹ For Mullen, SSCAC holds a special place as a pillar in the advancement and institutionalization of the Negro People’s Front. The Negro People’s Front was a manifestation of the Communist Party’s Popular Front emphasis on broad-based coalition politics in the struggle for social, political, and racial equality that party leadership promulgated following the Comintern’s Seventh World Congress in 1935. As A. Philip Randolph’s speech before the Second Negro Congress in 1937 amply illustrates, African Americans’ interest in coalition politics aligned with but ultimately superseded the United Front Against Fascism. In the speech, Randolph insists that:

[I]n the true spirit of the united front, and in the pattern and purpose of integration and coordination, for mass strength, [the National Negro Congress] embraces all sections of opinion among the Negro people. It does not seek to impose any issue of philosophy upon any organization or group, but rather to unite with various and varying philosophies, left, center, and right among the Negro people upon a simple, minimum program so as to mobilize and rally power and mass support behind vital issues affecting the life and destiny of the race.⁴⁰

³⁹ Bill Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 81.

⁴⁰ A. Philip Randolph, "The Crisis of the Negro and the Constitution," in *Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* ed. Francis L. Broderick and August Meier (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), 184.

A relatively short-lived gesture made in reaction to the ascendancy of Nazi fascism, the Popular Front period was the weak apogee for black involvement with the Communist party. This tactical shift attracted notable activists and artists, but not the dedicated African American masses. In supporting a synthesis of Leftist thought within various modes of creative expression based in the experiences of African Americans, Mullen argues, SSCAC played a critical institutional role, along with the *Chicago Defender* and *Negro Story* magazine, in shaping and extending the longevity of the Popular Front.⁴¹

The very first meeting of the effort to establish an African American community art center in Chicago was convened in 1938 by Peter Pollock, a Jewish gallery owner. Pollack's gallery was not supremely successful and lost money, but he was inspired by the Federal Art Project's focus on preserving the nation's cultural heritage. Pollack's interests were not altogether altruistic, however. He had mounted a small exhibition featuring African American artists in 1937 and saw the community arts center as a way of developing relationships

⁴¹ Mullen, 81.

with artists whose work he had come to admire. In a 1960 oral history interview Pollack recalled his involvement:

I was running a small gallery and working, supporting the gallery. Losing money on the gallery and supporting myself and my family, and this is a tremendous conception of preservation of the arts, of feeling part of something that was of national importance as a contribution to the arts. And because it was national, and little politics appeared in it, because we had a national head; we had Cahill there fighting with the proper people individually, with Congress to get us funds. We didn't care about funds. We weren't politicking, we were simply trying to do a job. . . . I became interested because I had had a gallery and had shown a group of negro (sic) artists and it wasn't because of any political motivation, but out of the fact that I believed that these chaps had tremendous talents. And they were, they were damn talented. But in '38 I took the challenge of building a center and the toughest one to build was the one on the South Side, among the negroes. . . . I left in 1942 when I went overseas and I have not been to a negro affair since because I'm interested in art, not negro affairs. If I had stayed there I'd have become a professional negro, as it were, carrying a banner for the negro, and I didn't want to do that. I wanted to stay in the art world.

The relationship Pollock developed was paradoxical and often led to conflict with local African American cultural leaders. As supervisor for Illinois Art Project community centers, Pollack negotiated the contentious relationship between the federal government and the South

Side community. A key principal of the community art center program was not to “superimpose preconceived ideas of art but rather to find, develop and broaden the indigenous culture of the community.”

However, the program was simultaneously premised on the notion that the federal government needed to facilitate “a long and serious process of education . . . to advance the cultural level of the nation as a whole.” At the operational level, these contradictory impulses translated into an ethos of patronizing race relations and condescending class interactions.⁴²

Pollack’s federal directives echoed the racial uplift ideals of segments of the black middle-class who occupied key leadership positions within the SSCAC. Social worker, Pauline K. Reed, president of SSCAC, connected the center’s success and sustainability to the cultural profile and status of African Americans in Chicago:

[The Center’s] growth and its longevity are therefore co-existent with the interest and assistance of the community. Just as its arrested development or untimely death would further injure our already damaged prestige, its perpetuation would not only advance our cultural status but

⁴² Pring, “Oral History Interview with Holger Cahill, 1957,” p. Reel 5285, Frames 390-418.

would, at the same time, breathe life and inspiration into our young artists whose spirits have been singed by the incandescent flames of race prejudice.

Businessman Patrick B. Prescott, chairman of the board of directors, highlighted the potential community impact of the center:

Today in a world gone mad, art is one of the few 'eveners' of life. It brings beauty, and with it peace, quiet, enjoyment and understanding. . . . [SSAC] seeks to serve the colored community in its hunger for the expression of beauty. . . . If in ten years we send on his or her way just one Tanner or a Paul Williams, a Sims Campbell, or a Richmond Barthe, in one of the chosen fields herein offered we will have justified our existence.

If indeed we merely create the love of orderly beauty and its preservation, so that homes, streets and parks may be the better maintained, we will have enriched a community. . . . It is the duty of the community now to make this idea, grown big, into one of the greatest influences for good in the life of the race, whose greatest need is opportunity.⁴³

Recent studies of the Black Chicago Renaissance, acknowledge a set of powerful antecedents in Harlem, but find many things uniquely and deeply rooted in Black Chicago's social structure.

⁴³ "Program for South Side Community Art Center Dedication Dinner Honoring Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 7, 1941," Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

In the introduction to the edited volume *The Black Chicago Renaissance*, Darlene Clark Hine establishes the critical role that Chicago's black professional classes played in supporting the city's artists. While much of the early cultural development of Black Chicago is connected to the special influence and financial means of patrician "Old Settlers" interested in advancing the race on one hand, and constructing class distinctions against Chicago's growing industrial working-class, on the other, Hine argues that, by the height of period, the arts would help to erode rigid class boundaries by providing "neutral ground" on which new migrants could engage in new ideas of black life in America.⁴⁴ In her book *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism*, Anne Meis Knupfer documents the significant and unique role that African American women played in fighting against segregated schools, substandard housing, and discriminatory hiring from the 1930s through the 1950s. As schoolteachers, clubwomen, founders and administrators of community institutions, activists, volunteers, and caretakers, Knupfer argues that black women drew

⁴⁴ Benard I. Duffey, *The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters: A Critical History* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1954), 5; Darlene Clark Hine and John McCluskey, ed. *The Black Chicago Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), xv-xxix.

from a strong transnational, Pan-African ideology to inform their community activism and civic investments in Black Chicago's cultural development.⁴⁵

During the period between 1939 and 1950, the modern nonprofit sector coalesced out of a series of legislative reforms and the New Deal's expansion of public-private partnerships in response to the social impact of the Great Depression. In an overview of the history of the sector, Peter Dobkin Hall argues that the Great Depression definitively illustrated federal, state, and local governments' growing dependence on private organizations both for expertise and on-the-ground service delivery. Hall contends that establishment of universal income tax and advancements in policymakers' use of social and economic data analysis fueled a transformation of the politics of public finance. "As the nation assumed its responsibilities as leader of the free world," Hall argues, "the emphasis in budgeting and spending shifted from balancing revenues and expenditures (and other attempts to limit government spending) to meeting strategic and policy objectives." The enlarged role

⁴⁵ Anne Meis Knupfer, *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 10, 76 -80.

for government combined with limited organizational capacity to deliver services fueled the exponential growth of the nonprofit sector during the period. According to Hall, the number of charitable nonprofit organizations increased from 12,500 in 1939 to 32,000 in 1950.⁴⁶

Cahill insisted that the relationship between a center's director and the community must be one of service. The needs of the community were to be reflected in the structure and programming of the center. The director and the establishing committee were to foster connections between the center and local artists, public schools, libraries, settlement house, and other institutions serving the public. Informal lectures and demonstrations in the use of tools and materials of art, access to reference materials and information on the work of regional artists, and hiring of regional teaching artists are the vital components of the art center's work aimed at bridging the chasm between art and community in American life. Cahill writes:

In the arts, as in many other phases of American life, there has been in our time a development of professionalism

⁴⁶ Peter Dobkin Hall, "A Historical Overview of Philanthropy, Voluntary Associations, and Nonprofit Organizations in the United States, 1600-2000," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook - Second Edition*, ed. W.W. Powell & R. Steinberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 32.

without a corresponding development of community participation. The art center program should be directed not only toward building larger audiences for the arts, but also toward guiding and encouraging group activity and group expression leading to more complete community sharing in the experience of art. It should help to further the application of art principles in the selection of articles of everyday use as well as in community and home planning. The project, so far as its personnel and facilities will allow, should endeavor to provide a center for local cultural activities in the visual arts and in related fields. Art center directors should encourage all activities leading toward a coordinated program in which painting, sculpture, music, theatre, and literature can participate. It should also invite the cooperation of other Federal cultural projects, of local music, theatre, and literary groups, as well as of such Federal agencies as the National Youth Administration, the WPA Recreation and Education Divisions, and other projects and organizations which would be interested in an educational and recreational art program for the community as a whole.⁴⁷

A broad connection to community was of primary importance to Cahill, and his manual instructs center directors not only to establish exhibition galleries, but also to provide classes that might attract the largest possible number of people to hands-on experiences in the arts as opposed to narrowly focused professional training.

⁴⁷ "Working Procedures, Community Art Centers F3.4," p. Reel 1107: Frame 221.

As important as the vision for administration and programming, the detailed requirements for sponsorship may have been more important in helping to forge connections between centers and the communities in which they operated. Reflecting the realities of limited federal funding, identification of diverse revenue streams was seen as crucial to the long-term sustainability and project eligibility. In the approval of the allocation of federal dollars to support the establishment of new centers, Cahill stressed the need for alternative funding supports to ensure a center's longevity. Cahill knew that in time, local communities would be fully responsible for maintaining the centers and warned directors that centers should not attempt to use federal funding to execute their personal artistic interests, but rather should use federal dollars to design and inaugurate a center that "belongs to and has been created by the community."⁴⁸

Cahill allowed two basic models of sponsorship in awarding federal funds to art center projects. On the one hand, local sponsorship for an art center could be spearheaded by a newly formed committee of individuals with established interests in the arts and connections to

⁴⁸ Ibid, Reel 1107: Frame 221.

existing civic organizations. On the other hand, existing arts organizations could serve as a “cooperating sponsor” and help facilitate the process of developing new programs to achieve the vision for community engagement and educational opportunity Cahill articulated. He saw the cooperating sponsor model as less effective compared to established arts organizations more likely to have a predetermined artistic vision and to be less open to allowing community members to provide input and direction for the development of new programs. The purpose of the Federal Art Project was to establish an art center for the entire community, not to advance the predilections of a limited group. “In either case,” Cahill insists, “it is essential that the cooperation and support of the municipal government, existing art groups, civic organizations, and of individuals interested in art be assured.”⁴⁹

The process for securing federal funding through the project usually began with the convening of a cross-section of the community to define areas of need and devise a vision statement that reflected the input of leaders and the general community. State directors provided technical assistance to planning committees in crafting full

⁴⁹ Ibid, Reel 1107: Frame 221.

programmatic and financial feasibility plans. Part of the state director's due diligence included making some assessment of that there were in fact adequate numbers of relief-eligible teaching artists and staff to operate the center in alignment with the articulated vision. Once state directors approved a request for funding through the program, the planning committee evolved into more formal standing committees with officers (and requisite subcommittees) and assumed full responsibility for raising funds to sustain the center, overseeing program and policy development, and pursuing increased community awareness and involvement.⁵⁰

The federal government's funding dollars could be used for a range of expenses associated with establishing and operating a center. WPA funding could be used to cover space acquisition, salaries of eligible teaching artists and other workers, and a small percentage of annual non-labor operating expenses. The first hired full-time staff person was typically the director of the art center, who as an executive agent of the sponsoring committee, managed day-to-day operations and promoted the center in the community. The state directors were to stay

⁵⁰ Ibid, Reel 1107: Frame 221.

in regular contact with local center directors, supporting the development of regional exhibitions of artworks created as a part of the program and facilitating presentations of national traveling exhibitions, which the government heavily subsidized. A center's director was responsible for raising funds to cover exhibition expenses, equipment purchases, rent and utilities, and any building improvements or renovations that centers needed to become operational. In addition to meeting these requirements, organizers had to raise significant local funding through individual donations or earned income to sustain operations. The center director was to act as a liaison between the community art center and local art associations, museum, and relevant agencies. Admissions charges, tuition, and fees were to be kept minimum to ensure the broadest possible participation; special provisions for free admissions and tuition were to be made for individuals on relief.⁵¹

In August 1938, the Federal Art Project hosted a special conference on developing community art centers by representatives from across the country. At that convening, FAP officials laid out the

⁵¹ Ibid, Reel 1107: Frame 221.

history and goals of the community art center initiative and project supervisors from across the country shared experiences getting their centers off the ground. At the close of the convening, FAP leadership prioritized the regional expansion of art centers in the mid-west, stressed the need for highly participatory art programs, recommended that small emerging centers use residencies with artists from larger East Coast centers to help establish their programs, and discussed the utility of multi-arts partnerships to broaden programmatic offerings. Relationships between federal directors in Washington, D.C. and the regional and state officials were often contentious. As directors pushed to extend the program's reach, many state and regional directors balked at the additional responsibilities and complained about lack of resources and global understanding of the vision for the program. State administrators of large programs refused to loan staff to smaller centers as a way of equalizing access to arts programming outside of major metropolitan centers. Elsewhere, the chain of command on hiring and firing artist workers was subverted or the murky promotion guidelines caused uproars. The pressure to control labor costs was perennial. In a

1938 communiqué, national directors formally expressed concerns to Washington about the project's administration and goals:

We would like to reaffirm at this time our unanimous opinion that we could not reduce the present man-year cost. Further, since Works Progress Administration employment, as a whole, has increased between sixty and seventy percent and the arts projects are held in iron-clad quota limitations, we are placed in an untenable position not only so far as labor relations are concerned, but also as far as the needs of our program are concerned.

While adjustments to meet local conditions were encouraged, any changes or improvements to procedures were to be sent to Washington, D.C. for review and approval. Still the program remained popular and by its dissolution in 1943, over 103 community art centers had been established across the country.⁵²

Conclusion

These socio-cultural and ideological developments in Black Chicago were part of an important structural shift taking place in

⁵² White, ed., 7; "Meeting Minutes, Conference on Community Art Centers, 1938," p. Reel NDA 15: Frame 869-872, 1513-1517, Community Art Center: Reports, 1938, Holger Cahill Papers, 1910-1993.

American associational life. Relief policy introduced a new organizational structure that carried with it a distinct idea about cultural democracy and the role that arts and cultural institutions might play in communities. The community art center model instituted by Cahill oriented SSCAC around public service rather than service to membership, defined a new space dedicated to arts experiences, and advanced the professionalization of arts administration. All was not healed in the new organizational model, however. Issues of race and class became interwoven in tensions over artistic vision/philosophy, administration style, and board oversight. These tensions spurred “ecological fragmentation” as the disgruntled sought to establish a range of new cultural organizations to meet the taste and interests of a rapidly evolving arts audience.

CHAPTER TWO:

Arts Policy in Richard J. Daley's Chicago, 1955-1976

Introduction

Over the course of his twenty-six year tenure as mayor, Richard J. Daley's administration incorporated arts and culture in the work of revitalizing the city of Chicago in surprising ways. While many historians have sought to understand the nature of Daley's legend and political influence on housing policy, urban planning, civil rights, and national politics, none has considered the degree to which Daley's administrations defined a new era of local support for the arts in the years before the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts. Guided by his own understanding of the city's racial hierarchy, the symbolic value of high culture, and the imperative of expanding the city's tax base, Daley deputized an elite group of white, civic-minded corporate executives to fashion and implement an expansive vision for how local government might invest in the arts as a means of enticing affluent white arts consumers back to the central city. In this chapter, I examine the development of Chicago's arts policy environment in the era of Daley I. As the National Endowment for the Arts spurred the

development of a statewide arts service agency, increased public arts dollars demanded greater transparency and broader participation in allocating federal and state resources for cultural development. This trend eventually overcame the Daley administration's reliance on a small network of elites.

Urban Development within a White Consensus

In *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (1983) historian Arnold Hirsch describes post-World War II Chicago as an era in which whites (in government, the corporate sector, and in the city's white ethnic working-class enclaves) vehemently devalued and marginalized black life:

The expansion of the ghetto and the deterioration of the central city alarmed corporate property holders, but their response differed from that of individual homeowners and renters. Downtown businesses and institutions located in slum or transition areas turned not to violence or suburban flight but rather to the use of political and legal power. Locked in a desperate struggle for survival, the city's large institutions used their combined resources and political influence to produce a redevelopment and urban renewal program designed to guarantee their continued prosperity. Their response to the changing conditions of the city was not a fundamentally different form of behavior; it was simply a different mode of reaction within a white consensus. If the white ethnic working class felt driven to the streets

to protect its self-defined interests, Chicago's business and institutional interest resorted no less forcefully to the political arena.¹

The nexus of inadequate housing stock and the pathologization of the black presence in Chicago persisted through the interwar period, providing a defining fault-line in race relations in the city. In *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago*, Smith argues that while World War II diverted needed investments into renewing urban housing for all Americans, the state of renewal for African Americans had deeper implications because the quality of housing was so poor to begin with; segregation contributed to severe overcrowding (Cayton and Drake recorded population densities in the Black Belt nearly twice that of the city's predominately white areas) and social disorganization among migrant families. Smith demonstrates that reformers, white and black, understood high levels of antisocial behaviors in slum areas as a symptom of transience and rapid social change. Reformers identified housing segregation as the root cause of

¹ Hirsch, 100.

social problems associated with the Black Belt into the post-war period.²

Richard J. Daley rose in rank from “go-fer” ward to Democratic Party Boss to America’s most legendary mayor driven by a desire to control the destiny of the city of his birth. His worldview arose from the area he was born in 1902, the close-knit Irish-Catholic neighborhood of Hamburg in the Bridgeport community area on Chicago’s South Side. Hamburg was what journalists Elizabeth Taylor and Adam Cohen and call a “village-within-a-village,” as Chicago’s Irish communities segmented themselves by their home parish affiliation which they often sustained for life and referenced as a core component of their identities. In addition to the centrality of the church in community life in Bridgeport, another important role was played by the secular institution of the athletic club. The Hamburg Club was one of the oldest continuously operating associations in the country, binding young men together and providing early lessons in racial differentiation and Democratic machine politics.

² Preston H. Smith, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012), 1-2.

It was as a teenager in the Hamburg Social and Athletic Club that Daley apparently discovered his first leadership opportunities. Becoming a member as a high school student, Daley served as president of the Hamburg Athletic Club from the age of twenty-two to thirty-seven, i.e., 1924 to 1939. Other club members describe Daley as a serious member, overseeing participation in competitive leagues and organizing social outings for members. Beyond sports and social activities, Taylor and Cohen explain that the club was politically-sponsored and served as a place where neighborhood politicians could recruit a steady pool of eager foot-soldiers for their campaigns, young men willing to canvass door-to-door and even “apply force on behalf of their sponsors” when candidates wanted to intimidate elections judges with physical violence or steal votes outright.³

Beyond politics, members of the Hamburg Athletic Club acted as a white ethnic gang, maintaining the integrity of their racialized neighborhood and social boundaries with intimidation and violence. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations in its published report, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot*, found that

³ Elizabeth Taylor and Adam Cohen, *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley: His Battle for Chicago and the Nation* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000), 27-36.

clubs including Hamburg Athletic Club played a leading role in deepening and extending the blood-shed of the 1919 Race Riot that rocked Chicago from July 27 through August 2, 1919, claiming 23 black lives and 15 white lives and injuring a total of 537 Chicagoans. The Commission concluded that white ethnic young men associated with these organizations escalated the conflict by exploiting municipal laxness. According to a municipal court judge who testified before the Commission, white gang members felt a degree of protection from white police officers and took advantage of the chaos and lawlessness generated by the riot to “inflict their evil propensities on others.” According to the Commission, “it is doubtful if the riot would have gone beyond the first clash” without the instigation the Hamburg Athletic Club and other white gangs in the Bridgeport neighborhood, where nearly half of all violent activity took place.⁴

To be sure, the violence that erupted in the riot of 1919 was only a symptom of the racial tensions in Chicago boiling over as the city’s

⁴ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1923), 11-12. The Commission acknowledged many antecedent events that evidence the animosity existing between white ethnic youth and African Americans in the city, finding that access to the city’s various neighborhood-based recreational facilities had often precipitated skirmishes between organized white gangs and athletic club members and individual African American youth.

working-class white ethnic neighborhoods used any means necessary, up to and including terroristic bombings, to attempt to contain an expanding African American population. The Commission found that the low housing supply and its exceedingly poor quality in the Black Belt created conflicts in many ways more contentious than the ones concerning jobs, which were more plentiful with fewer barriers. Surveying the nature and sources of racial tensions in the city, in its report, the Commission concluded: "Practically no new building had been done in the city during the war, and it was a physical impossibility for a doubled Negro population to live in the space occupied in 1915."⁵

In *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, sociologists St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton present a clear example of the deep anxiety produced by the expanding African American population in an interview with a pastor of a white Baptist church:

In 1915 the cry was heard, 'The Negroes are coming.' . . . Beautiful homes occupied by families belonging to the church for generations were sold for whatever price they could obtain. The [church] membership declined to 403 and only 10 persons united with the church in that year. The church was face to face with catastrophe. No eloquent preaching, no social service, could save a church in a community that was nearly 100 percent Negro Meanwhile the Negroes are steadily pushing

⁵ Ibid, 3.

down the alleys southward with their carts of furniture, but Forty-seventh Street running east and west still stands as a breakwater against, the coming tide. If it crumbles there will be some new history for the First Church.⁶

Intra-racial relations among African Americans were also contentious against newly-arrived migrants. In its examination of public opinion, the Commission's report includes quotes from the media referencing some of the areas of conflict, such as this passage from a May 22, 1920 article in the *Chicago Searchlight*, an African American newspaper:

Did you ever get on the elevated train at Indiana Avenue about 5:30 o'clock in the afternoon, and meet the 'gang' from the Stock Yards? It would make you ashamed to see men and women getting on the cars with greasy overalls on and dirty dresses in this enlightened age. There is really no excuse for such a condition to exist. There is plenty of soap and water in the Stock Yards and you have better clothes in your homes. Why not take a suit to the yards and wash up and change your clothing, before attempting to mingle with men and women, many of them being dressed for theaters and club parties, etc.? Don't you know that you are forcing on us here in Chicago a condition similar to the one down South?⁷

⁶ St Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis : A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 63-64.

