



Entering Cultural Communities: Diversity and Change in the Nonprofit Arts (Rutgers Series: The Public Life of the Arts)

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Arts organizations once sought patrons primarily from among the wealthy and well educated, but for many decades now they have revised their goals as they seek to broaden their audiences. Today, museums, orchestras, dance companies, theaters, and community cultural centers try to involve a variety of people in the arts. They strive to attract a more racially and ethnically diverse group of people, those from a broader range of economic backgrounds, new immigrants, families, and youth.

The chapters in this book draw on interviews with leaders, staff, volunteers, and audience members from eighty-five nonprofit cultural organizations to explore how they are trying to increase participation and the extent to which they have been successful. The insiders' accounts point to the opportunities and challenges involved in such efforts, from the reinvention of programs and creation of new activities, to the addition of new departments and staff dynamics, to partnerships with new groups. The authors differentiate between "relational" and "transactional" practices, the former term describing efforts to build connections with local communities and the latter describing efforts to create new consumer markets for cultural products. In both cases, arts leaders report that, although positive results are difficult to measure conclusively, long-term efforts bring better outcomes than short-term activities.

The organizations discussed include large, medium, and small nonprofits located in urban, suburban, and rural areas—from large institutions such as the Smithsonian, the Walker Art Center, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the San Francisco Symphony to many cultural organizations that are smaller, but often known nationally for their innovative work, such as AS220, The Loft Literary Center, Armory Center for the Arts, Appalshop, and the Western Folklife Center.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A magnificent and timely account of how cultural institutions grapple with engaging their audience. Brimming with ideas and data and beautifully written, this book is perfect for students, practitioners, and researchers." -- *David Halle, Professor of Sociology, University of California Los Angeles.*

About the Author

Diane Grams, a sociologist and former museum director, directed this project through the Cultural Policy Center at The University of Chicago.

Betty Farrell, associate director of the M.A. Program in Social Sciences and senior lecturer at The University of Chicago, works on the sociology of culture.

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