⁷ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 11-12.

This columnist's commentary reveals the social tensions and depth of distinctions many in the Black Belt sought to draw between themselves and newcomers.

In a report section titled "Negroes and Property Depreciation," the Commission captures the difficulty of the predicament African Americans faced as they sought decent homes during the period:

No single factor has complicated the relations of Negroes and whites in Chicago more than the widespread feeling of white people that the presence of Negroes in a neighborhood is a cause of serious depreciation of property values. To the extent that people feel that their financial interests are affected, antagonisms are accentuated . . . The Negro suffers under the realization that, for reasons which he cannot control, he is considered undesirable and a menace to property values. Wherever Negroes have moved in Chicago this odium has attached to their presence.⁸

As individual African American families attempted to escape the poor housing conditions that defined the Black Belt, whites branded them as the source of "slums," "blight," "urban decay," "crime," "vice," and "delinquency."

⁸ Ibid, 195.

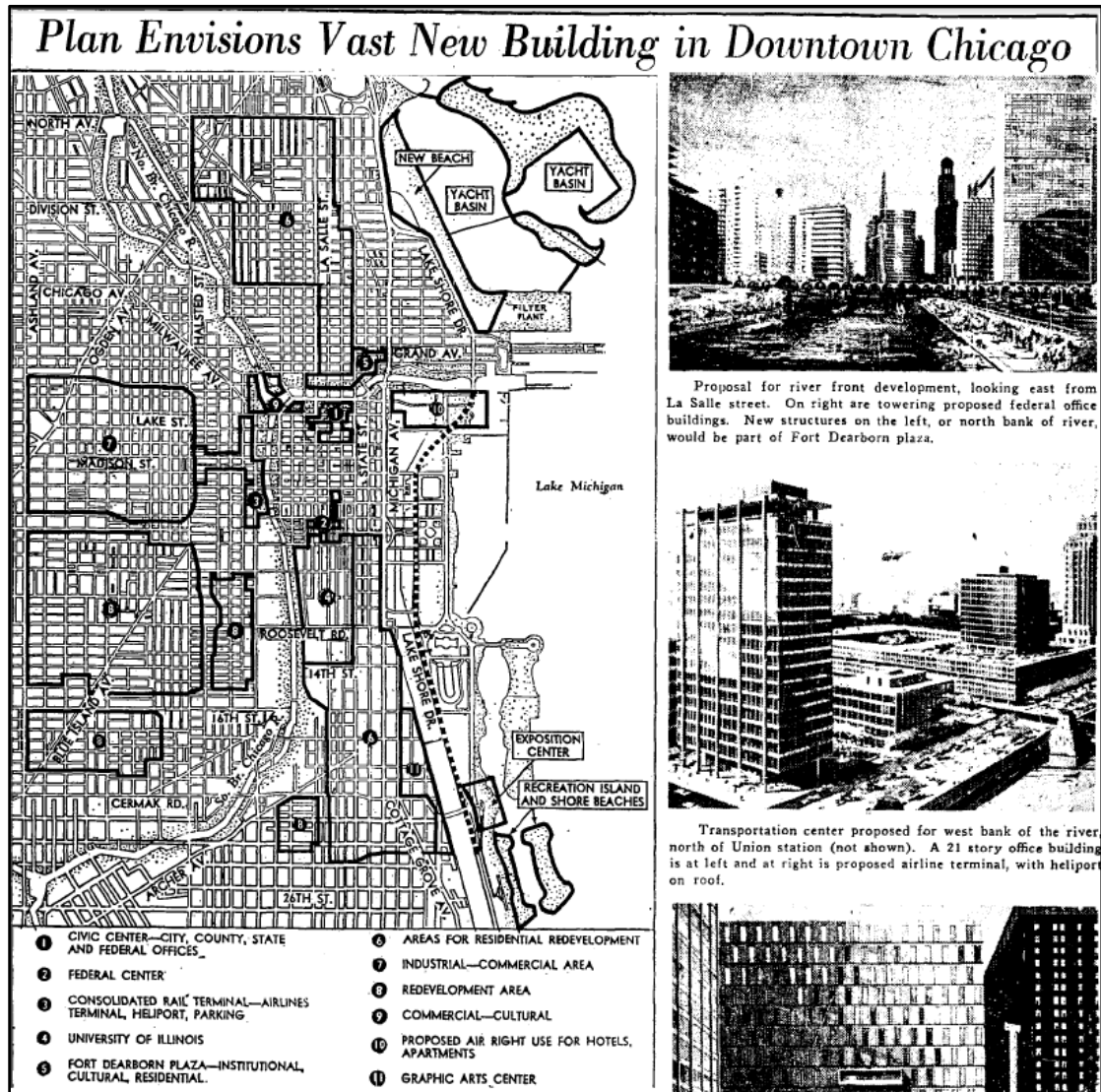


Figure 2.1. Graphic from article reporting on the Daley administration's plans for revitalization of downtown and surrounding areas. Source: Thomas Buck, "22 Year Plan: A New Face for Chicago!" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1958, 1.

Daley strategically ingratiated himself to the city's downtown business community, famously reaching out to several prominent businessmen to identify a list of major projects that should be made priorities. He created a number of special committees and commissions

focused on the issues most relevant to downtown business interests, which had experienced a significant diminishment since the Depression and were at risk of encroachment by black neighborhoods. The encouragement of segregated high-rise public housing, decimation of historically black neighborhoods for highway projects, undermining historic black political authority within the Democratic Party, all serve as evidence of Daley's deep commitment to safeguarding the racial "integrity" of the city by delimiting blacks' presence. For Chicago's downtown corporate community, Daley presented himself as someone who could get things done with a special facility for working outside the rules. Within the first month of his first term as mayor, Daley proclaimed to the nation his commitment to reversing in Chicago the national trend of white flight and doing everything in his power to "bring people back from the suburbs to our city."⁹

Early Dealings in Cultural Symbolism

Arts and cultural issues were presented to Daley immediately upon taking office. In December 1955, Daley presented a resolution to city council to honor the work of Lawrence V. Kelly, Carol Fox, and Members

⁹ Taylor and Cohen, 165.

of the Lyric Guild for their work establishing the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Kelly, an insurance broker, and Fox, a young student singer, used their own resources to marshal community support for a new opera company in the wake of several opera company bankruptcies that had left a void for many years in Chicago. Daley read the following resolution into the record:

WHEREAS, The Lyric Theater of Chicago has restored Opera in the grand tradition to our city; and

WHEREAS, The brilliant performances presented during this and last season providing the finest in operatic art have won the plaudit of music critics everywhere; and

WHEREAS, The Lyric Theater has made a major contribution toward advancing Chicago's acceptance as a great cultural center; and

WHEREAS, The success of this endeavor provides inspiration for the activation of other great events which sparked with similar dynamic force can be brought to fulfillment in our revitalized Chicago; and

WHEREAS, It is evident that credit for this magnificent accomplishment must be shared by the hundreds of hard working and self-sacrificing Chicagoans, who, banded together in the Lyric Guild made a dream a reality; now, therefore

Be It Resolved, That I Richard J. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago do hereby proclaim that it is the desire of all Chicago to acclaim the "I Will" spirit of two young Chicagoans Lawrence V. Kelly and Carol Fox who provided the inspiration for, and were the leaders of this project which has regained for Chicago position among the Opera Centers of the world, and I commend to all the

people of our city the example they and their associates have set in rendering civic service.¹⁰

City council adopted the resolution unanimously. Daley highlighted the youths' ambition and cultural contribution as emblematic of the city and credited the two with advancing Chicago's position in a cultural hierarchy of cities around the globe premised on the quality and availability of Western classical music traditions. In the weeks following, Daley announced that he would investigate how the city might subsidize the opera, ballet, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; possible strategies included establishing a "fund for culture" and underwriting performances. State law prohibited the use of tax dollars to support direct subsidies, but Daley pledged his interest and intention to "explore the idea further as an instrument of good will for the city."¹¹

The Lyric Opera's resolution and interest in studying novel means of support were surely a welcome signal of support to the city's arts organizations. However, the expansion of the city's tax revenue was one of Daley's highest priorities and major arts organizations found

¹⁰ *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, (1955): 1477-1478.

¹¹ "Daley Studies Subsidies to Boost Culture," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1955, 3.

themselves under new financial pressures as Daley worked with City Council to impose new city taxes.

Daley had spent much of his early career in positions concerned with revenue at different levels of government: Illinois House and Senate seats, deputy controller, state director of revenue, and county clerk; these experiences gave him great insight into the interconnectedness of state and local government and the impact on Chicago of the state constitution's arcane revenue article limiting municipal governments to collecting property taxes. In an interview, Daley said, "the members of the [state] legislature know full well that property taxes cannot meet the costs of essential services to the second largest city in the world." Eight days after his inauguration, Daley visited Illinois Governor William Stratton in Springfield to assert the need for greater "revenue power" and they eventually struck a deal to introduce an emergency bill that would allow Illinois cities to enact a non-referendum half-cent city sales tax for two years and for Chicago to put in place a five percent utility tax.¹²

¹² "Daley Studies Plans to Hike City's Revenue," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 19, 1955; George Tagge, "Daley Reaches Policy Accord with Stratton: State and City Program Worked Out," April 29, 1955; George Tagge, "City Must Get More Revenue, Stratton Says: Agrees with Daley on Need for Cash," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 6, 1955; "Mayor Daley 'Happy' over Utility Levy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 16, 1955;

There were changes to other taxes as well. In a brief note from Chicago Symphony Orchestra general manager George Kuyper, dated November 5, 1956, board members of the Orchestral Association and Lyric Opera of Chicago, including notably Leonard Spacek, a highly respected “dynamo” among the city’s corporate leaders, were deployed to lobby Daley about the impact on major arts organizations of a new amendment to the city’s Amusement Tax:

Mr. Spacek saw Mayor Daly (sic) on October 31. He has talked with the Mayor and discovers that the ordinance had been passed and signed by Daly over a month ago, but that he did not know that he had signed it or what he had signed. Mr. Spacek said he was also speaking for The Orchestral Association since both organizations felt that it was unfortunate that the City went back to this taxation; that if the City wanted to tax the Opera out of existence, well, that was it. The Mayor promises that he will get busy as soon as he can and get a new ordinance through the Council exempting the two organizations. Lee Freeman, the Opera’s counsel was supposed to call Dr. Oldberg to tell him about this.¹³

Leonard Spacek was at the time a managing partner at the prestigious Arthur Andersen accounting firm and an influential arts patron. The

"Mayor Speeds Plan to Use City Sales Tax," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 24, 1955; Edward Schreiber, "Daley Vows Greater City: Chicago's New Mayor Sworn before 2,000," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 21, 1955.

¹³ George Kuyper, "Memorandum to Chicago Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors, 1956," Executive Office Papers, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Archives.

ordinance of concern had imposed a three percent tax on gross receipts and established a license requirement for public places of amusement:

SECTION 1. Section 104-2 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is amended to read as follows:

104-2 License tax.) A license tax is imposed upon all amusements within the city, excepting automatic amusement machines, of an amount equal to three per cent of the gross receipts from admission fees or other charges, exclusive of federal and state taxes, to witness or to participate in such amusements. It is unlawful for any person to produce, present or conduct any such amusement without payment of the tax.

SECTION 2. Section 104.1-2 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is amended to read as follows:

104.1-2. License required.) It is unlawful for the owner or person in control of any property to produce, present or conduct thereon or to permit any person to produce, present or conduct thereon any amusement, other than those excepted in section 104.1-1, without first having obtained a license for a public place of amusement.¹⁴

The amendments had passed unanimously in September 1956, but after conversations with Spacek and possibly other influential board members from major arts organizations as well, Daley worked to have an amendment introduced that would provide an exemption for these organizations at the city council's very next session in January 1957.

¹⁴ *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, (1956): 3272-73.

The City council approved language to distinguish nonprofit cultural amenities like the Lyric Opera, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Art Institute of Chicago, from commercial establishments like movie theaters, vaudeville houses, and cabarets that operated “for gain or profit.”¹⁵ While providing evidence of Daley’s early support for the arts in the city, the memorandum also opens a window to the relationships Daley would forge with members of Chicago’s white civic elite to undertake initiatives aimed at improving the city’s cultural life for residents and signifying downtown revitalization.

In July 1956, Spacek became the president of the board of the Lyric Opera of Chicago at a time when bad finances, bad business deals, and warring board factions had literally cleaved the organization into two. Rising through the ranks of Arthur Andersen Accounting from supervising accountant in 1934 to managing partner in 1947, Spacek had become a boisterous champion of transparency and high professional standards. Over the course of his career, he would take the accounting field, the United States Security and Exchange Commission, and the United States Congress to task over what he termed “musky”

¹⁵ *Journal of the Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, no. 158 (1957): 910-911, 4440.

accounting standards in corporate financing and tax policy development. Under Spacek's leadership, the Lyric Opera mounted a dramatic turnaround, quashing organizational conflicts and achieving a spectacular fundraising goal of \$300,000, almost twice as much as it had been able to raise previously.¹⁶

Spacek sent the press a memorandum noting that the Lyric Opera of Chicago was positioned to begin long range artistic planning, only months after having to consider cancelling seasons, if not the prospect of going out of business completely. The Dr. Oldenberg referenced in the memo was actually Dr. Eric Oldberg, a prominent neurosurgeon and similarly committed patron of the arts in the city. Oldberg was born in Evanston and educated at Northwestern University. After graduating medical school, he conducted research and published widely in the field of neurosurgery. From 1951 to 1961, he was professor and department head at the University of Illinois Medical College. Oldberg served on many different boards but throughout his life was particularly dedicated to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He served as president of the Orchestral Association's board for over a decade and saw the

¹⁶ "Accounting Standards Musty, Spacek Says," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 5, 1956, C9.

organization through many difficult seasons, labor disputes, staff conflicts, and financial downturns. These men had significant access to the mayor and were able to lobby effectively on behalf of their organizations to receive extended support from city government.¹⁷

Daley also convened civic leaders around completely new cultural initiatives he thought would benefit the city. In May of 1958, Daley assembled a forty-two member taskforce to develop strategies for promoting “culture” and combating fears that opera, ballet, and symphonic music were on the decline in Chicago, overcome by movie theaters and other popular entertainment options. Daley reviewed the taskforce’s recommendations for providing new buildings and performance spaces suitable for these art forms. There was significant disagreement about what was needed and where meaningful opportunities lay. A dual purpose building capable of housing opera and ballet, constructed in railroad air rights owned by the city, was rejected, as were proposals for sites located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood roughly ten miles outside of downtown. The group did achieve consensus around giving priority to a campaign for the

¹⁷ "New Musical Group to Be Named Lyric Opera of Chicago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 6, 1956; "Eric Oldberg Biography," Eric Oldberg (1901-1986) Papers.

renovation of the Auditorium Theater in the South Loop. Daley concluded: "I believe we are all unified on restoration of the Auditorium and I think we are all agreed on what it would mean to the city."¹⁸ The trustees of Roosevelt University, which owned the building and operated classes in what was originally a hotel, responded enthusiastically to the news of the mayor's committee's focus on the building. In a publicly issued statement, they wrote: "Roosevelt University regards the restoration of the Auditorium as a community undertaking and welcomes the establishment of Mayor Daley's cultural committee."¹⁹ Daley put his support behind the \$2.7 million renovation project chaired by Mrs. Beatrice T. Spachner, who with her husband John V. Spachner, pledged the first \$500,000. The Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler-designed Auditorium Theater successfully reopened in 1967 as the premier stage for ballet and opera in the city.²⁰

¹⁸"City Culture Group Holds 1st Meeting," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 2, 1958, A4.

¹⁹ "Consider City Buildings and Cultural Need," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 9, 1958, B9; "Daley Replies with Praise to Rap at Art," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 24, 1959, Part 3, 11.

²⁰ "\$500,000 Pledged to Auditorium," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 25, 1959, F9; Ridgely Hunt, "Resurrection of a Masterpiece: Out of a near-Ruin of Cobwebs," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 29, 1967, H26. John V. Spachner was chairman at the Container Company of American.

Getting the Only “Right People” for the Job

In 1961, during his second term, Daley appointed the Committee on Economic and Cultural Development of Chicago (CECDC), a standing committee with the mission to “stimulate and expand the economic and cultural environment of Chicago.”²¹ Banker David M. Kennedy chaired the committee. Kennedy was a former director and president of Continental Illinois Bank, whom President Nixon would elect to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Treasury from 1969 to 1971. As chair, Kennedy led the CECDC as it swelled to 250 members interested in inaugurating, or recommending for inauguration, programs which would foster immediate development within the greater metropolitan Chicago community of the arts, commerce, education, and industry.²²

Members of the committee represented Chicago’s civic elite, individuals holding significant positions in the city’s largest corporations who were all white. African Americans decried the CECDC’s all-white composition. “How,” an assembly of prominent African Americans asked, “can this group improve the Windy City’s image, if they don’t know the feelings and thinkings of one fourth of the

²¹ "Economic and Cultural Development," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 7, 1963, I38.

²² "Daley Names Advisory Unit on Publicity," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 15, 1962, A10. CECDC first appeared on the city budget in 1963, with an appropriation of less than \$50,000.

population?" Included in the protesters was Edwin C. Berry, executive secretary of the Chicago Urban League. Berry insisted that race relations was the single most important problem facing the city of Chicago and a high-powered taskforce needed to be charged with finding answers. Berry condemned the slight of exclusion, saying, "We cannot do a lasting job of improving Chicago if we overlook the needs, contributions and aspirations of a million people."²³

Agnes Thornton, president of the Chicago and Northern District of Colored Women's Club, and A.L. Foster, executive director of the Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, also lambasted the mayor for the racial snub and wrote an open letter to the mayor insisting that someone be added to the committee to represent the vast African American population that calls Chicago home. Daley eventually relented and named Lewis A. H. Caldwell, president of the Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, as the lone African American member of the CE CDC, though the committee seems not to have taken up issues critical to African Americans until the late 1960s.²⁴

²³ "'Sell Chicago' Snub Irks Southsiders," *Chicago Daily Defender*, December 20, 1962, 2.

²⁴ "Name Caldwell to Daley Group to 'Sell' Chicago," *Chicago Daily Defender*, January 12, 1963, 1.

The outcry over the racial composition of the CECDC was part of African Americans' larger persistent appeals for fair treatment from Daley's city hall. Between 1963 and 1964, three stories of racial bias in city hiring and promotions circulated prominently in the media headlines. Desmond H. Sealy, a city planner; Samuel Cullers, and Paul Williams, all resigned from city posts in protest over unfair treatment. In his resignation letter to the CECDC, Sealy wrote: "My decision to resign has been promoted by the lack of satisfactory opportunities for advancement afforded by the staffing and promotion methods of the Committee." Sealy told the Chicago Defender, "In local government here, Negroes of good qualifications are systematically bypassed." Of the mayor's role, Sealy said: "I haven't had any contact with the Mayor, of course, but this is not just the Mayor but his department heads who determine whether Negroes advance or not." He concludes:

I'm sure he's aware of the situation. There are very, very few Negroes in top positions in city government. The present administration seems to be hopelessly committed to a policy of tokenism and gradualism where employment opportunities for Negroes at all levels of city government are concerned. The administration seems content to hire one Negro secretary in the Mayor's office, make sure this gets into the newspapers, and then to assume that all

commitments to the Negro community have been completely fulfilled.²⁵

Over the first year of its existence, CECDC acted as a chamber of commerce/think tank for the mayor's office. The CECDC conducted and issued a major study of economic conditions in the city; devised plans to develop emerging industry clusters; advised other governmental committees; issued research on the impact of automation and technology on the city's economy; was a liaison to the United States Department of Defense in organizing a defense contracting conference in Chicago; developed a lecture series on the economic development with the University of Chicago and many other special projects. In support of the city's cultural life, the Cultural Advisory Committee focused its early work on propping up the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and preparing a "unified informational program to portray Chicago to the world."²⁶

An All-Encompassing Vision for the City's Support of the Arts

The relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was all encompassing. In 1962, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's endowment

²⁵ Lillian S. Calhoun, "3rd Top Negro Aide Quits Daley Regime Charges Racial Bias in Promotions," *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 11, 1964, 4.

²⁶ "Economic and Cultural Development," 138.

was at \$10 million the second largest of any symphony orchestra in the country. It assiduously proclaimed its ranking as one of the top three or four symphony orchestras of the world and the unparalleled significance of its contribution to Chicago's cultural life. Managing Director Merrill Shepard made a grandiose case for support to the city's corporate community:

The mere fact that [the Chicago Symphony Orchestra] exists, and exists and functions in Chicago, places a capstone of eminence on the whole structure of education in the cultural area of music. At Princeton in the School for Advanced Studies the mere presence of Albert Einstein created a focus on high intellectual attainment—an incentive toward intellectual achievement—a standard for intellectual performance which affected not only the twelve or fifteen students whom he spoke to directly but every member of the entire community down to the entering freshman. Similarly, every teacher of music in the universities, the colleges, the high schools and the elementary schools of Chicago and its suburbs is influenced in exactly the same way by the existence and pre-eminent brilliance of performance of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—and in turn influence is transmitted by those teachers to their pupils. Our Orchestra stands as an inspiration and a goal in terms of the highest performance in the area that music occupies in the education of the well-rounded citizen.²⁷

²⁷ "Fact Sheet--Chicago Symphony Orchestra Contract Negotiations, 1962-2004, 2004," CSO Executive Office Files; financial and labor struggles were in fact nothing new for the Symphony, from its founding in 1891 through today the organization has struggled for sustainability and relevancy, see Ellis A. Johnson, "The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1891-1942—a Study in American Cultural History" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955).

Despite the significance of its endowment and cultural contribution, the Symphony faced record operating deficits and crippling labor disputes throughout the 1960s. Just as the compensation for all the musicians topped \$1 million in 1960, annual operating deficits began to climb, also reaching \$1 million by 1965. The Orchestral Association announced that contract disputes with Local 10 of the Chicago Federation of Musicians (a member of the American Federation of Musicians) would force the cancellation of the 1962-1963 season, so Daley interceded as a mediator, working to secure a collective bargaining agreement whereby the major disputes over the number of rehearsals, group health insurance, and protections from unwarranted dismissals of musicians would be referred to a Fact-Finding Board. Daley enlisted United States Court of Appeals Judge Roger J. Kiley to chair the Fact-Finding Board composed of representatives from the Orchestral Association and Local 10 of the Chicago Federation of Musicians. The group met sometimes weekly over the course of more than a year to resolve disagreements.²⁸

²⁸ Board chair Eric Oldberg explained the “poison” of dipping into endowment principal to cover annual deficits and that a \$1 million endowment gift actually only yielded roughly \$40,000 to support annual operations, see Seymour Raven, “Why

As the Fact-Finding Board did its work, Daley and the CECDC's executive committee committed to raising up to \$350,000 over three years for the Symphony. David Kennedy acknowledged that fundraising had not been a part of the CECDC's work up until that point, but embraced the work of fulfilling the pledge. A Citizens' Committee was established to solicit funds, sending the following to potential contributors:

As a member of the Citizen's Committee for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, I am writing you to ask that you give it your financial support. This year out extended season, including planned tours, will run for 36 weeks and the following year if the commitment of the Mayor's Committee on Economic and Cultural Development is met, the Orchestra will play for a total of 40 weeks. Our ticket revenue covers only about half our expenses, and therefore to play these longer seasons we will have to incur steadily mounting deficits which we can anticipate will reach \$500,000 annually in the years immediately ahead. These sums must be provided by the citizens of Chicago if our community is to continue to enjoy superlative symphonic music.

In addition to playing longer seasons, we are also planning to broaden the services rendered by the

Orchestra Needs \$225,000 Is Outlined," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 1, 1955; Claudia Cassidy, "Chicago Has Million Dollar Orchestra in Fact as in Reputation," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 19, 1961; Claudia Cassidy, "When You Solicit Private Subsidy for the Arts It Takes a Little More Evidence Than Just That You Need the Cash," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 4, 1962; Thomas Willis, "Chicago Symphony Loss Is a Record Million," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1965; Thomas Willis, "Daley Meets with Panel to Aid Orchestra: Hunts Way to Raise Necessary Funds," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 27, 1962; Seymour Raven, "Letter to Jean Martinon, 1962," CSO Executive Office Files; Roger J. Kiley, "Letter to Honorable Richard J. Daley, 1963," CSO Executive Office Files.

Orchestra. More extensive major tours will be undertaken, thus bringing home to thousands of new listeners the stature of Chicago as a center of music. Interesting special activities are being developed for those of our supporters who qualify for one of the membership classifications listed in the enclosed brochure.

I hope you will read our leaflet and I also hope you will make as generous a gift as you possibly can. If you can envision what Chicago would be like without its world-renowned Symphony, I am sure you will look upon this appeal as seriously as do all of us who are working to make this campaign a success.²⁹

These were extraordinary interventions into the operations of an independent cultural organization.

Daley would also facilitate the Symphony's special performances before members of the United States Armed Forces. When the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra cancelled a tour to South America, Daley and the CE CDC worked with the Cultural Presentations Division at the State Department to get the Chicago Symphony the job and agreed to host a fundraising dinner to cover a substantial part of the funds needed to make the tour happen. Daley made the Symphony an extension of the city itself, writing "We are making a concerted effort to

²⁹ Claudia Cassidy, "Mayor's Committee Comes Thru and Orchestra Makes It 36 Weeks," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 28, 1964; "Citizens' Committee for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Solicitation Letter, No Date," CSO Executive Office Files.

uphold Chicago's reputation as a city of renowned hospitality that expresses its gratitude to our servicemen in deeds as well as words."³⁰

In 1964, CECDL launched *Chicago Magazine* as a vehicle for telling the story of the city's transformation and vitality. CECDL established *Chicago Magazine* as a quarterly, 100-page magazine with high production value and articles by some of Chicago's best-known writers. The magazine started with a volunteer staff of CECDL members producing an initial run of 65,000 as "part of a total communications plan aimed at marketing Chicago to the world."³¹ The committee earmarked the bulk of the initial run to be sent to corporate executives and opinion leaders to stimulate interest in the advertising space as much as content. Eventually the CECDL outsourced the magazine to be operated by a separate nonprofit organization named The New Chicago Foundation. Members of the board of trustees were chairmen from Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Co., International Harvester Company, Inland Steel Company, Marco, Inc., Illinois Bell Telephone

³⁰ Richard J. Daley, "Letter to Seymour S. Raven, 1962," CSO Executive Office Files; Merrill Shepard, "Letter to Richard J. Daley, 1964," CSO Executive Office Files.

³¹ James Smith, "Chicago Quarterly Looks Like Success," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 26, 1964, C7.

Company, Parker House Sausage Company, First National Bank of Chicago, United States Steel Corporation, and Commonwealth Edison.³²

The early issues present a Chicago on the move with infinite new choices. The editorial staff sought to achieve a tone that was comforting, delivering articles about recently opened art exhibitions, sports accomplishments, cuisine, and the experience of various cultural ambassadors abroad. In an exemplary column, the editor provides an extended explication of the magazine's refusal to take on difficult issues in its pages:

By trying humor we are hoping to find a tone of voice that will reach as many Chicagoans as possible. With so many writers today shouting their outrage at readers equally outraged and with pollyanna's cooing consolations to those already content with the world as they find it the question arises: who is communicating with whom? Aren't most of us reading writers we agree with merely to get confirmation or supportive arguments for conclusions we already hold? Or to learn what new issues should concern people of our degree of humanity and enlightenment? We wonder how many ideas are being exchanged

Since in the past few years the public at large discovered injustice, there has been a relentless appeal to our sense of it by the more responsible press. The issues are big and they are certainly urgent. Too often, however, as soon as we recognize the familiar appeal to our outrage, we tune out. It is not that we are indifferent

³² "New Magazine Chicago Has Debut Monday," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 2, 1964, 12; "New Magazine to Point out City's Culture: Daley Unit Plans Promotion," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 1, 1964, 2.

or blind to the many disasters we are careening toward, it is simply that we have run out of indignation and alarm and have grown bored.³³

Daggett Harvey, heir to the Harvey House hotel and hospitality industry fortune, served as chair of the CECDC's Cultural Advisory Committee in 1966. Under his leadership, the CECDC commissioned two major studies both published in 1966: "The Prospectus for Development of the Chicago Performing Arts Center" and "A Program for the Arts in Chicago." A menu of concerns and hopes for the arts in Chicago appeared in these two documents. One was a planning study for a massive, never-implemented performing arts center, and the other a detailed assessment of the current state of the arts with strong recommendations for the future executed by the John Price Jones Company, a major New York nonprofit consulting firm. Drawing on the resources of corporate and civic leaders, public opinion polls, models from other cities around the world, and the energies of Chicago's established arts community, the Cultural Advisory Committee of the CECDC presented the mayor with strategies for reaping economic benefits from the arts.

³³ William C. Wright, "Forcing a Smile," *Chicago Magazine* 3, (1970): i.

The vision for a major performing art center articulated in “The Prospectus for Development of the Chicago Center for the Performing Arts” grew out of the work of a small group concerned with “stimulating and fostering professional creative work in the performing arts in Chicago.”³⁴ Commencing in the fall of 1962, input came from a seemingly awkward array of attorneys, educators, critics, and artists and culminated in 1965 with the establishment of a not-for-profit corporation. The prospectus called for public support of a massive center that would generate an “interstimulation of the performing arts through mutual and vigorous exploration of the creative experience unique to the performing arts by the artists and general public of the greater metropolitan Chicago community.”³⁵

The center would be composed of separate divisions for theater, dance, and music and film and broadcasting arts. The divisions of theater, dance, and music would each have dedicated auditoriums with up to 3,200 seats. The film and broadcasting arts division would house seven soundstages, a 900-seat theater, and a screening room. A call for functionalism and a spacious use of natural materials drove the

³⁴ Joseph J. O’Shea and Weldon B. Bleiler, *Prospectus for Development of the Chicago Center of the Performing Arts, 1962-1966* (Chicago, IL, 1967), 7.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

architectural concept for the center. “Expansive the Center will unquestionably be; such unavoidable expansiveness, however, need not overwhelm and suppress,” the writers reasoned. Anticipating (and possibly responding to) charges that community-based arts initiatives should be the focus of any new city funding, planners downgraded neighborhood arts initiatives as secondary to the larger “cultural future of the city.” Only through a major, centrally-located venue, they reasoned, could the city cultivate appreciation for the arts, foster a habit of financial support, and train professional artists. Planners concluded that providing such a center, in fact, would make neighborhood arts programs all the more successful. If completed according to plan, the center would occupy nearly three square city blocks on Chicago’s near north side. With a proposed budget of \$489, 240 for the theater division alone, the colossus would have dwarfed most of Chicago’s arts organizations.³⁶

Placement of the center would accomplish cultural elevation as well. The center would revitalize a blighted area and create new, inspiring vistas:

³⁶ Ibid, 92-93.

Utilization of this site for the Center immediately would help accomplish the following: (1) elimination of a significant blighted area that has developed in that section of the city's near north side; (2) development, through redesign, of the potentially beautiful north and east shores of the Chicago River as it bends northward around Wolf Point toward the Kennedy Expressway entrance to the central area of the city; and (3) development into an associated line of beauty the riverfront of the city, extending westward past the Equitable and the Sun-Times and Daily News buildings, Marina City and its National Design Center, and the Merchandise Mart.³⁷

By contributing to the "development of the urban area's aesthetic potential" through the various divisions of the center, planners argued that they mimicked the collaborative efforts of the commercial, financial, legal, and political sectors devoted to economic development. Just as cooperative efforts had worked to increase the city's stature in business, so too, with cooperation, could Chicago's cultural stature rise.

At a symposium held at the Hull House Theater with CECDC Cultural Advisory Committee members, many considered the center idea flawed because it did not grow organically from positive theater activities happening in the city at the time. An alternative scheme presented would have created seven small community-based professional theaters located in neighborhoods around the city that

³⁷ Ibid, 11.

could incorporate local concerns into their artistic mission and productions. Several attendees critiqued the inherent class bias guiding the development of such a major institution from whole cloth. Keith Neilson, a very well-respected Chicago playwright, concluded:

[CECDC committee member Richard Ross] to me made the one irrefutable argument for the resident theater when he said the kind of theater that is built must be of the type that will be funded by the people who have money. So we're stuck with this kind of thing. If that is where the money is, then the taste of this social group will dictate the sort of theater that we have. In this thing called culture, there are at least two kinds of culture. There is a creative kind of culture in which new ground is being broken and new things done. But there is also institutional culture, such as museums and symphonies and operas, all of which are fine and interesting and necessary but are not doing anything novel or exciting.³⁸

Key figures from Chicago's theater community were rebuking the top-down approach and felt that if built, such a large-scale center would be an artistic disaster.

The press responded with measured enthusiasm for the proposed new building. Theater critic William Leonard placed the initiative in the context of private efforts afoot to improve Chicago's theater scene. He pondered the significance of City Hall's concern: "Perhaps times really

³⁸ Charles Booth, "Symposium on a Chicago, Professional, Resident Theater " *Intermission Magazine*, (1966): 11.

are changing. There definitely is an awareness that something has been missing on the Chicago scene. When City Hall admits as much, especially in a city with a City Hall as strong as this one, you can bet that something will be done about it.”³⁹ While its grand scale seemed to fit nicely with Daley’s “Make No Little Plans” philosophy for the city, it never materialized. The bylaws laid the responsibility for proceeding from the planning stage to materialization squarely at the feet of the CECD and Daley, and no additional steps were ever taken.

The John Price Jones Company survey, conducted between May 26, 1965 and May 31, 1966, presented a snapshot of arts activity in Chicago and made recommendations on the ways that city government could “strengthen cultural opportunities for all Chicagoans.”⁴⁰ The study considered a range of art forms and venues around the city. Delineating the state of the arts, the report made note of local activities and comparisons to national and international trends in the arts. The establishment of a permanent resident professional theater, for example, emerged as a major concern of those surveyed. Seventy-five percent of the “Random Public” the Jones Company interviewed held the

³⁹ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁰ Daggett Harvey, *A Program for the Arts in Chicago: A Report for the Mayor’s Committee for Economic and Cultural Development* (Chicago, IL, 1966), i.

opinion that additional physical facilities were “desirable,” thirty-five percent indicated that additional facilities were “much needed.” Asked whether additional facilities for theater or other art forms should be “located in a central complex or within the general Chicago Area,” the public responded overwhelmingly in favor of smaller-scale individual buildings dispersed around the city: sixty percent versus just over twenty-seven percent for a central complex.⁴¹

The major recommendations made by the Jones Company combined a mix of immediate capital investments and long-term administrative strategies designed to help Chicago develop its potential as a cultural center. The capital investments included new facilities for a major resident professional theater and museums of contemporary art and contemporary crafts. The recommendations for the establishment of new facilities took advantage of efforts already afoot to fill voids. More than two years before the survey, for example, a group incorporated The Gallery of Contemporary Art of Chicago as a nonprofit educational organization. The Gallery of Contemporary Art (renamed the Museum of Contemporary Art) sought to supplement the mission of

⁴¹ Ibid, 158.

the Art Institute of Chicago by displaying new works made by local and international artists.⁴²

Significantly, the first step to improve Chicago's cultural life, according to the Jones Company and many others in the arts community, needed to be the establishment of an arts council. They recommended: "That a Chicago Arts Council be established to develop, coordinate, and facilitate the efforts . . . and to assist these autonomous organizations in carrying out joint efforts such as education, audience-building, and the initiation of new enterprises and services in the arts."⁴³ An arts council would serve the people of Chicago, cultural organizations, and the city's artists. They suggested an administrative budget of \$83,000 in the first year increasing to \$115,000 in the second. The key advantage would be the ability of the council to "speak as one voice" in public discussions on the arts and in relation to business, labor, education, and religious groups. The Chicago Community Trust presented "Overview of the Cultural Arts in Chicago" in 1974. This report focused on pessimism in Chicagoans' perception of the cultural life of the city. It asked thirty-four arts and cultural leaders about

⁴² Ibid, 89-118.

⁴³ Ibid, 119.

problems in the arts and sought recommendations about what the city could do to improve the situation. Again the recommendation for the establishment of an arts council surfaced, but this time with clear dissenting opinions. Major institutions, citing differences in needs and preexisting relationships among cultural organizations, felt that a council was unneeded and actually posed a potential threat to fundraising efforts.⁴⁴

A year later, in 1975, the Illinois Arts Council presented a draft staff report entitled “A Proposal for the Illinois Arts Council to Create the Chicago Arts Advisory Committee.” The Illinois Arts Council established a three-year pilot program charged with increasing the financial support of the community’s cultural institutions, working toward the development of new audiences, and developing cooperation and coordination, where helpful, between arts institutions.

Conclusion

In Chicago, the state had taken the lead, doing what local organizations could not and what local politicians would not. It took the City of Chicago a full ten years before the recommendation for the

⁴⁴ Ibid, 95.

establishment of an arts council came to fruition. On November 26, 1975, Daley presented to city council an ordinance establishing the Chicago Council on the Fine Arts, charging it with the “development and support of the arts in the City of Chicago.” The first appointed fifteen members of the Council on Fine Arts came from an assortment of institutional types, sizes, and artistic traditions, not all devoted to the “arts.”

Between 1955 and 1976, the infrastructure for municipal support of the arts underwent a dramatic change—from a hyper-focus on downtown and the interests of a small group of civic elites to a broad-based representative committee of practitioners and systematic surveys of public opinion. Richard J. Daley’s administration pursued arts policy as arts patronage. While many historians have sought to understand the nature of Daley’s legend and political influence on housing policy, urban planning, civil rights, and national politics, Daley’s influence on the arts and cultural landscape was significant and helped to pave the way for greater municipal support of the arts.

CHAPTER THREE

Art to the People: The Illinois Arts Council and the Expansion of Chicago's Arts Infra-Structure

Introduction

President John F. Kennedy's administration set in motion the establishment of a permanent source of federal support for the arts in the United States. Though contemporary commentators made much of the prominence of the ceremonial inclusion of artists in the early days of Kennedy's presidency—Robert Frost's recitation of a poem along with the presence of painters Franz Kline and Mark Rothko at the inauguration, cellist Pablo Casals' performance at the White House to honor Puerto Rico, the President and First Lady playing host to the French Minister of Culture Andre Malraux—a true national plan for cultural policy did not materialize until President Kennedy hired August Heckscher as special consultant on the arts to assess the current state of governmental support and make recommendations for how that support could be deepened. This chapter examines the establishment of

the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) as a new statewide arts agency.

Contending with philosophical and budgetary challenges from state legislators, IAC succeeded in rapidly expanding its reach and influence. Undertaking the first systematic assessment of the health of the state's cultural infrastructure, IAC opened new pathways of access to the arts, supported the creation of new community-based arts organizations, and acted as a conduit for national programs and best practices in the arts.

The Sunk Costs of the Federal Art Project

With the demise of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project in 1943, the United States government discontinued investments in various programs and institutions. Between 1935 and 1939, the Federal Art Project operated programs in thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia; produced over 95,000 original paintings, prints, mosaics, and sculptures; nearly 350,000 posters; over 250,000 photographs; lent artworks to over 11,000 organizations; established fifty community arts centers; and documented American decorative, provincial, and folk art dating back to the country's founding; and mounted exhibitions and teaching activities that reached an estimated

11 million Americans.¹ Yet, in the years immediately following the program's dissolution, across the country most organizations and programs established and sustained with the support of the Federal Art Project immediately shuttered or simply withered and disappeared over time. Even much of the artwork produced was lost, destroyed, forgotten, or sold by weight—pennies for a pound—as administrators “wrapped-up” the program.²

There was, in fact, a strong lobbying effort led by a disparate array of supporters of the Federal Art Project who believed that the federal government should remain engaged in a proactive effort to support the arts at a significant scale. In May 1939, Nelson Rockefeller, trustee of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, wrote to the Congressional Subcommittee on the Value of the Art Program, arguing for the continuation of the program as a component of the WPA. In his letter, Rockefeller argues that the Federal Art Project had succeeded in

¹ Holger Cahill, “Federal Art Project Works Progress Administration,” *Frames* 986, 992-993, *National WPA/FAP: Summary and Recommendations for Continuation*, 1939.

² Holger Cahill, “Federal Art Project Works Progress Administration.” *Frames* 986, 992-993. *National WPA/FAP: Summary and Recommendations for Continuation*, 1939; Cahill recounts that the Procurement Division sold many “first-class” paintings as canvas by weight for as little as eight cents per pound and that many were eventually resold through small galleries to collectors, see Oral History Interview with Holger Cahill, 1960 Apr. 12 and Apr. 15. Holger Cahill Papers, Archives of American Art.

revealing a new potency in the relationship between artist and the public that drew together the “scattered creative efforts of this country into a truly significant art movement.”³ He cited the program’s investments in Colonial Williamsburg and the development of the Index of American Design, in particular, as critical projects that solidified the “richness and variety of [the American] cultural background” and would help to displace the prevalence of European references for future generations of American artists and citizens alike. In the closing of his statement to Congress, Rockefeller warned that the benefits of the Federal Art Project could be undone:

To discontinue or even to restrict the great, all-embracing activities of the Federal Art Project at the present time would be—I believe—a measure of extremely short-sighted economy, both from the human and cultural point of view....Sudden cessation or change in the federal sponsorship would inevitably stop in mid-stream a movement that has the greatest possibilities of future development, a movement that has won the confidence of critics and the public in all parts of our nation, to say nothing of the esteem abroad. The Federal Art Projects represent a public investment which more than amply repays the public and will continue to pay dividends to all future Americans.⁴

³ Nelson Rockefeller, "Statements to Congressional Sub-Committee on the Value of the Art Program, 1939," p. Reel 1105, Frames 981-983, National WPA/FAP: Summary and Recommendations for Continuation, 1939.

⁴ Ibid, Reel 1105, Frames 981-983.

The National Federation of Settlements' board of directors issued a similar statement of support. While more circumspect than Rockefeller in its assessment of the quality of work produced in the program, the Federation nevertheless saw the program as filling demonstrated needs for artists and communities around the country:

The allocation of services of a considerable number of unemployed professional people and artists to neighborhoods in which the unemployed live is to this Board a particularly sound principle. Settlement workers know, as a result of fifty years of service spent in depressed areas in different parts of the United States, that such localities are pitifully understaffed in the fields of medicine, nursing, recreation direction and leadership in music, art and handicraft, dance, drama, literature, science, and economics and social meetings.... [Our] experience shows that with proper administration safeguards, a sound and advancing scheme to raise the level of the cultural life of the nation can be devised and put into operation. We therefore urge the Federal Government to allocate monies to be used as grants in aid to continue to employ teachers and practitioners of the arts, education, and recreation of high competence.⁵

The National Federation of Settlements' statement echoes Nelson Rockefeller's support of the Federal Art Project in arguing that the continuation of the Federal Art Project would avoid "a relapse into the

⁵ "Resolution Concerning the W.P.A. Federal Art Project Adopted by Prominent Organizations: National Federation of Settlements, 1939," p. Reel 1105, Frames 1013-1016, Report, National WPA/FAP: Summary and Recommendations for Continuation.

cultural barrenness” and a tragic wasting of the talents of artists sustained through the Depression.⁶ Additional resolutions in support came from the Young Women’s Christian Association, the Western Arts Association, the Council of the American Library Association, and the Fine Arts Federation of New York, leading educators and social workers, and an assortment of media outlets. However, though widely championed for creating a “national arts consciousness, a greater appreciation of the fine and applied arts, and [contributing] to the cultural development of the country,” Congress said “no.”⁷

Endowing the Nation's Cultural Life

Hired by President Kennedy as special consultant on the arts in 1962, August Heckscher conducted a thorough investigation of governmental support of the art and produced *The Arts and the National Government*, an investigative report with recommendations for the arts aimed at “raising the standards and encouraging the fullest use of the opportunities.”⁸ The report considered the impact of current tax policy on the arts, including income taxes, tax deductions for contributions to

⁶ Ibid, Reel 1105, Frame 1016.

⁷ Ibid, Reel 1105, Frames 1013-1016

⁸ August Heckscher, *The Arts and the National Government: A Report to the President* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), v-3.

the arts, admissions taxes paid by cultural institutions, professional tax deductions, and tax treatment of copyrights. The report's recommendations forged new ground in conceptualizing an explicit structure for the federal government's ongoing investment in the cultural life of the nation.⁹

Possibly as significant as its recommendations for new policy, is Heckscher's thorough cataloging of the various ways that the federal government was already engaged in supporting the arts. Indirectly and directly, the federal government exerted significant influence on American cultural institutions and the ways Americans encountered the arts as practitioners and patrons. He documented at least forty bills

⁹ The Kennedy administration's first significant investment of political will in support of the arts actually involved deploying Labor Secretary Arthur J. Goldberg to intercede in a dispute between the American Federation of Musicians and the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1961. Conflicts with musician and stagehand unions had threatened the Metropolitan Opera's seasons for decades, and Goldberg was able to negotiate a respite. On his return, Secretary Goldberg made a plea for government and private subsidy of the performing arts in the United States that spurred President Kennedy to appoint a special consultant on the arts to explore current and prospective ways that the federal government might support the cultural life of the nation. Mark Bauerlein and Ellen Grantham, *National Endowment for the Arts: A History, 1965-2008* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2008), 5-12; "Opera Suit Opens over 'Canned Music'," *New York Times*, December 2, 1938, 26; "Labor Pacts near with 'Met' Opera: Settlement of Differences That Threaten Opening Is Expected Soon," *New York Times*, November 14, 1944, 19; Ross Parmenter, "Petrillo Makes a Decision... His Order Overrules Local 802 Resistance to Taping of Philharmonic Concerts," *New York Times*, December 24, 1950, 47; Taubman Howard, "Opera May Be Shut by Wage Disputes," *New York Times*, April 15, 1953, 39.

before the United States Congress during the period of his research that involved the arts in some manner.

Tax policy shaped the behaviors of arts managers, faced with balancing operational budgets; ticket-buyers; contributors to cultural organizations; and artists, struggling to make ends meet from their creative talents and passions. Diplomacy and the competitive projection of American democratic values around the world fueled ongoing cultural exchanges and intercourse with other nations, friend and foe alike. Washington, D.C. held the unique position as a national cultural monument with major cultural organizations, a coordinated architectural plan, and extensive public programming. Heckscher found that existing government programs and policies intersected with the arts in the acquisition and display of art by various agencies and oversight of design standards in everything from print materials to the architecture of government buildings. Arts and cultural programs were already an integral, if fragmented, component of American statehood.¹⁰

However, in his assessment of the governmental impact on the cultural environment, Heckscher forged new ground in defining a role for the federal government by connecting the arts to the revitalization of

¹⁰ Heckscher, 35.

the country's urban centers. In assessing the governmental impact on the cultural environment of the nation, he highlights the importance of urban planning and design and the vitality of community life and critiques the made repeated reference to the disruptive nature of urban renewal efforts in metropolitan areas across the country. "The urgency of slum clearance," he warns, "often means that a wrecking crew destroys in the process a humanly scaled and intricately woven community life."¹¹

Critical of the implementation of urban renewal, Heckscher nevertheless affirms and infuses the arts into the central purpose of the Housing Act of 1949 to establish "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American." In the report, Heckscher emphasizes the need to protect the fabric of community life and the urban environment, and argues for a deeper connection between the logic of historic preservation and protection of open spaces and investments in the infrastructure of cultural amenities at the neighborhood level across the nation. This emphasis led to Heckscher's admonishment of the country's approach, especially for the case of public housing. The language in authorizing legislation over-focused on providing housing

¹¹ Ibid, 10.

distinguished by its “serviceability, efficiency, economy, and stability,” and the avoidance of “elaborate or extravagant design of materials.”

These criteria, he determined, had led to a false conclusion that public housing developments by law had to be reduced to concrete boxes void of amenities and services. While believing that large-scale urban renewal projects were the only practical and effective way to address urban decay, for Heckscher argues that “recognition by the Urban Renewal Administration that plans should be concerned with historic preservation, with the provision of such public services *and* amenities such as theaters, libraries, and cultural centers, and with standards of good architectural design, is important.”¹²

Envisioning a National Cultural Infrastructure

Heckscher envisioned an integrated national cultural infrastructure. He considered provisions for new dual-purpose facilities throughout the country as well as in Washington, D.C.; urban renewal and community development programs that included planning for cultural amenities; as well as public works and National Park Service programs that engaged the arts and artists. Heckscher identified the

¹² Ibid, 10.

lack of proper cultural facilities as possibly the most important impediment to developing significant performing arts programs throughout the country. Heckscher's recommendations proposed interweaving new arts and cultural assets into other federal building projects as a means of strengthening the national cultural infrastructure and avoiding exorbitant additional capital expenditures. For the building boom projected for schools and universities through the 1970s, Heckscher saw a mutually beneficial opportunity to invest in school auditoriums so they might have the capacity to mount professional quality arts performances and meet the needs of the community as a whole, playing expanded cultural and civic roles, in addition to their educational role.¹³

President Kennedy accepted Heckscher's core recommendation to establish a thirty-person advisory council on the arts. He charged the council with planning "permanent procedures and programs" for the federal government to advance the arts and address the deteriorating financial position of the nation's symphony orchestras, opera and ballet companies, and the weaknesses of professional theater.¹⁴ Despite

¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁴ Ibid, 33.

demand from growing American audiences, many long-established major organizations were mired in labor disputes and lacked the capital resources needed to upgrade facilities while providing living wages to professional artists. "Art is no exception to the rule in human affairs," Kennedy reasoned, "that of needing a stable and ample financial and institutional base." Kennedy argued: "The concept of the public welfare should reflect cultural as well as physical values, aesthetic as well as economic considerations. We have agencies of the Government which are concerned with the welfare and advancement of science and technology, of education, recreation and health. We should now begin to give similar attention to the arts."¹⁵ As a part of his charge, Kennedy cites the need for state-wide arts councils, rural and urban community cultural centers and protection of the interests of the United States at home and abroad: "It is supremely important that we fulfill our Nation's destiny in making the most complete and most effective use of our creative and artistic capabilities, both to assure our national well-being and to enhance the appreciation of our culture abroad."¹⁶ The membership of the council had not been named at the time of Kennedy's

¹⁵ Ibid, 33.

¹⁶ Ibid, 34.

assassination. President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 into law on September 29, 1965.

The final act that brought the Endowments into being projected lofty aspirations for the government. The committee was filled with powerhouse intellectuals steeped in the western canon. Members included: Roger L. Stevens, President Kennedy's arts adviser; Elizabeth Ashley, actress; Leonard Bernstein, famed conductor; Anthony A. Bliss, president of the Metropolitan Opera Association; David Brinkley, National Broadcasting Company news commentator; Albert Bush-Brown, president of the Rhode Island School of Design; Agnes deMille, choreographer; Rene d'Harnoncourt, director of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Ralph Ellison, writer; Paul Engle, poet and teacher; R. Philip Hanes Jr., president of the Arts Council of America; Reverend Gilbert Hartke, director of the Speech and Drama Department at the Catholic University of America; Eleanor Lambert, fashion designer; Dr. Warner Lawson, dean of the College of Fine Arts of Howard University; William Pereira, architect; Gregory Peck, actor; Richard Rodgers, composer; David Smith, sculptor; Oliver Smith, scenic designer and producer; Isaac Stern, violinist; George Stevens Sr., film director-

producer; James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Houston Museum of Art; Otto Wittmann, director of the Toledo Museum of Art; Minoru Yamasaki, architect; and Stanley Young, executive director of the American National Theater and Academy.

The language of the act situates the United States within a vague hierarchy of nations, where recognition as a “high civilization” requires a balanced portfolio of accomplishment across various fields of human endeavor. An assessment of the degree to which this civilization has delivered humanity to a higher state of being is a central concern. The Act “finds and declares”:

(1) that the encouragement and support of national progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts, while primarily a matter for private and local initiative, is also an appropriate matter of concern to the Federal Government;

(2) that a high civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone but must give full value and support, to the other great branches of man's scholarly and cultural activity;

(3) that democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens and that it must therefore foster and support a form of education designed to make men masters of their technology and not its unthinking servant;

(4) that it is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and add to programs for the advancement of the humanities

and the arts by local, State, regional, and private agencies and their organizations;

(5) that the practice of art and the study of the humanities requires constant dedication and devotion and that, while no government can call a great artist or scholar into existence, it is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent;

(6) that the world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit; and

(7) that, in order to implement these findings, it is desirable to establish a National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities and to strengthen the responsibilities of the Office of Education with respect to education in the arts and the humanities.¹⁷

The establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 spurred an unprecedented articulation and expansion of the country's arts infrastructure. Addressing fears over the creation of a centralized cultural bureaucracy that acted alone and where Washington, D.C. dictated how funds should be spent, the legislation required the

¹⁷ "An Act: To Provide for the Establishment of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities to Promote Progress and Scholarship in the Humanities and the Arts in the United States, and for Other Purposes," in *79 Stat. 845 (1965) Public Law 89-209*, ed. 89 Congress (1965).

establishment of state arts agencies (SAA) as well as matching state legislative appropriations. While these stipulations assured national reach, local control, and a degree of broadbased political support, there was not a clear vision for how these new agencies would operate beyond regranting to local cultural organizations.

In the first few years, most states took advantage of small NEA planning grants to develop missions and programmatic structures but adhered to NEA guidelines that defined eligible grantees as 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations; established disciplinary categories; and gave primacy to expertise codified by academic credentials and affiliation with elite institutions. Prior to 1965, only eight states had an SAA, but by 1974 all fifty states, Washington, D.C., and four United States territories had created these governmental agencies.¹⁸

According to economist Julia F. Lowell, the particular nature of the stipulations and assumptions that defined the startup phase of the NEA had the effect of creating a national infrastructure disconnected from community interests or concern for cultivating new audiences. Most early funding went to symphony orchestras, opera and ballet

¹⁸ NEA Research Division, *State Arts Agencies in 1974: Present and Accounted For* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 1978), 5.

companies, and major art museums. On the one hand, the focus of these organizations on presenting canonical Western European artworks aligned with the values of the white, affluent, highly educated individuals who typically populated the councils and panels responsible for decision-making and oversight of SAAs. On the other hand, these organizations had the administrative capacity be accountable for public monies. Through their board members these organizations also benefited from powerful social networks that could mobilize influential individuals to lobby for preferential support. This framework remained in place for the first decade of the NEA's existence.¹⁹

By the mid-1970s, the rise of a “populist critique” found newly empowered constituencies more forcefully raising questions about the “for what” and “for whom” of public support for the arts. According to Lowell, the NEA's early focus on symphonies, opera and ballet companies, and large art museums drew criticism for ignoring the artmaking traditions and accomplishments of other groups. Related to this, the focus on legacy organizations constrained the definition of arts audiences. The primacy of the tastes of highly-educated, white, urban

¹⁹ Julia F. Lowell, *State Arts Agencies 1965-2003: Whose Interests to Serve* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004), 5-8.

elites was challenged by individuals and organizations invested in cultivating the arts among a broader, more representative sample of the American public. The NEA responded to these criticisms with new programmatic initiatives aimed at rural and ethnic constituents and some SAAs further decentralized by delegating greater decision-making authority to local arts agencies.²⁰

Shaping a Statewide Cultural Infrastructure for Illinois

In Illinois, a Governor's Advisory Commission formed in 1963 worked for the better part of a year to develop recommendations for the creation of a new government agency with "the power and responsibility to stimulate public understanding and recognition of the

²⁰ Lowell, 11. Evidence suggests that gender also played a significant role in the reorientation of public support for the arts through the National Endowment. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of women in the artist labor force increased 162% (from 157,165 in 1970 to 232,726 in 1980), while men increased their numbers only 53% during the same period. The role of female public administrators in the arts has not been examined. In 1976, a survey of state arts agency directors revealed a significant turnover rate with 36% of executive directors reporting having served a year or less. An oral history interview with Sophie Chandler Consagra, executive director of the Delaware State Arts Council (DSAC) from 1972-1977, suggests a concern for breaking boundaries: "My hope for the DSAC, besides keeping it alive, was to heighten the awareness of the arts in their diversity and in their creators, the artists themselves, which at one point I referred to as 'an endangered species.' My state was conservative and I felt that maybe the shock of the new might sensitize attitudes to change and social awareness," see Susan Neumann, "Oral History Interview with Sophie Chandler Consagra, Executive Director of Delaware Arts Council, 1972-1977, 2005," State Arts Agencies Oral History Project; NEA Research Division, *Women and Minorities in Artist Occupations* (1983).

importance of Illinois cultural institutions, to improve the climate for the arts and artists in Illinois and to encourage the use of local resources for the development and support of the arts.” In 1964, an Executive Order established the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) as an agency of the state.

IAC’s focus in Chicago was on equitable access to cultural resources, especially “underserved populations,” creating an important new source of support and leverage for cultural activists in the city. Drawing on the national discourse on the role of the government in supporting the nation’s culture, in line with local and national civil rights and race relations developments, field administrators developed funding programs and special initiatives to expand the cultural infrastructure of the state. Ultimately, IAC’s implementation of the federal measures on increasing access to underserved populations and establishing more egalitarian decisionmaking presented a disruptive alternative to Mayor Richard J. Daley’s Committee for the Cultural and Economic Development of Chicago and its focus on courting white civic elites, suburbanites, and would-be tourists. IAC instigating the establishment of the Council on Fine Arts worked to decouple Chicago’s

nascent municipal arts subsidy programs from the interests of a bounded community of white elites.

The establishment of the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) was part of the larger national discussion concerning governmental support of the arts. Spurred by Heckscher's *The Arts and the National Government* (1963), Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, Jr. established an advisory commission in 1963 to explore the relevancy of and opportunities for support of the arts throughout the state. IAC took advantage of the planning grants offered from Washington, D.C. to help newly established SAAs study the arts landscape. IAC members visited every Illinois community with a population greater than 5,000. Members convened local meetings in 102 counties throughout the state to gather information from civic leaders on the status of current cultural facilities, staffing levels, the intersection of arts and public education, and other germane issues. The resulting report documented the centrality of Chicago in the cultural life of the state. IAC members found that of the state's twenty-one established cultural organizations, all but one was located in Chicago. In a series of articles exploring the work of the newly formed council, *Chicago Tribune* reporter Thomas Willis found that many in the state were circumspect about the ability of the state to deliver a

fundamentally better alternative to the “private patronage of independent, well educated people.” Reviewing the tally, which included one major symphony orchestra, ten resident professional theater companies, two resident professional opera companies, and four resident professional dance companies, Willis found that the report overstated the number of existing cultural institutions as some in the count were recently defunct or far from professional.²¹

The Illinois General Assembly established the IAC with the power and responsibility to:

1. Stimulate greater governmental and public awareness and appreciation of the importance of the arts to the people of Illinois;
2. Encourage and facilitate greater and more efficient use of governmental and private resources for the development and support of the arts;
3. Encourage and facilitate opportunities for Illinois residents to participate in artistic activities;
4. Promote the development of Illinois artists, arts institutions, community organizations sponsoring arts activities, and audiences; and
5. Assess the needs of the arts, artists, arts institutions and community organizations

²¹ Thomas Willis, "Cornucopia Visions in Arts Bill," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 17, 1965, F9-10.

sponsoring arts activities, and of the people of this State relating to the arts.²²

These goals mirrored those of many states around the country as they established as governmental the duty for the improvement in the financial health of cultural organizations, development of new strategies for more effective communications about the arts, and investment in the elevation of artistic standards.²³

The expansion of the state appropriation for the Illinois Arts Council was rapid but hard-fought with members of the State Senate challenging the budgetary and philosophical grounds for increased support. After clarifying overarching agency goals, the leadership of the Illinois Arts Council sought to expand its resources promptly, requesting a two-year state appropriation of \$500,000 for programming from 1967 through 1969. However, the request came in the midst of billion-dollar budget crisis in the state and State Senators denied the full request. Still, between 1965, its first year of fully implemented programming, and 1971, IAC's budget quadrupled from \$190,548 to \$851,057. While the federal contribution receded from a high of \$172,284 for 1967-

²² Ibid, F10.

²³ Thomas Willis, "Illinois Arts Review a Little Misleading," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 12, 1966, F7-8; Gail Stockholm, "How Art Council Movement Started; Some of Its Goals," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 4, 1966, 11.

1969, the state's contribution grew exponentially. IAC's state appropriation grew twelvefold in just six years, from \$50,000 in 1965-1967 to \$600,000 in 1970-1971.

The 1970-1971 state appropriation passed very narrowly, 31 to 7, just one vote over the required 30 votes needed. Republican Senators roiled against the increase, arguing against Democrats' positive assessments of broad social impact that arts spending had "gotten out of hand," and that if the developing trend of governmental support for the arts was ever going to be reversed, Senators should "kill this bill," refuse future requests for millions in arts investment, and focus on programs of higher priority. It is ironic that at the federal level, Republican President Richard Nixon reversed his negative position on government support of the arts and exerted significant influence in an effort to double the federal appropriation for the Endowments during the same budget period from roughly \$28 million to \$60 million. In a special press briefing, Nixon cited the Endowments' significant social impact, productive public-private partnerships, and the continuing need of the nation's major cultural organizations.²⁴

²⁴ George Tagge, "Pollack Warns Illinois Taxes May Rise Billion for Two Years," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 14, 1967, 5; Linda Winer, "Approve \$1.2 Million Arts Budget," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 23, 1971, 1-c3; Thomas Willis,

Illinois Arts Council Budget, 1965-1971

For the Fiscal Year(s) Ended June 30th	1965-1967	1967-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971
FUNDING SOURCES:				
State of Illinois	\$50,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$600,000
Federal	37,053	172,284	118,524	127,038
Community Sponsors	-	290,173	37,580	53,522
Private Grants	103,495	283,667	103,500	64,750
Miscellaneous Income	-	3,000	3,050	5,747
TOTAL	\$190,548	\$949,124	\$512,654	\$851,057
DISBURSEMENTS:				
Education/Special Program	\$25,084	\$53,499	\$45,843	\$92,235
Free Street Program	-	32,821	70,554	229,930
Performing Arts Program	34,493	558,844	188,865	282,750
Visual Arts Program	12,890	88,345	64,699	80,974
<i>Total Program Costs</i>	72,467	733,509	369,961	685,889
Administration Cost	118,081	215,615	142,693	165,168
TOTAL	\$190,548	\$949,124	\$512,654	\$851,057

Figure 3.1. Illinois Arts Council Budgets, 1965-1971. Source: Seven Year Report: Illinois State Arts Council.

In fact, it only took a year before the IAC submitted a \$1.2 million budget request to the state legislature for fiscal year 1974-1975, doubling the previous fiscal year's appropriation.²⁵ Ensuing budget battles highlighted philosophical disagreements on the rationale for government support of the arts while emphasizing the political dimensions. Upon taking office in Illinois Governor Dan Walker sought

"Government and the Arts: Subsidies for Symphonies," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 31, 1971, 1-a2; Howard Taubmans, "Full Fund for Arts Is Sought by Nixon," *New York Times*, January 16, 1971, 1.

²⁵ Illinois Arts Council, *Seven Year Report: State Arts Council* (Chicago, IL: IAC, 1973). In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the State's appropriation was \$19,799,300 (2007, a relative value of \$3,870,000 in 1971 dollars), see Samuel H. Williamson, "Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to present," *Measuring Worth*, 2015 [<http://www.measuringworth.com> accessed April 1, 2015].

to reverse emphatically the trend of increased state funding for the arts advanced by his predecessor, proposing cuts to current and future appropriations for the IAC. In January 1973, Walker insisted that IAC implement some "belt-tightening," encouraging reduction of expenses for consultants, printing and publications, and "unnecessary administrators and desk workers."²⁶ In July of 1973, he passed the forty percent reduction to IAC's appropriation approved in 1970. In his letter to the Senate, Walker wrote:

The item reduced is a new program to be undertaken this year by the Illinois Arts Council. Since submitting my budget, I have been persuaded that the program can be worthwhile, but the amount appropriated would not only double the Arts Council budget, it would be far more than could effectively be spent in the initial year of the program. By reducing the item to \$200,000, I believe the state will be increasing support to the arts in a manner consistent with the fiscal limitation which must be recognized.²⁷

The cuts caused an unprecedented uproar from the state's arts sector. A new alliance composed of representatives from sixty large and small arts organizations in Chicago formed, calling itself S.A.I.L. (Save the Arts

²⁶ Daniel Walker, "Letter to Leonard S. Pas, Jr., 1973," Illinois Arts Council Collection; Daniel Walker, "Letter to the Honorable Members of the Senate, 78th General Assembly, 1973," Illinois Arts Council Collection.

²⁷ Linda Winer, "Illinois Arts Council Submits Record Budget," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 17, 1973, 1-b6; Stanley M. Frechling, "Arts Council Budget," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 25, 1973, 12.

THESE ARE THE MAJOR POINTS IN THE FIGHT TO RESTORE THE \$1.2
MILLION TO THE ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC)

I. THE IAC EXPOSES YOUNG PEOPLE TO ARTS EXPERIENCES.

By making possible in-school concerts and lecture demonstrations, and reduced rates to arts events, the IAC has helped to alleviate cultural deprivation and has provided communication across the entire social economic spectrum.

II. THE IAC PROVIDES "SEED MONEY" NECESSARY FOR PROJECTS.

Their support has enabled arts organizations, institutions, "grass roots" arts organizations, and local artists to bring the arts to the people. Their recognition and encouragement of these groups has made possible federal and private funding.

The burden on private support is high, it will become an impossible task for private sectors to provide the support necessary for the arts should state support be cut.

If you don't get support for the arts on a state level, you won't get it anywhere!!

III. WITH A BUDGET CUT, ARTS ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE FORCED TO CUT BACK PROGRAMS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE IAC.

We all know of exciting and innovative programs, particularly those out-of-house and downstate ones, that will be in grave danger of being curtailed without state support.

These special projects have often lead to those which are now earning their own income and enriching the arts in Illinois. Shall there be no more new beginnings, no encouragement of new talent?

IV. THIS CUT WOULD BE A GIANT STEP BACKWARD

Regression in state support of the arts in Illinois "negates the critical need for the arts as a component of the quality of life for its population."

When New York spends 75¢ per person per year on the arts, and Alaska spends 33¢, where does Illinois stand when they spend 5¢ per person. . . and that was with the current \$600,000 budget. What then if that budget is cut by 17 per cent?

And how does that compare with Illinois spending \$113.85 per person per year on highways and 18¢ on improving the breed of Illinois Thoroughbreds?

3/73/100

Figure 3.2. Illinois Arts Council Budget Battle Advocacy Campaign Flyer, 1973. Illinois Arts Council Collection.

in Illinois League), and mounted a lobbying and letter-writing protest to the radical cuts.²⁸

The campaign gained critical allies, including the Lieutenant Governor Neil Hartigan. Representatives came from organizations such as the Organic Theater, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Mayor's Committee for the Cultural and Economic Development of Chicago, which promised to "button hole" every legislator in Springfield to protest the severity of cuts. Hartigan, a Democratic committeeman from Chicago, excoriated members of the Republican-controlled Senate Appropriations Committee and convinced them of the utility of greater investment in the arts of the state, not less. Hartigan blasted the committee with tagline argumentation for the arts: "Art is the cheapest economic catalyst;" "Cultural activities not only enrich our lives but leave a lasting legacy that becomes part of the fiber and fabric of the continuing heritage of Illinois;" "Art is not just for the elite—it is for everyone."²⁹ Together with a mobilized sector, Hartigan was able to sway the committee to restore IAC's funding to the \$1.2 million level. At the end of the year, the governor attempted in vain to mend fences by

²⁸ "Illinois Arts Council Budget Battle Advocacy Campaign Flyer, 1973," Illinois Arts Council Collection.

²⁹ "Hartigan Splits with Walker, Wins Vote on State Aid to Arts," *Chicago Daily News*, May 3, 1973, 4; Winer, "Illinois Arts Council Submits Record Budget," 1-b6.

planning a dinner for three hundred directors and trustees of major cultural institutions for the expressed purpose of “stimulating a dialog in order to determine what constitutes a major cultural institution and how such an organization should receive state support.” Arts organizations refused the invitation as a hollow peace offering and the governor cancelled the dinner.³⁰

IAC developed an operational orientation towards increasing the accessibility of the arts outside of Chicago. At the administrative level, S. Leonard Pas, Jr. served as IAC’s first executive director. Pas worked with Irwin in Quincy, Illinois before moving to Chicago where he consulted in the city’s Office of Urban Opportunities, an anti-poverty program. In an interview, Pas recalled that early in the work of the IAC, the major issue facing communities outside of Chicago was suitable space:

The first issue was to create another study of the facilities in the state where arts things might happen ..
.. I hired 3 people to move around the state, sort of like traveling salesman, and they went from town to town, to every county in the state, to look at where things might happen. We came out with some

³⁰ Frechling, 12; "Hartigan Splits with Walker, Wins Vote on State Aid to Arts," 4; "S.A.I.L. Set to Hit Arts Budget Cuts," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 20, 1973, B3; John Elmer, "Illinois Arts Council: Committee Expands Funding Bill," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1973, 2; Aaron Gold, "Tower Ticker," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 4, 1973, A2.

interesting findings. One of the findings was, there weren't a lot of venues, places where the arts could be presented. There weren't museums, galleries, theatres, on and on and on. So our first plan was devised to take the arts out of Chicago, in a lot of cases we had to import them from other places, or create them and move them out to nontraditional kinds of facilities.³¹

The challenge of inadequate space forced Pas and his staff to develop IAC programs that either were not facilities-dependent professional productions, such as artist residencies, or were flexible enough to be mounted in non-arts institutional venues, such as traveling exhibitions hosted by universities and community partners throughout the state. Under Pas, the IAC sponsored regional performances outside the city-limits. For example, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed at the Abraham Lincoln Chapter of the National Secretaries Association in Springfield; the Civic Music Association; the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; and Western Illinois University in Macomb; Lewis College in Lockport.

Beyond performances, IAC connected major downtown organizations with smaller organizations in outlying areas for technical

³¹ Maryo Ewell, "Oral History Interview with S. Leonard Pas, Jr., Executive Director of the Illinois Arts Council, 2005," p. 2-10, State Arts Agencies Oral History Project ; George M. Irwin, "Memorandum to John S. Edwards Concerning Chicago Symphony/Illinois Arts Council Programs, 1968," p. 2, Illinois Arts Council Collection.

consultancies. With funding from IAC, John Welch, assistant manager of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra engaged the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and the Mendelssohn Club in Rockford. The Symphony's director worked with Southern Illinois University, St. Louis Symphony, and the Missouri Arts Council to examine the feasibility of creating a new music festival in Edwardsville based on the successful Ravinia model. Edwardsville also provided services to the long-range planning committee of the Northwestern Symphony Orchestra in Des Plaines and the Peoria Symphony Orchestra, where strategies focused on broadening the organization's reach.³²

As with other state agencies, IAC gave its own shape to new federal funding programs. In 1968, the National Endowment for the Arts chair Roger L. Stevens implemented The Museum Purchase Plan. Developed in Washington, D.C., the program made available \$10,000 grants major museums to be used to purchase artwork by living American artists. The goal of the program was to expand the representation of American artists in the permanent collections of museums across the country, many of which had built their

³² Ewell, p. 4; "Two Downstate Concerts Added," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 31, 1964, G8; Weston Hatfield, *The Arts in Rural Illinois: Articles on Community Arts Development* (Springfield: Illinois Arts Council, 1979), passim.

international reputations on major founding collections of artworks by European masters.

In a letter soliciting advice and “personal connections,” the Illinois State Museum director Milton D. Thompson inquired to IAC board chair George Irwin about the best approach for securing a grant through the program. Irwin was the founder of the Quincy Symphony Orchestra and a longtime advocate for Illinois artists. Thompson was excited about the potential purchasing power the grant and matching funds would provide to his museum, writing “I am very conscious that the \$20,000 which would be generated by this \$10,000 grant would be of great significance to the purchasing program... allowing us to get a few oils of quality or even some small sculpture.”³³ Though Thompson acknowledged the beneficial opportunity to exhibit acquired works throughout the state, he had not committed to purchasing works by Illinois artists. Stevens’ program required only that institutions find local funds to match those provided by NEA grants and that a special panel of experts in the museum field be convened to develop program criteria and review all applications. IAC’s Irwin made concern for

³³ Milton D. Thompson, "Letter to George M. Irwin, 1967," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council.

purchasing the work of Illinois artists an explicit criterion of the program. In response to Thompson' inquiry concerning the program and the need to secure matching funds, Irwin offered a discretionary IAC grant and stressed consideration of the state's artists:

Assuming that you wish to do this, I am sure that you will want to give a heavy orientation to Illinois artists and/or artists having worked for a substantial period in Illinois, or spending their early years here. This is not especially restrictive from a quality standpoint, as this would give you a wide range of recognized artists from whom to choose.... Tying your project into availability throughout the state in traveling shows is certainly a good thing and would enhance a proposal, I am sure. There is a definite interest in the works of Illinois artists, as we have found with our four traveling exhibits of paintings, now completely booked into next June, having only become available in mid October.

Irwin also worked beyond IAC's grants program to support Chicago's major legacy arts organizations. Irwin was instrumental behind the scenes fostering connections between the state's arts organizations and powerful offices within the state's political hierarchy, including the Governor's office. In the case of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Irwin wrote personally to the Governor and the Illinois Department of Business and Economic Development, seeking special support from the state for a planned European tour. At other times, Irwin lobbied for

additional investment on behalf of all of Illinois' major arts organizations before foundation and corporate representatives.³⁴

Arts Policy and Race Relations in Chicago

The racial turmoil in Chicago also significantly influenced IAC's programmatic development. Through out the 1940s and 1950s, the city's white population seemed to grow only more resistant to the expanding presence of African Americans in the city and the mounting demands for equal opportunity and social justice from African American labor unions, old-guard civil rights institutions, and new organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality. Even as the city's political leadership gestured to inculcate racial problem-solving into the purview of city government with the establishment of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations in 1947, the colorline seethed instead of diminished. The nationally-broadcast Cicero Race Riot in the summer of 1951, sparked by whites ambushing an African American family moving

³⁴ George M. Irwin, "Letter to Louis Sudler, 1970," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council; George M. Irwin, "Letter to Illinois Governor Richard B. Ogilvie, 1970," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council; George M. Irwin, "Memorandum to George Ranney, Dave Sturges, and S. Leonard Pas, 1971," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council; George M. Irwin, "Letter to John Edwards, 1968," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council.

into a previously white apartment, left little question about the heated and entrenched nature of race relations in city.³⁵

In their work, *Confronting the Colorline: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago*, historians Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering judge the failure to make material progress with regard to race in housing and schools harshly, writing:

The formation of the civic credo and the role of the schools [as a reform institution] in it is a case study in moral failure of a high order, the story of how high ideals, originally espoused as creative instruments of civic self-criticism, came to be used as weapons of civic self-defense, obscuring the realities of injustice, community disruption, and human suffering.³⁶

Anderson and Pickering chart how whites' racial reasoning and hope for a leveling-off of African American population expansion had the effect of worsening race relations through the period. They write:

The disruptions arising from the expanding color line in Chicago had been subsumed under a civic credo that authoritatively asserted that the issue was best described as the Negro problem, with the emphasis on what was wrong with blacks; this problem was analogous to that previously faced by other ethnic, immigrant groups; democratic values and the formal functioning of institutions would, in due time,

³⁵ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), 372-378.

³⁶ Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 62.

produce equality of treatment for blacks; the worst was over, and the road ahead was incomparable smoother; and therefore, further progress depended on pursuing nonpartisan, majoritarian, consensual strategies in an atmosphere of civic calm.³⁷

A public discourse that privileged the “irrational fears of whites” and denigrated African Americans’ mounting activism as self-defeating “segregated-mindedness,” according to Anderson and Pickering, delivered a fundamental impasse as the Supreme Court deliberated on *Brown*. The opening of the Chicago Freedom Movement offered great promise conceptually.³⁸

The confrontation in the fall of 1965 between the organizing principals and methods of the southern Civil Rights Movement and Chicago’s virulent brand of northern racism was as dramatic as any that had take place in the South. In the fall of 1965, operating within the context of a new coalition of community-based civil rights organizations, the Chicago Freedom Movement recruited King to bring attention to conditions in the city and attempt to build a national discussion on the persistent effects of racism beyond the South. The uprising of Watts provided a perfect backdrop; King warned of the

³⁷ Ibid, 66.

³⁸ Ibid, 65.

potential for riots again in Chicago: “I say to the power structure in Chicago that the same problems that existed and still exist in Watts, exist in Chicago today, and if something isn’t done in a hurry, we can see a darkened night of social disruption.”³⁹ *The Kerner Report*, investigating the bevy of race riots in American cities between 1964 and 1967, would echo King’s assessment by summarizing the state of race relations in the United States as “moving towards two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal.” The Chicago Freedom Movement drew visibility and the framework of nonviolent protest from King’s presence, but was not to be. King was outmatched by the beguiling Daley, undone by an inability to expand the Chicago Freedom Movement with additional allies, and shaken by the depths of whites’ hostility and hatred toward African Americans.⁴⁰

The lackluster performance in Chicago exasperated pressures within the national Civil Rights Movement. King’s inability to deliver material changes in the face of the complexity of urban poverty in a major city like Chicago evidenced the limitations of nonviolent direct

³⁹ James R. Ralph, *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King, Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88.

⁴⁰ Harvard Sitkoff, *King: Pilgrimage to the Mountaintop* (New York Hill and Wang Press, 2009), 179-186; Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), passim.

action for a vocal segment of African American activists calling for greater militancy in the Freedom Struggle. Conversely, King's deepened engagement with issues of poverty, labor, and fair housing and inability to quell the cycle of urban riots generated powerful anxieties for middle-class whites, causing their retreat from support of the Civil Rights struggle.

On April 1, 1968 *Chicago Tribune's* editorial board presented an inflammatory conspiratorial narrative, purporting to shed light on the Communist siege King was planning and warned against white complacency:

The ambitious plans of these campus Bolsheviks might seem a little fanciful except that the Rev. Martin Luther King, supported by loud-mouthed black power agitators, is planning a massive march on Washington, also in April. King sanctimoniously advocated 'nonviolence' while clandestinely conspiring with the most violent revolutionaries in the black power movement.... King himself has threatened 'massive dislocation' of Washington and organized demonstrations to 'disrupt the functioning' of other major cities, including Chicago, which would be a curious manifestation of nonviolence.... Despite all this evidence of interlocking and concerted activity, the President's Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders headed by Gov. Kerner, had the effrontery or credulity to report that last summer's 164 disorders, of which eight were major and 33 were serious, 'were not caused by any organized plan or conspiracy.' In their eagerness to blame 'white

society' for black violence, these blind demagogues evidently didn't bother to read FBI Director Hoover's annual report, which said the Communist party could look back upon 1967 with satisfaction. 'Black power . . . has created a climate of unrest and has come to mean to many Negroes the power to riot, burn, loot, and kill,' Hoover reported 'This black power development is tailor made for the Communists. They have sowed the seeds of discord and hope to reap in 1968 a year filled with explosive racial unrest.'⁴¹

King's assassination ignited Chicago. Across the nation, over 120 cities experienced disorder. Whole segments of Chicago burned and continue to the present day to bear the scars of the riots that swept the city April 4 through 7, 1968. Thousands of rioters overwhelmed Chicago police, necessitating the mobilization of the National Guard. Widespread looting and fires affected the city's South and West sides, where teen rioters opened extended attacks on white-owned businesses and property, eliciting Mayor Daley's infamous "shoot to kill" order. In his book *Chicago '68*, historian David Farber details escalations that defined the riots and the layers of response after the riots that led to new city ordinances and federal laws to provided law enforcement greater power in responding to riots.⁴²

⁴¹ Wilkerson, 389; Editorial Board, "Ten Days to Shake America," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 1, 1968, 24.

⁴² David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 246-258.

In the aftermath of the riots, Daley turned to the arts seeking some semblance of cooling and reconciliation. IAC executive director Leonard Pas remembers meeting with Daley to discuss ways the arts might contribute to de-escalating tensions. In an interview, Pas recalls:

Martin Luther King was killed in that period, the late 60's, and a result of that the city [of] Chicago was in flames; there were major riots in Chicago. The then-Mayor (father of the current Mayor of the City of Chicago) called me into his office and asked me what we could do to help the city pacify—I don't think he used that word, but that's what he was talking about—in other words, create a better understanding, a better feeling for, living in the city, getting rid of the anger.⁴³

That discussion with Mayor Daley became the impetus for the IAC's investment in the development of the Free Street Theater program in partnership with artist Patrick Henry from The Goodman Theater.

Started in 1967 as a small youth outreach program, Pas and Henry made it a signature program for IAC. They established a multiracial, multiethnic troupe that used a “showmobile” to travel to Chicago's segregated neighborhoods to present original theatrical, dance, and music performances that engaged the issues of the day. Henry recalls the vision for the new program being to “cut through the layers of

⁴³ Ewell, 4.

political, social, and religious philosophy that have separated people from one another and to concentrate on the rhythms and energies common to all people.” Pas recalls the Free Theater program as emblematic of the IAC’s deepening “arts to people” orientation, which guided its work through the 1970s.



Figure 3.3 Headline on IAC Free Theater Program. Source: "Illinois Arts Council Brings Theatre to the People," Chicago Daily Defender, July 28, 1973, 7.

Redefining the State's Arts Audiences

In its focus on engaging underserved constituencies, the Illinois Arts Council supported programs to cultivate new audiences and provide opportunities for collaboration among the state's major organizations. IAC's implementation of a Museum Ticket Plan is an example of how the Council attempted to address, simultaneously, the boundaries to arts participation faced by individuals and the financial instability of major cultural organizations. In 1971, IAC facilitated a partnership between five Chicago museums concerned with reaching new audiences in underserved inner city neighborhoods. The program provided admissions vouchers for free attendance at The Field Museum of Natural History, The Chicago Historical Society, The DuSable Museum of African American History, The Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Art Institute of Chicago. IAC hired outreach workers to make personal community contacts and used ads in foreign language newspapers to build interest in the new program. The outreach workers had to overcome deep skepticism in many communities but eventually the ticket program took-off.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Beverly McGuffin, "Speech to the Midwest Museum Conference in St. Louis Missouri 1974," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council Collection.

During the first year and a half of the program's activity, some 500,000 tickets were dispensed by 200 agencies, including: Urban Progress Centers, libraries, Boys and Girls' Clubs, city departments, drug abuse and mental health centers, settlement houses, neighborhood centers, YW and YMCAs, churches, and childcare centers. The largest distribution centers were the Chicago Federation of Settlements, the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity, and the Department of Human Resources.

IAC tracked the distribution patterns of the program and noted that black and Hispanic neighborhoods had far lower utilization rates than the city's German and Polish communities. IAC implemented new marketing strategies that focused on vividly-informational posters, a cross-promotional events calendar, and transportation guides to help individuals travel to unfamiliar sections of the city. In order to reach an even broader audience, IAC enclosed admission vouchers in the mailings of the Council for Community Services, which reached over 300,000 households in contact with social service agencies through the

Chicagoland area. The program became a national model, inspiring similar programs in Seattle and Los Angeles.⁴⁵

In 1966, Governor Kerner gave IAC the responsibility for cultural planning for the Illinois Sesquicentennial celebration. Governor Kerner hoped it would be “the beginning of a renaissance” and positioned strong arts programming as a spur to business growth. The IAC formed an Arts Committee with subcommittees for Architecture, Art, Music, Theatre, Writing, and Special Events. The stated goals of these committee were “first, to give Illinois artists an opportunity to express themselves publicly, to show the layman what was currently being produced; second, to benefit the Illinois community by giving it a chance to share in the artists’ commitment to the Fine Arts.” The committees were to focus on the “[p]ersonal involvement of artists and public...so that in the process of participation something better could emerge—something enriched, sharpened and of benefit to the future of the State.” A concerted effort was made by the committee to represent the history of African Americans in the state. Over time several African Americans

⁴⁵ Michel Brustin, "Letter to E. Leland Webber, 1975," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council Collection; Barbara Plate, "Letter to Michele Brustin, 1975," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council Collection ; Sandra Dilley, "Tickets for Everyone," *Arts in Common Newsletter, Associated Councils of the Arts* January 1973.

served on committees and subcommittees, such as John H. Sengstacke, *Chicago Daily Defender* editor and publisher.⁴⁶

IAC was instrumental in fostering broader racial and ethnic representation in the cultural landscape of the state. The Arts Committee commissioned African American sculptor Richard Hunt to create a work honoring John Jones, the first African American official elected to the Cook County Board of Supervisors. Chicago's history as home to the blues was represented in William Russo's commissioned composition "Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra." Poet Gwendolyn Brooks judged a statewide poetry contest. The Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) offered a writers workshop and a visual arts exhibition as a component of the festivities; the program called "Uh Livin' Experience," honored DuSable's legacy. At a gala dinner held in Chicago, attendees wore costumes impersonating Father Jacques Marquette, Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, U.S. Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams and other Illinois figures. Descendants of early Chicagoans were also honored at the

⁴⁶ Helen Tieken Geraghty, "Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission Art Committee Final Report, No Date," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council; "Sengstacke Named to State Group," *Chicago Daily Defender*, October 18, 1965, 4.

dinner, including Du Sable's great-great-great grandnephew and Ida B. Wells' daughter, among other noted Illinoisans.

Recognition for Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, a trader of African descent, as the founder of Chicago and the development of a memorial honoring him as the area's first permanent non-Native American settler was one of the first and most significant projects planned for the Illinois Sesquicentennial celebrations. A Du Sable Heritage Committee researched all known references and attempted to locate his burial site. Believed to have been of French and Haitian heritage, Du Sable prospered as a trader between 1774 and 1800, when he sold his homestead and moved to Missouri, where he died in 1818. *Chicago Defender* columnist, Doris E. Saunders noted that "DuSable has long been ignored in the City where he settled, so this memorial stone is long overdue."⁴⁷ Indeed, though honored with a plaque as early as 1850, Du Sable was long denied recognition as the city's founder. Christopher Reed documents African Americans' efforts to have Du Sable included as a central figure in the general narrative of the city's historical evolution as a part of the Century of Progress exposition. According to Reed, beginning in 1928, The National De Saible Memorial Society

⁴⁷ Doris E. Saunders, "Confetti," *Chicago Daily Defender*, October 9, 1968, 14.

encountered layers of opposition from whites, including racial aversion to officially recognizing black contributions and resistance against the displacement of the image of Fort Dearborn as the city's singular founding institution. In addition to these challenges, the Memorial Society found itself with little capital to implement ideas, and also competing with other African American groups likewise advocating for inclusion in the proceedings. Reed concludes that the effort laid the groundwork for the perennial efforts at having Du Sable and other black contributions to the city's early history officially recognized.⁴⁸



Figure 3: Left: Art & Soul staff, November 1968; from left: Thurman Kelley, Daniel Hetherington, Anne Zelle, Jackie Hetherington, Jim Houlinhan, and Peter Gilbert; on right: Children making masks at Art & Soul studios (photography copyright Ann Zelle).

⁴⁸ Christopher R. Reed, "'In the Shadow of Fort Dearborn': Honoring De Saible at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933-1934," *Journal of Black Studies* 21, no. 4 (1991): 398-413.

Through the Sesquicentennial and beyond, IAC was instrumental in helping to grow African American-led arts organizations concerned with racial equity, representation, and social justice. Art & Soul was a cooperative venture between the Conservative Vice Lords, Inc. and several community-based organizations, including the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. Funding through the Sesquicentennial Commission allowed Art & Soul to acquire and renovate space and launch programming. The Conservative Vice Lords, Inc. was an offshoot of the Vice Lords street gang that had transformed itself into a community development organization, incubating new businesses and providing various services to the Lawndale community. The original objective of Art & Soul was to “create a focal point for the development of Black arts on the neighborhood level.”⁴⁹ The organization offered classes for youth, a library, art exhibitions, workshops, and other programming. The Sesquicentennial Commission hired a project administrator to support the development of the new organization and oversee funding.

⁴⁹ Jackie Hetherington, "Memorandum to the Members of the Art & Soul Advisory Council, 1969," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council Collection.

When Sesquicentennial Commission funds ran out in 1968, the leadership carried out an intensive fundraising campaign that yielded a new administrative partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago and federal funding through Office of Economic Opportunity. A campaign letter to the chair of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Art Department pitches the transformation of the space into "a more extensive educational innovation center." However, the Conservative Vice Lords seem to have been separated from the organization by the Cook County State's Attorney and Mayor Daley's declared "War on Gangs." Between 1969 and 1972, Art & Soul continued its work in Lawndale until cuts to federal programs forced it to close its doors.⁵⁰

With significant grant support and technical assistance from IAC, Urban Gateways was able to extend its work beyond the city of Chicago to reach three surrounding counties, providing diverse cultural programming to suburban enclaves as well as inner-city neighborhoods. Urban Gateways was founded in 1961 by Jesse Woods, Charles Burns,

⁵⁰ The Conservative Vice Lords, "Request for Immediate Action in Regards to Continuing the Art & Soul Art Workshop: Memorandum to Simon Steiner, Chairman, Department of Art at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus, 1969," Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council Collection; Harold Haydon, "Struggle to Survive in a Cruel World: 'Art and Soul' Tries to Bring Black Culture," *Chicago Sun Times*, March 23, 1969; Rebecca Zorach, "Art & Soul: An Experimental Friendship between the Street and a Museum," *Art Journal*, 70, no. 2 (2011): 66-87.

Dr. Raymond Jerrems, Connie Williams, and Helen Kolar to provide academic support to students from distressed neighborhoods by increasing access to arts and arts education programming. Led by Jessie Woods, the founders believed that arts education could be a mechanism for social change. In a speech describing the organization's mission, Woods wrote:

The arts have brought a new dimension to the lives of the economically deprived population we serve. We challenge the sometimes voiced criticism that we are trying to impose middle class white values on the poor. The arts have been a way of knowing, learning and communicating since the time of earliest man. Neither the wonders of nature nor those wrought by man's creativity are the property of any class or economic group. We consider efforts to alienate the black and poor from full awareness of all arts is an insidious device employed to deprive them of their birth right. We present everything from Bach to Rock and we tell our participants to experience it all. 'Select what you will but provide options from which to make a selection.'⁵¹

Many of Urban Gateways programs focused on cultural exchange.

Woods believed that "[as] the insular character of suburban life has advanced, so [had] the cultural isolation of its children." Woods reported that the IAC support 1972-1973 would allow the program to

⁵¹ Jessie Woods, "Speech Delivered to March S.A.I.L Meeting, 1973," p. 2, Administrative Files, Illinois Arts Council.

reach over 170,300 youth in 315 schools with Artists-in-the-Schools presentations and youth-oriented matinee performances at major cultural organizations in the city of Chicago.⁵²

Conclusion

The establishment of the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) was part of the larger national discussion concerning governmental support of the arts. Spurred by Heckscher's work, state officials mounted the first systematic assessment of cultural resources in the state—convening community meetings on the arts in over 100 counties throughout the state. Though the work of the WPA Federal Art Project and the brand of cultural democracy embodied in the community art center movement were left to wither on the vine, the national infrastructure that emerged after the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts eventually turned back to a concern for providing underserved and vulnerable populations with access to the arts.

IAC's focus on equitable access to cultural resources created distinct new opportunities. Though battles for increased financial resources for its work were hard fought, IAC expanded access to

⁵² Ibid, 5.

cultural resources throughout the state and helped connected the cultural riches of the city of Chicago to the broader constituencies outside of the city in downstate towns and rural areas. IAC customized federal programs to the needs and interests of the state, highlighting the accomplishments of Illinois' artists, organizations, and historical figures. IAC also lobbied for investment in the arts within the state bureaucracy. Its role fostering broader racial and ethnic representation in the cultural landscape of the state was significant. IAC sought ways for the arts to engage on issues of race and class, rather than shirking away. Its work through the 1970s, particularly its instigation of the establishment of the Chicago Council on Fine Arts, helped to advance cultural diversity and broad participation in the art sector.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Arts and Harold Washington's Multicultural Coalition

Introduction

A sea change in the city's political history, the election of Harold Washington as the first African American Mayor of the City of Chicago in 1983 was a political triumph for a new multicultural coalition. In what is now understood to have been a fleeting moment of successional weakness between the twenty-plus year tenures of Daley I (1955-1976) and Daley II (1989-2011), the city's long history of political patronage and racial hostilities was challenged by the ascendancy of a "multipronged, antimachine, antiracist, proneighborhood movement."¹ Under the moniker of "community empowerment," the Washington coalition was composed of a core of grassroots activists committed to improving the life chances of low-income blacks and Latinos in

¹ Pierre Clavel and Wim Wiewel, ed. *Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods: Progressive City Government in Chicago, 1983-1987* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 1.

Chicago's distressed neighborhoods. However, the coalition extended beyond this core to include white liberals, black and Latino elites, and a strong segment of Chicago's business community. The Washington administration's engagement with the arts reflected these key tenants. The administration's engagement with the arts also provided a means for institutionalizing within city government the "multicultural" vision that defined Washington's political coalition. The establishment of the Department of Cultural Affairs as a highly visible and community-engaged arm of city government provided an effective basis for development of a transformative vision of Chicago as a tolerant and inclusive city.

Selecting a Municipal Arts Council Model for Chicago

The relationship between government and the arts in Chicago evolved in important new ways in the time before Washington took office in 1983. Over the course of his twenty-six year tenure as mayor, Richard J. Daley had built relationships with a network of Chicago's white corporate elite to rebrand the city as vibrant, cultured, and "on the move." Civic-minded corporate executives sought to implement an expansive vision for how local government could invest in the arts as a

means of stimulating the local economy and recasting negative perceptions of Chicago. Through executive action, various municipal policies around taxes and zoning, government-sponsored research, grand-scale building projects, and other initiatives, between 1955 and 1976, Daley's administrations set a foundation of active municipal support of the arts premised on elitist notions of cultural vitality. The Mayor's Committee for the Cultural and Economic Development of Chicago, through the late 1960s, advanced a conception of "the arts" crafted for an affluent white audience, with the hopes of attracting suburbanites and cultural tourists to the central city. Daley's city hall aligned itself with the pursuit of high art as barometer for urban vitality and essentially co-opted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, taking extraordinary steps to settle labor disputes, raise funds, and secure high profile bookings.

In the mid-1960s through the 1970s, new federal dollars allowed the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) to seed new agencies and advance a notion of cultural democracy that harkened back to the Depression-era Work Progress Administration's Federal Art Project. IAC broaden the reach of the arts, first by assessing the cultural infrastructure needs in

rural areas and small towns and then by developing an orientation to extending cultural resources to “underserved” communities—both in the form of access to legacy cultural organizations and support of emergent cultural organizations operating within new cultural, political, and community contexts. IAC drew on increasingly well-organized arts activism and national discourses of best-practices in government support of the arts; successfully lobbied for expanded state budget allocations; engaged arts administrators in transparent processes for overseeing and distributing public grant dollars; and acknowledged the various roles the arts might play in redressing racial inequity and hostilities. IAC presented a disruptive alternative to Mayor Richard J. Daley’s close relationships with white corporate elites and their overriding interests in Western European-based cultural amenities and the economic revitalization of downtown. IAC’s development of National Endowment for the Arts-funded programming and instigation of the establishment of the Council on Fine Arts worked to decouple Chicago’s nascent municipal arts infrastructure from the interests of a bounded community of arts-engaged white elites.

In fact, there had been multiple calls for the establishment of some form of arts alliance or council in Chicago for many years. Between 1966 and 1975, there were no less than five significant research studies commissioned by governmental and nongovernmental bodies alike in which the recommendation to create a coordinating local arts agency emerged as a first priority.² The Chicago Community Trust's "Overview of the Cultural Arts in Chicago," includes interviews with a representative sample of thirty-four arts leaders—organizations of different budget sizes, local foundations, art critics, and individuals. Respondents identified the challenges of inadequate funding, insufficient cooperation among organizations, languishing audiences, and a general void in leadership needed to take advantage of the most basic collaborative strategies. In 1970, a group of arts organizations, artists, and supporters argued at a hearing before city council for the establishment of a council on the performing and creative arts, but

² Victor J. Danilov's background memo to arts council members lists: John Jones Price Company, "A Program for the Arts in Chicago," for the Mayor's Committee for Economic and Cultural Development, 1966; William E. Hartmann, "Hartmann Report," 1967; Mayor's Committee for the Economic and Cultural Development of Chicago, "A Resident Professional Theater for Chicago," 1969; Chicago Community Trust, "Overview of the Cultural Arts in Chicago," 1974; and Illinois Arts Council, "A Proposal from the Illinois Arts Council to Create the Chicago Arts Advisory Committee (Draft)," 1975; see Victor J. Danilov, "Memorandum to Chicago Council on Fine Arts, Background Information on Local Arts Councils, 1976," Michael A. Bilandic Papers.

could secure any commitments from members.³ It was representatives of the city's major cultural organizations who mounted opposition to the creation of an arts council, believing that their needs were distinct from smaller cultural organizations and that efforts at joint-fundraising might have detrimental effects on individual campaigns, which were already experiencing significant strain.⁴

In preparation for introducing the new ordinance to City Council, Victor J. Danilov, then-director of the Museum of Science and Industry and a respected researcher, gathered extensive comparative information on the development of local arts agencies around the country.⁵ He found two forms—those created by local governments and those that had evolved through the independent association of arts organizations—organized around three basic functions: providing

³ "Chicago Urged to Save Arts with Aid Plan," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1970, B7.

⁴ Danilov, "Memorandum to Chicago Council on Fine Arts, Background Information on Local Arts Councils, 1976."

⁵ Victor J. Danilov served as president of the Association of Science-Technology Centers and after his tenure as director, became a Life Trustee of the Museum of Science and Industry. He received the ASTC Fellow Award in 1986 for in recognition of his outstanding service to the science museum field by assisting new museums; chronicling the evolution of science centers and documenting their achievements; and promoting ASTC worldwide. As a pioneer of international cooperation and communication among science museums, his accomplishments have fostered the growth of the field and the development of the Association of Science-Technology Centers. See ASTC Fellow Award Recipients webpage at <http://www.astc.org/about-astc/awards/fellow/recipients/>.

services; operating cultural programs; and granting public and/or foundation dollars to individual artists and nonprofit tax-exempt arts and cultural organizations. In Atlanta, for example, the Bureau of Cultural and International Affairs was established in 1974 by city government, received funds from local and federal sources, presented a range of cultural programming, operated a neighborhood arts center, and administered a small grants program to support neighborhood arts festivals. In Boston, the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs was established in 1968 to increase access to the arts among city residents. Originally funded through the mayor's budget, by 1976, it had evolved to become a private nonprofit entity that maintained a service contract with the city to manage programs but allowed the mayor's appointee to the position of director of cultural affairs to also serve as the president of the private foundation. In New York City, the Commission for Cultural Affairs was established in 1975 as an alternative to the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, which was determined to be "ineffective and insensitive to the community's needs." As a result, the twenty-one member commission of citizens took-over responsibility for overseeing arts and cultural programming and grantmaking to nonprofit institutions.

In contrast to these government-initiated models, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance formed as a federation of leading arts and cultural institutions with the mission to “strengthen the cultural resources of the Philadelphia region, to achieve increased public and community awareness and utilization of these resources, and to create a climate of increased public and private support for creative individuals and organizations in the community.” The Cultural Alliance’s membership consisted of over eighty nonprofit organizations working together to better the environment for nonprofit arts organizations by engaging in public awareness campaigns and policy advocacy on behalf of its members with state and local government. Similarly, the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis sought to stimulate broad community interests in cultural programming, but divided its membership into separate classes; beneficiary members were allowed access to more than \$1.5 million raised annually through a united community appeal. In total, Danilov surveyed governmental and nongovernmental local arts agencies in twelve major cities coast-to-coast.

Chicago's first arts council developed as a municipal council supported with public and private funding. When Richard J. Daley signed it on November 26, 1975, the ordinance to establish the Chicago Council on Fine Arts integrated the service; grantmaking; and programming found in national model agencies. The ordinance established the following powers, "subject to the approval of the Mayor":

To survey and assess the needs of the arts, both visual and performing, within the City of Chicago;

To identify existing legislation, policies, and programs which affect the arts and to evaluate their effectiveness;

To stimulate public understanding and recognition of the importance of cultural institutions within the City of Chicago;

To promote an encouraging atmosphere for creative artists residing within the City of Chicago;

To encourage the use of local resources for the development and support of the arts; and

To report to the Mayor on or about October 1 of each year the results of its recommendations.⁶

⁶ Danilov, "Memorandum to Chicago Council on Fine Arts, Background Information on Local Arts Councils, 1976."

In addition to these enumerated powers, the ordinance provided strict guidance for the composition of the fifteen-member council, which was to be representative of a cross-section of the sector.

By stipulating membership from organizations of different sizes and orientations and for the inclusion of members of the general public, the Council brought new voices and greater public accountability to municipal arts policy in Chicago. The Council's establishing ordinance required that the fifteen-member group be composed of five members from major cultural institutions, five members from community arts organizations, and five members from the public at-large: Representing major cultural institutions were Edwin Byron, Jr., treasurer of the auxiliary board of the Art Institute of Chicago; William Woodman, artistic director of Goodman Theater; Ardis Krainik, assistant manager of Lyric Opera; and John S. Edwards, general manager of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Representing community arts groups were Jessie Woods, executive director of Urban Gateways; Ruth E. Higgins, executive director of the Chicago Alliance for Performing Arts; Reverend James A. Shiflett, executive director of the Community Arts Foundation; Dr. Margaret Taylor Burroughs, co-founder and director of The DuSable

Museum of African American History; and Victor Sorrell, chairman of the art department at Chicago State University. From the community at large, were Sara F. Nash, who was active with the Beverly Art Center; Edward H. Weiss, chairman of Lee King and Partners, Inc.; Daniel A. Garamoni, president of the Chicago Federation of Musicians; Victor Power, playwright; and Norman Ross, vice president of public affairs for the First National Bank of Chicago.⁷ The Council formed subcommittees, including Executive, Program and Services, Public Awareness, and Government and Corporate Support. The full Council maintained bi-monthly meetings and set policy to be implemented by the executive director and professional staff members. Staff worked with practicing artists and arts administrators acting as representatives of various artistic communities. By 1980, an additional Business Advisory Committee with the chief operating officers of the city's major corporations was established to "advise and lend support to the Council and Chicago's arts community." The committee was an attempt to engage the city's corporate community more fully, since most corporate

⁷ "15 Named to Arts Council," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 16, 1976, A1.

gifts were extended to the large legacy organizations rather than to smaller, neighborhood-based organizations.⁸

Drawing from national models, the Council established a menu of programs and services between 1976 and 1983. Many initiatives were simply informational, aimed at increasing the level of public awareness of the arts and positioning the Council as a clearinghouse for information on cultural offerings. For example, the Council established the Cultural Information Booth in Daley Civic Center that served residents as well as tourists; an arts hotline, which gave the latest news on major performances, festivals, and exhibitions; and a line of publications and guides to help users navigate the cultural offerings throughout the city. For example, the “Guide to Chicago Murals: Yesterday and Today” provided a walking tour and narrative history of murals in Chicago from the New Deal to present day and the “Growing Up with Art” guide that the Council published in 1982 provided information on arts resources available throughout the city for school-aged children. The Council created citywide special events like “Arts in Education Week,” which provided a platform for organizations

⁸ Richard Christiansen, "Council on Fine Arts Wooing Top Businessmen to Help Raise City's Cultural Stock," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 17, 1980, A12; "Chicago Council on Fine Arts," (City of Chicago, 1980).

throughout the city to promote themselves. Other services, such as the technical assistance program, sought to serve artists and arts administrators. The program offered seminars, workshops, and one-on-one consultancies to support the professionalization of the sector.⁹

Beyond services to audiences and the field itself, the Council operated citywide arts programs. The Council presented regular series of art exhibitions and performances, organized awards programs, and operated the Chicago Artists-In-Residence program, the most significant federal investment in working artists since the New Deal. With funding through the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973, the Council offered the Artists-In-Residence program from 1977 to 1981. In *Bureaucratizing the Muse*, Dubin notes that at its start, CETA was to provide opportunities for employment and training to the long-term unemployed and underemployed. However, the program widened its tolerances through the mid-1970s as the unemployment rate began to increase, allowing greater flexibility to local governments to create temporary jobs in the public sector. By

⁹ Madeline Rabb, "First Meeting: Commission on Cultural Affairs, No Date," Personal Statements, Madeline Rabb Archive; Chicago Council on Fine Arts, "Guide to Chicago Murals: Yesterday and Today," (1982); Chicago Council on Fine Arts, "Growing up with Art: Educator's Guide to Chicago's Cultural Resources," (1982).

1977, Chicago was receiving \$26.1 million in CETA funds annually, with approximately \$2.4 million allocated to cultural organizations for administration. The Council applied for and received a \$1.2 million CETA grant in 1977, set a policy of fifty percent annual turn-over rate to ensure a broad reach, and by 1981 hired over one hundred artists in dance, film/video, music, photography, theater, and the visual and graphic arts.¹⁰

New federal funding programs developed by the National Endowment for the Arts leveraged city resources for a regranting program that focused on neighborhood-based arts programs. In 1979, its first year, the CityArts program made sixty-nine small grants ranging in size from \$500 to \$3,500 to nonprofit organizations with budgets under \$100,000. The program was popular from the start with more than 130 applications submitted for consideration. Citing the city's national "leadership role in urban arts," the Council solicited and received increased support from local government and foundation and

¹⁰ Steven C. Dubin, *Bureaucratizing the Muse: Public Funds and the Cultural Worker* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Marie Cummings, "Executive Director Job Description, 1983," Council on Fine Arts Personnel Report, Municipal Records Archive.

corporate partners that allowed it to announce a tripling of the program's budget to over \$350,000 for 1983.¹¹

Campaigning for the Arts

During the 1983 mayoral contest, the incumbent mayor Jane Byrne, and Illinois state senator Harold Washington, both proclaimed deep support for the arts and made direct appeals to the sector. The city's first female mayor, Byrne sought to position herself as a reformer committed to revitalization against a down national economy. Elected mayor in 1979, Byrne had cut her political teeth as a loyal supporter of her mentor Richard J. Daley. It was Daley who hired Byrne for early key jobs and presented her with her first political appointment as a member of his cabinet (the first female). However, as a candidate and eventually as mayor, she showed her toughness and independence from the Democratic Machine.¹²

¹¹ "Local Arts Groups Receive Grants," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 2, 1979, 3; "Arts," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 3, 1982, LF6.

¹² Jane Byrne, *My Chicago* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 251-279; for more on Byrne's relationship with Daley, see: Milton L. Rakove, *We Don't Want Nobody Sent: An Oral History of the Daley Years* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); Paul Kleppner, *Chicago Divided: The Making of a Black Mayor* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985); Melvin G. Holli and Paul M. Green, *The Making of the Mayor of Chicago 1983* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publisher Co., 1984).

The mayoral race of 1979 was quite possibly the first in which candidates debated the city's support of the arts; Democratic candidate Byrne and Republican Wallace Johnson, sparred before the Chicago Alliance for the Performing Arts and the Chicago Artists Coalition over how as mayor each would address the sector's various concerns.¹³ In the months leading up to the election, Byrne met with union members of Actors Equity Association and pledged: "when I am elected, and I will be, that I will see to it that a percentage of the budget goes into a department to specialize and bring about a new day in the performing arts." In addition to her meeting with Actors Equity, Byrne met with arts organizations, trumpeting her support for their work. She was quoted as promising to allocate up to five percent of the city's budget to Chicago's arts sector and use a more equitable proportion of the hotel tax to help establish a \$1 million dollar line item budget for the work of the Council on Fine Arts.¹⁴

The arts experienced significant expansion under Byrne. Where Daley's administrations focused on developing major museums, the

¹³ Richard Christiansen, "Tempo the Arts: Byrne, Johnson Will Confront Art of Politics," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 8, 1979, A8.

¹⁴ Richard Christiansen, "Groups Keep Byrne Busy Forming Cultural Policy," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 29, 1979, A9.

Council on Fine Arts Program History

Programs	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Artists-in-Residence									
Arts Accessibility									
Cultural Information Booth, Daley Civic Center									
"Dial F-I-N-E A-R-T"									
Publications and Guides									
Technical Assistance									
"Under the Picasso" Programs and Exhibitions									
Artists Slide Registry									
Percent for Art									
CityArts I									
Cooperative Education									
DateBook									
Arts in Education Week									
Chicago Creative Writers Registry									
Cultural Center Programs and Exhibitions									
"Dial-a-Poem, Chicago!"									
Resource Development									
Resource Library									
Neighborhood Arts Projects									
"ChicagOh!" Arts Awareness Campaign									
CityArts II									
Performing Arts Registry									
Chicago Poets Award									
Cultural Enrichment (Urban Gateways)									

Figure 4.1. Council on the Fine Arts Program History, 1977-1985. Source: Madeline Rabb, "First Meeting: Commission on Cultural Affairs," Personal Statements, Madeline Rabb Archive, Harold Washington Library Special Collections

symphony, ballet and opera, in and around the city's central business district, Byrne attempted to reach out into the city's neighborhoods.

In her inaugural address she stated:

Chicago's neighborhoods have always been this city's greatest strength. If those communities are left to decay, this city will decay. We cannot, we will not, let this happen.

Be assured that I did not become the Mayor of Chicago to preside over its decline. I am here before you tonight to dedicate this administration to bringing a new renaissance of neighborhood life and community spirit, a renewal of confidence in the future of our city and a revival of opportunity for all Chicago.¹

The Council on Fine Arts expended its staffing and developed new programs under Byrne. Artists residencies and artists in schools programs, corky programs such as Dial-a-Poem, and festivals all worked to make city-sponsored arts and cultural programming a part of the city's vitality and she would build on this if reelected. Byrne's administration, however, was ultimately crimped by ineffectual leadership and overpromising of resources at a moment of national economic downturn. Her "feisty, wisecracking, mud-in-your-eye" style did not inspire confidence from the business

¹ Chicago City Council, "Journal of the Proceedings," (1979).

community, helped little to resolve the massive labor disputes that occurred during her tenure, and could not overcome Washington's groundswell of support.²

Harold Washington had a uniquely distinguished political pedigree. He grew-up in a household very much at the center of Chicago Democratic politics. His father Roy Lee Washington, was an attorney, minister, and Democratic politician in Black Chicago's Third Ward. Political connections, history, and strategy were passed father to son and after a stint in the United States Air Force, Washington became a lawyer and joined his father's law office on Chicago's South Side. Taking over his father's position as a Democratic precinct captain in the Third Ward, eventually Washington ran and won seats in the Illinois State House of Representatives (1965 to 1976), the Illinois State Senate (1976 to 1980), and the United States House of Representatives (1981-1983). Though early in his legislative career he toed the line of the Democratic Machine, he was spirited and independent-minded and broke from the Machine. In the U.S. Congress, Washington was critical of the Reagan Administration's

² Robert G. Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders : A History of Chicago* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 241-256.

broad cuts to education and social services in the federal budget and defiantly accused the President of “balanc[ing] the budget on the backs of the poor.” Having attempted an unsuccessful bid for mayor following Daley’s death in office, Washington announced his candidacy for mayor in 1982 in a Chicago experiencing expansion of Latino and African American populations, rising dissatisfaction with the incumbent, and energized calls for radical reform in city hall.³

Washington had a personal affinity for the arts. In a biography of Washington, Chicago historian Alton Miller writes that the depth of the mayor’s appreciation of the arts could surprise and he regularly interacted with local and international artists from different fields. According to Miller, on his own Washington “courted and was courted by” major artists and writers, but members of his family were deeply engaged in Black Chicago’s arts community. His mother was a singer who had left a small farming town in downstate Illinois as a teen to find stardom in Chicago. Washington’s step-mother Arlene Washington served for many years on the board of

³ “Harold Washington” in *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007*. Prepared under the direction of the Committee on House Administration by the Office of History & Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives. Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008; Tracye A. Matthews, “Harold Washington: The Man and the Movement,” ed. Chicago Historical Society (2003), *passim*.

the South Side Community Arts Center and his step-brother, Ramon B. Price was a noted painter and worked as a curator at SSCAC and The DuSable Museum of African American History.⁴

As a candidate, Washington issued “The Washington Papers” to outline the components and background of issues defining his campaign platform. In The Washington Papers for the Arts, Washington’s campaign referred situated the candidate as “a product of Chicago’s rich pluralistic heritage and the first expression of the new renaissance—he will be a leader and speak for a program to make Chicago one of the most exciting and creative cultural centers in the United States.” The campaign forwarded a six-point platform that included the following principles:

- I. A broadbased, city-wide program that reflects the richness and cultural diversity of our multi-ethnic, multi-racial heritage.
- II. Democratic decision-making with continuous input from all regiments of the population, including the consumers and producers of cultural products.
- III. Cross-cultural interchanges between communities and between neighborhoods and the Loop.

⁴ Alton Miller, *Harold Washington: The Mayor, the Man* (Chicago: Bonus Books, Inc., 1989), 38, 73, 104, 332.

- IV. Consolidation and expansion of existing programs and the elimination of waste and duplication of effort.
- V. New initiatives designed to free Chicago cultural institutions of the dead hand of patronage and political interference.
- VI. New initiatives in the field of culture and tourism designed to create additional jobs for Chicagoans.

Beyond attending to the cultural vitality of the city, the Washington campaign its overarching reform agenda to the cultural status of the city, promising to deal with the “deterioration in the cultural status of the city” caused by “political manipulation and the lack of a long-range cultural policy.”⁵

On his transition team, Washington drew on Lerone Bennett, Jr., to articulate his vision for the arts. Bennett, then executive editor of *Ebony* magazine, conducted research on the arts by contacting individuals from the Chicago community and other cities. After conversations with Atlanta cultural affairs officials, Bennett argued that the consolidation of the city of Chicago’s cultural affairs in one city department was “sound and long overdue.” If elected,

⁵ "The Harold Washington Papers: Arts, " Mayoral Campaign Records, Harold Washington Administration Collection.

Washington would seek to unify a fragmented arts and culture-related positions in various city departments under an Office of Cultural Affairs; appoint a nonpartisan Advisory Commission on Cultural Affairs that represented “all segments of the community . . . [to] develop a clear and equitable policy that will ensure distribution of funding throughout the city”; and make more efficient use of funds generated by the hotel/motel tax fund for grantmaking to arts and cultural organizations rather than to “big events . . . exploited for political purposes,” as the campaign charged had happened under the Byrne administration. During its due diligence period, the Washington Transition team reviewed a series of charges to the Municipal Hotel—Motel Operators’ Occupation Tax Fund for neighborhood festivals: \$206,018; Fine Arts: \$96,666; Dinner Reception for Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus of the Netherlands: \$98,023; and Contributions and Grants to major arts institutions and events ranging from \$4,000 for the MCA to as much as \$200,000 for Art Institute of Chicago.⁶

⁶ Lerone Bennett Jr., “Memorandum to Research and Issues Campaign Committee, 1983,” Mayoral Campaign Records, Harold Washington Administration Collection; “Chief of Staff’s Office, 1981-1988, Transition Team

Washington's campaign materials, ends with an encompassing view of the both Washington's impact on the arts and the arts impact on the city:

Under Harold Washington's administration, there will be an unprecedented revitalization of our pluralistic heritage. Chicago has always been a haven for great writers like Carl Sandburg, Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks and Saul Bellow. It was the birthplace of modern architecture. It was the scene of the adaptation of the blues and other Afro-American art forms to an urban milieu. It is the home of great institutions and museum, such as the Art Institute, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Science and Industry, the DuSable Museum, The Polish Museum of America, the Lyric Opera and the Chicago Symphony. It has a lively and diverse theater, talented producers of film and video and it is on the cutting edge of the urban adaptation of Latino rhythms and culture.

A product and a symbol of this rich pluralistic heritage, Harold Washington is committed to the view that culture has a significant role to play in the new Chicago Renaissance. A man of culture, with a deep appreciation of art, literature and music, he will be the first true advocate of the arts to occupy the Mayor's office. As Mayor, he will democratize our heritage, depoliticize it and make it available to larger publics. Under his administration, culture will become once again the possession of all the people, and the expression of their deepest values.⁷

Materials, " Mayor's Office of Special Events, 1982-1983, Harold Washington Administration Collection.

⁷ Fred Fine, *Chicago Cultural Plan* (City of Chicago: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1987); Michel Segard, "Chicago Mayoral Candidates' Position on the Arts," *New Art Examiner*, April 3, 1983, 1.

Elevating Arts and Culture within Chicago's Political Regime

In his inaugural address delivered April 29, 1983, Harold Washington painted a sobering portrait of a city facing fiscal problems “both enormous and complicated.” The Chicago Public School system’s deficit could soar as high as \$200 million, twice projections. Similarly, the Chicago Transit Authority, which operated the city’s public transportation network of buses and elevated trains a deficit of \$200 million with no solutions in sight. The city’s general fund, too, was found to be facing a shortfall of as much as \$150 million. “Reluctantly,” he confided, “I must tell you that because of circumstances thrust upon us, each and everyone of us, we must immediately cut back on how much money the City can spend.”⁸

Arts groups pressed Washington’s administration to keep promises made during the campaign. The elevation of cultural affairs to a Cabinet position was seen as a critical step in realizing broader coordination and investment in the sector. If Chicago was to attract tourist, generate dollars, and enrich the city as a whole, the arts needed governmental support. Part of Washington’s Transition Team was a Task Force Committee on Arts and Culture that looked to

⁸ Chicago City Council. *Journal of the Proceedings*, April 29, 1983, p. 7–11.

the successes attracting conventioners to the city and reasoned similar strategies might be used to attract greater cultural tourism. The Task Force also cited Illinois' position as 36th among states in per capita expenditures on the arts and estimated that municipal spending on the arts would have to increase five-fold, from \$1.9 million to as much as \$10 million, in order to be on par with other cities. However, the arts were among the administration's first cuts.⁹

In fall 1983, a *Chicago Tribune* article's headline read: "Arts council grits teeth as budget ax takes toll." The Tribune's writer begins the article with the story of blind music students at Skinner School. Because of their commitment to rehearsals over a four-year period, the students had received the great honor of an invitation to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Orchestra Hall. Instead, the mayor's cuts to the Council on Fine Arts had prevented an increase to the school's grant sufficient to allow the performance. This, the writer notes, was one of more than a hundred artist projects "jeopardized by the staff and funding cutbacks recently imposed by

⁹ Monroe Anderson, "Arts Groups Want City at Center Stage," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 31, 1983, 7, 11.

Mayor Harold Washington.”¹⁰ The mayor’s cuts reduced the Council’s staff from 27 to 15 and reduced the budget from nearly \$1million in 1983 to \$669,000 for 1984. In the article, Council chair Victor Danilov land-blasts the mayor’s cuts to the Council on Fine Arts, saying the cuts “decimated” the Council and “would tear the heart out of the neighborhood arts projects.” “Through all four mayors,” Danilov rails in the article, “the arts council has never reached its full potential because there has never really been a total dedication to the public arts in the city.”¹¹

After meting-out severe budget cuts within his first few months in office, Washington did in fact continue with many of his campaign promises, including the consolidation of cultural functions into one department with leadership to guide its development. In 1984, the mayor amended the ordinance establishing the Council on Fine Arts to create the Department of Cultural Affairs. The new government department was composed of the Chicago Office of Fine Arts (the Council on Fine Arts), the Office of Special Events, and the Chicago Office of Film and Entertainment Industry, all of which had

¹⁰ Cindy Skaugen, "Arts Council Grits Teeth as Budget Ax Takes Toll," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 14, 1983, CT6.

¹¹ Ibid, CT6.

evolved separately. The mission of the department was to “coordinate the City’s cultural programming, support for the arts, tourism efforts and long-range planning for cultural development.”¹² To coordinate the department’s programming and develop a long-term vision, the mayor appointed Fred Fine as the city’s first commissioner of cultural affairs, a cabinet level position.

Fred Fine was a respected cultural administrator in Chicago. Beginning in the 1960s, Fine’s production company presented everyone from the Beatles to Israeli dance troupes at venues throughout the country.¹³ In addition to presenting arts events, Fine was engaged in the early development of the Illinois Arts Council and the Illinois Arts Alliance, an arts advocacy organization. Fine had been a driving force behind the establishment of the Chicago International Art Exposition, which provided a unique stage for artists, arts organizations, and gallerists. Fine founded and served as chair of Columbia College’s arts and entertainment department, one of the first such programs in the country. Colleagues knew him as an

¹² “Department of Cultural Affairs Annual Report, 1984.” Public-Private Partnerships, Box 89, Folder #10, Harold Washington Administration Collection, The Chicago Public Library.

¹³ Glenn Jeffers, “Obituary: Fred Fine, 89, Activist, Teacher, City Arts Official,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 12, 2004, 2C 13.

individual committed to process and working through established channels to "get things done."¹⁴

Ex-Communist clears a hurdle Fred Fine wins support

By Jim Strong

FROM THE AGE of 13 until his mid-40s, Fred Fine was a member of the Communist Party.

It was, he told Chicago aldermen Friday, something he was "born into," something he thought would "lead to a better, fairer world than the impoverished ghetto I grew up in in Chicago."

It was a "difficult chapter" of his life, one that led him to go underground for four years when he was accused of advocating the overthrow of the United States.

Eventually, he surrendered and was convicted on those federal charges. But that conviction was reversed by the U.S. Court of Appeals because there was no evidence that Fine had called for the government's overthrow. He resigned from the party in the mid-1950s.

With frankness and emotion, Fine, 70, laid out the history of his membership in the Communist Party in more than two hours of testimony at a meeting Friday of the City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs.

AFTER HEARING him out, the committee voted unanimously to approve Fine's appointment to the new \$52,000-a-year post of Commissioner of Cultural Affairs.

But Fine's appointment is expected to face opposition when it comes before the full council for consideration.

A preview of that opposition came at Friday's meeting from Ald. Roman Pucinski (41st), who is not a member of the committee. Pucinski



Fred Fine

Carthy in the 1950s. Oberman said, "I think the McCarthy era was one of the most sordid eras in this history of this country. Whatever involvement Mr. Fine had in the political organization at that time, he has certainly paid a very great price."

One witness for Fine, Essee Kupcinet, a leader in performing arts activities and wife of Sun-Times columnist Irv Kupcinet, upbraided Pucinski for dredging up events of 30 years ago.

Figure 4.2 Excerpt of article on Fine. Source: Jim Strong, "Ex-Communist Clears a Hurdle." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 10, 1984, 5.

¹⁴ Judy Weisman, "Voice of the People: Praise for Fine from Colleague," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 25, 1984, 20.

Despite a strong reputation and deep experience in the arts, Washington's nomination of Fine to the commissioner of cultural affairs met great resistance in city council. After Fine's nomination was unanimously approved by city council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, the recommendation advanced to the full body where council members raised concerns over Fine's past as a youth member of the Communist Party. Fine's family was active in the left-wing Jewish labor movement in Chicago, and he joined the Young Pioneers and Young Communist League at age thirteen. Fine enlisted in the Army National Guard during World War II, guarding German prisoners of war at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. He continued his involvement after his discharge, rising to the level organizational secretary within the Communist Party. However, Fine left the Party in 1957, disillusioned about the possibilities for significant reform. Alderman Roman Pucinski argued vigorously that Fine's appointment would elicit a "strong and violent reaction from ethnic groups" that had been victims of Stalin's repressive regime in the Soviet Union. Other aldermen fell in line with Pucinski contributed steam to the effort to block Fine's to nomination.¹⁵

¹⁵ "... As It Leaps into the Past," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1984, 14;

In fact, the nomination had become fodder for the “Council Wars”; Pucinski was a member of the “Vrdolyak 29,” a bloc of white and one Hispanic aldermen lead by Ed Vrdolyak that stymied Washington’s agenda for much of his first three years in office. The bloc persisted until a federal court ruled that city council had unfairly drawn ward boundaries to achieve a white majority in city council. “Does the council majority want us to believe that Mr. Fine will give Chicago’s cultural secrets to the Russians?,” one letter to the editor chided, “This controversy has nothing to do with ancient history and everything to do with current politics. His appointment is being delayed by the majority bloc for the same reason so many others are being held up—purely because it comes from Mayor Washington. Mr. Fine is not a threat to anybody, bit the council’s delays have become a threat to orderly government.”¹⁶ In a public statement, Fine discusses how his early involvement with the Community Party had been prefigured by his parents and professed: “Other than my service as an American soldier, I have never advocated force and

Interview with Fred Fine, *Twentieth Century Radicalism in Minnesota Oral History Project*, ed. Carl E. Ross, in the Minnesota Historical Society Collection, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display.php?irn=10362538> (accessed April 1, 2015).

¹⁶ “... as it leaps into the past.” *Chicago Tribune*, November 20, 1984, 14

violence Terrorism is an anathema to me." In his confirmation hearing before the full city council, Fine appealed to on the basis of the arts impact on the neighborhood level:

Our neighborhoods, even now, are a tapestry of the wondrous diversity of our peoples' arts. Community revitalization depends in great measure on the quality of life in our neighborhoods. We need expanding partnerships between the public and business sector and private citizens. I am an advocate of cultural excellence, diversity and democratic access. I say let's get on with passage of the council ordinance and my confirmation, and let's get to work.¹⁷

Fine's discussions with Washington about the administration's cultural work centered on a shared value that "arts and culture are not the private preserve of the privileged." This common-ground connected the two men in purpose and opened the way for a distinct new era of engagement between city hall and the cultural sector in Chicago.

Immediately on receiving confirmation, Fred Fine constructed an advisory board unlike any assembled by previous city hall administrations. The advisory committee represented a diverse cross-section of Chicago cultural figures, including high net worth

¹⁷ Office of the Mayor Harold Washington, "Cultural Affairs, 1984-1985, 1984," Record Group 8 Press Releases by Subject, Harold Washington Papers

individuals, artists, and arts administrators. The advisory committee included: Etta Moten Barnett, actress and contralto vocalist known for her role as “Bess” in *Porgy and Bess*; Ellen Benjamin, president of the Borg-Warner Foundation; Lerone Bennett, historian and executive editor of *Ebony* magazine; Thomas Burrell, founder of Burrell Communications Group; Dr. Margaret Burroughs, founder of the DuSable Museum of African American History; Quinn Ellis Delaney, community volunteer and wife of Robert O. Delaney; Ruth Ann Rozumoff, community volunteer and wife of Daniel Edelman; Stanley Freehling, arts patron and partner at Freehling and Company; Roger Gilmore, dean of the Art Institute of Chicago; Ronne Hartfield, executive director of Urban Gateways; sculptor Richard Hunt; David Hillard, art collector and attorney; and arts patron and collector Ruth Horwich; among others. Fine sought to use the advisory committee to connect the Department of Cultural Affairs to the “mood and opinion” of the arts community.¹⁸

¹⁸ Oral History Interview with Etta Moten Barnett, *The HistoryMakers* ed. Larry Crowe, <http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/etta-moten-barnett-40> (accessed April 1, 2015).

He also used the committee to create opportunities for the mayor to project his connectedness to the public. In a status report submitted to the mayor, Fine spells-out the political benefits to be gained through participation in the arts:

In addition to the intrinsic value of supporting the city's cultural expressions (quality of life, etc.) the cultural community includes large numbers of artists, their boards, staffs and supporters and hundreds of thousands who reap artistic harvest—the audiences and museum goers. Many of those people are already part of your base. The city's affirmative support of their cultural expressions is a powerful symbol of your interest in them. Cultural support offers and opportunity to reach out to many others and find common ground. Culture is a significant entrée into important arts interested constituencies including board members, who are part of the city's establishment, the 'lakefront liberals' and working artists and their organization staffs throughout the city. We have made important strides into these constituencies through your trip to London for the CSO concert, the American Conservatory of Music dinner with Leonard Bernstein, the announcement last week of the AT&T-sponsored Chicago theatre festival at Kennedy Center, your attendance at the opening of Art of the Cameroons at the Field Museum, etc., etc.¹⁹

¹⁹ Fred Fine, "Memorandum to Mayor Harold Washington, Department Status Report, 1985," Harold Washington Administration Collection.

Fine reported significant improvements in providing resources to neighborhood-level cultural projects and festivals that had broad appeal and aligned with the administration's community empowerment philosophy. The city's investments in the arts opened important new pathways that supported the mayor's agenda and public persona.

The newly structured department did face challenges. Staffs in each of the offices consolidated within the Department of Cultural Affairs were resistant to giving-up the autonomy with which they had operated for many years. Fine reported on the difficulties he faced having directors acknowledge the authority vested in his role as commissioner. The tendency for directors to "freelance" was an ongoing concern for Fine. There were also areas of concern that had not previously come under the purview of any of the consolidated offices. The department counseled the mayor on the negative impact of modifications to the Amusement Admissions Tax on Chicago's competitiveness attracting tours of large-scale theatrical productions, which in turn supported jobs and affected the vitality of the city's nightlife. The need for a comprehensive assessment of arts real estate arose as a critical underdeveloped component of the

department's work. The city's building code. According to Fine, "[u]nreasonable code requirements and inspector discretion" stymied arts-based development and exposed the arts to corruption.²⁰

The benefits of the office far outstripped challenges. Fine and his deputy would represent arts interests on the citywide Development Sub-Cabinet as it attempted to respond to major real estate development issues, including the renovation of Navy Pier, a proposal to establish a performing arts center in the Illinois Center building, North Loop Theatre Row revitalization, renovation of the Chicago Theater, and securing a building for the Mexican Fine Arts Center in the Pilsen community.²¹ The new department was able to support the mayor's agenda while bringing arts-specific expertise to many areas of concern for the city as a whole. Consolidation reduced redundancy, benefited the city in renegotiation of festival contracts, opened opportunities for cultural resources to flow to areas of need beyond downtown, and attracted revenue from diverse sources.²²

²⁰ Ibid, 4-5.

²¹ Ibid, 4.

²² Marsha Howard, "Memorandum to Madeline M. Rabb, 1985 Funding for Chicago Office of Fine Arts, 1985," The Municipal Reference Collection.

Revenue by Source for the Chicago Office of Fine Arts, 1985

REVENUE	1985 Appropriation	% of Total Revenue
<i>City of Chicago</i>		
Corporate Fund Allocation	594,430	
Hotel/Motel Tax	150,000	
Finance General*	<u>150,000</u>	
Subtotal	\$894,430	45%
<i>Community Development Block Grant</i>		
Community Arts Development	398,199	
Staff Serving the Community	145,576	
Cultural Enrichment	<u>82,000</u>	
Subtotal	\$625,775	31%
<i>Illinois Arts Council</i>		
Resource and Development	31,910	
Local Regranting	34,120	
Chicago and Rosofsky Exhibitions	7,430	
Art Museum Association Conference	<u>300</u>	
Subtotal	\$73,760	4%
<i>Other Sources</i>		
MacArthur Foundation*	55,000	
National Endowment for the Arts*	75,000	
Chicago Community Trust	150,000	
Woods Charitable Fund, Inc.	50,000	
Amoco Properties, Inc.	5,000	
Burrell Advertising	500	
Illinois Bell Telephone Company	1,000	
Illinois State Museum Grant 1984/85	9,534	
Fund Balances	<u>53,279</u>	
Subtotal	\$399,313	20%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,993,278	100%

*Figure 4.3 Revenue by Source for the Chicago Office of Fine Arts, 1985. Source: Marsha Howard, Memorandum to Madeline M. Rabb, "Re: 1985 Funding for Chicago Office of Fine Arts," Dated January 28, 1985. * Includes amounts marked "pending," as of January 28, 1985.*

The Chicago Cultural Plan

The Chicago Cultural Plan set an aspirational vision for cultural development in the city based on municipal accountability, equitable access to public resources by the city's racially and ethnically diverse communities, and the need for strategic economic development.

Funded with a major grant from the Chicago Community Trust grant, the two-year planning process was the first comprehensive plan for municipal support of the arts in Chicago. The process used to create it was informed by the philosophy of community empowerment that served as the philosophical bedrock of the Washington administration and the multicultural coalition it represented.

The framework for the plan was in stark contrast to the emphasis on the vitality of particular art forms or particular organizations pursued during Daley's administrations. The planning committee articulated the following core principles at the start to guide the work:

Culture and the arts are vital to the quality of our lives and should be so recognized in all aspects of municipal planning.

Cultural resources must be accessible and fairly distributed to all to ensure the continued and

historically vital contributions of all segments of our diverse culture.

Culture is important to our economy by employing thousands of people, attracting new businesses, revitalizing neighborhoods, and drawing hundreds of thousands of tourists to the city each year.

The Cultural Plan embraces these principles in a manner that celebrates the cultural diversity of the city.
Process.²³

The plan weaves together individual artists, community-based organizations, larger cultural organizations, and tourists in a mutually beneficial cycle of cultural uplift and economic development: “The cultural sector employs thousands; cultural organizations bring identity to downtown and the neighborhoods; and our cultural diversity helps business maintain a quality workforce that wants to live in Chicago.”²⁴ Under Daley, preservation of the symphony, opera, and ballet was set as the most significant cultural task for the city.

²³ Department of Cultural Affairs, *The Chicago Cultural Plan* (City of Chicago 1986), 4-6.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 4

The planning process solicited the input of a broad cross-section of voices. The advisory committee operated with the intention of addressing “the doubts and skepticism” of large segments of the cultural sector that felt left out of previous administrations’ visions for the arts in the city, especially along the faultline of downtown versus neighborhood-based activities.²⁵ Fine and his project director Mike Dorf scheduled discussion sessions in church basements, bank boardrooms, union halls, libraries, movie houses, schools, community centers, and other community spaces throughout the city, ultimately holding more than 300 meetings and involving 10,000 individuals in the visioning process. Dorf recalled the range of participants in the planning process: “Parents came, and kids came, and business men and aldermen, and teachers, and librarians, and historians, and artists, and artisans of every kind. They told us of ways to use the arts in the everyday life of the city. They told us of the joy the arts bring to the soul. We realized again and again the central role the arts play in our life in Chicago and in Chicago’s role and image in the world at large.”²⁶

²⁵ Ibid, 6.

²⁶ Ibid, 7-8.

The planning team sought to assess the cultural needs at the grassroots level, soliciting input from the city's cultural networks, such as: the Jewish Community Centers; the Catholic Archdiocese and the Episcopal Diocese Centers; and the music and art teachers throughout our schools. In a press release announcing the launch of the plan, Dorf reasons, "By the end of the process, we hope to have developed a plan which will be IMPLEMENTED, because the people throughout the city will have become involved in the process and ultimately have a stake in seeing it succeed." Mirroring broad community input, the plan focuses on five broad areas of activity: the Department of Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Economic Development, The Chicago Park District, and Public Art.²⁷

For the Department of Cultural Affairs the plan recommends advocacy on behalf of the arts in the areas of zoning codes enforcement, transportation, planning, and education; full expression of cultural interest among other subcabinets of Development and Community Services; closer cooperation with the Illinois Arts Council and the Illinois Humanities Council; and the expansion of staff

²⁷ Office of the Mayor Harold Washington, Mayor's Press Office News Release, May 1, 1985. Harold Washington Administration Collection, The Chicago Public Library.

capacity to provide technical assistance and grant support to the cultural sector. Within the area of Tourism, the plan maps the connections between cultural vitality and the city's competitiveness attracting conventions and visitors from around the world. The development of Cultural Enterprise Zones, incubators, and a film finance fund and tax incentives were proposed as components of the Economic Development strategies that could cultivate local creative businesses and keep the city competitive with other regions seeking to attract major film productions. The plan recommended greater collaboration between the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Park District to help facilitate the revitalization of shuttered fieldhouse facilities on parkland for use by artists and neighborhood-based cultural organizations. In the area of Public Art, the plan calls for deeper engagement by representatives from neighborhoods in the selection and placement of public art works.²⁸ Supplementing cultural investment at the neighborhood level was the development of the Chicago Cultural Center as a downtown venue to showcase the various creative traditions inhabiting the city. The plan reads:

²⁸ *The Chicago Cultural Plan*, passim. In addition to these recommendations, participants raised concerns about access to cultural programming; the expansion of coordinating bodies for arts programming; the establishment of more community centers; and provisions for more artist live/work spaces.

There is a need for a full-fledged cultural center downtown that can highlight the very best of Chicago's creativity and diversity, give prominence to the variety of our European Ethnic, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and Black arts traditions, diversify cultural offerings in the Loop and become the city's star in Chicago's cultural galaxy.²⁹

In each component, the plan's advisory committee sought to represent the cultural diversity of the city as both an asset and a responsibility. In seeking to present and produce cultural programming, project the city's vitality, and support the development of new institutions, government was to embrace many different traditions.

Conclusion

To win the mayor's seat, Washington and his backers formed a "rainbow coalition," composed of African Americans, white progressives, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Washington and his rainbow coalition broke the hyper-centralized, patronage system of machine politics and put in its place a system directed at opening governance and redistributing resources to dispossessed people and neighborhoods. However, the center simply did not hold and the

²⁹ Ibid, 26.

very broad spectrum of interests contained within the Washington coalition suffered irreparable fractures and points of deep conflict. By the end of his first term in office, a dénouement of community empowerment took place in favor of “progrowth” investments focused on the central downtown area and most beneficial to the affluent.

Though Mayor Harold Washington initially cut much of the budget for municipal investments in the cultural life of the city and implemented major staff reductions, actual program streams remained stable and expanded in the last two years of his first term. Washington’s appointment of Fred Fine as the city’s first Cultural Commissioner resulted in an inclusive vision for the arts and a broadbased plan that serves still as a model for cities around the nation.

Fine tendered his resignation on April 8, 1987, the day after Chicagoans reelected Harold Washington to a second term as mayor. To replace Fine, Washington appointed Joan Harris, wife of prominent Loop investment banker Irving Harris and an active board member for the Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Symphony

Orchestra, and the Museum of Contemporary Arts. Joan Harris, as the *Chicago Tribune* reported on her appointment, was “convinced that city government must remain a player, though a minor player, in funding Chicago's many nonprofit arts institutions.”³⁰ Though a passionate advocate for broad access to the arts, Harris’ vision seemed a far cry from that represented in the *Chicago Cultural Plan*. By November, the city government would be thrown into deep transition as Mayor Washington died in office of a massive heart attack.

³⁰ Manuel Galvan and James Strong, "Mayor Shuffles Heads of 5 City Departments," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 27, 1987, 1; Richard Christiansen, "New Mayor Must Promote Arts as a Growth Industry," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 29, 1989, J20.

CONCLUSION

The cultural sector in the United States has been shaped by a series of laws, practices, and funding programs implemented at the federal, state and local levels that work together, directly and indirectly, to define the environment in which arts organizations operate. Though WPA was left to wither, the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts contributed significantly to the institutional expansion of the sector. Before the establishment of the NEA in 1965, only eighteen state arts agencies existed; by the end of 1967 all fifty states had some form of a statewide arts agency. Consequently, the number of local arts agencies expanded as well. In 1965 there were only 500 local arts agencies in the United States; by 2003, there were well over 4,000. Though the national advancements achieved under the WPA Federal Art Project were allowed to wither,

the renewed investment of federal resources in the NEA leveraged state and local funding that supported the sector's growth.¹

Since 1965, the arts sector has experienced exponential growth in the totality of its economic impact. The annual budget for the NEA increased from \$2.9 million in fiscal year 1966 to \$124.4 million in 2007.² In their report *Growth of Arts and Cultural Organizations in the Decade of the 1970s*, economists Samuel Schwarz and Mary G. Peters calculate that by the end of the 1970s, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in the United States numbered approximately 20,000 with direct expenditures totaling \$2 billion.³ Forty years later, in their national report *Arts & Economic Prosperity IV*, Americans for the Arts estimates that in 2010 nonprofit arts and culture organizations generate \$61.1 billion in direct expenditures in addition to \$74.1 billion in arts event-related expenditures

¹ Julia F. Lowell, *State Arts Agencies 1965-2003: Whose Interests to Serve?* (Santa Monica: RAND Corp, 2004), 4-6.

² Americans for the Arts, "NEA Appropriations History Fiscal Years 1966 to 2012" Factsheet (Americans for the Arts: Washington, D.C., 2013).

³ Samuel Schwarz et al., *Growth of Arts and Cultural Organizations in the Decade of the 1970s: Final Report* (Rockville: National Endowment for the Arts, 1983), 8.

(restaurant meals, parking, hotels, retail stores, etc.), for a combined \$135.2 billion of economic activity.⁴

The role of government in supporting the sector's growth in an orientation towards cultural democracy is less easily described. Valued diversity, open participation, and the right to be heard are fundamental elements of any concept of cultural democracy.⁵ However, it is these ideas that are so often compromised as racial and class contests determine allocations of resources. This dissertation suggests the complexity of interests acting within the arts sector. In Chicago, cultural activism, intergovernmental relations, and economic imperatives acted as rivers weathering and shaping the cultural landscape.

⁴ Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences, IV* (Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2012), 3.

⁵ Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, "Cultural Democracy: Introduction to an Idea," (1995) (accessed April 1, 2015).

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