

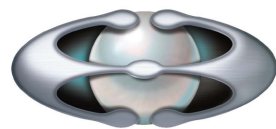


Connecticut Commission on Culture and
Tourism, Arts Division

The Values Study

Funded by the Wallace Foundation

Summary Presentation



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Participating Organizations

Discipline Focus: Visual Arts

- Artspace, Inc.
- Creative Arts Workshop
- Mattatuck Museum
- Arts Council of Greater New Haven
- Silvermine Guild Arts Center
- Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Discipline Focus: Dance

- Nutmeg Conservatory
- Music and Arts Center for Humanity
- Center for the Arts – Wesleyan Univ.
- Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium

Discipline Focus: Music

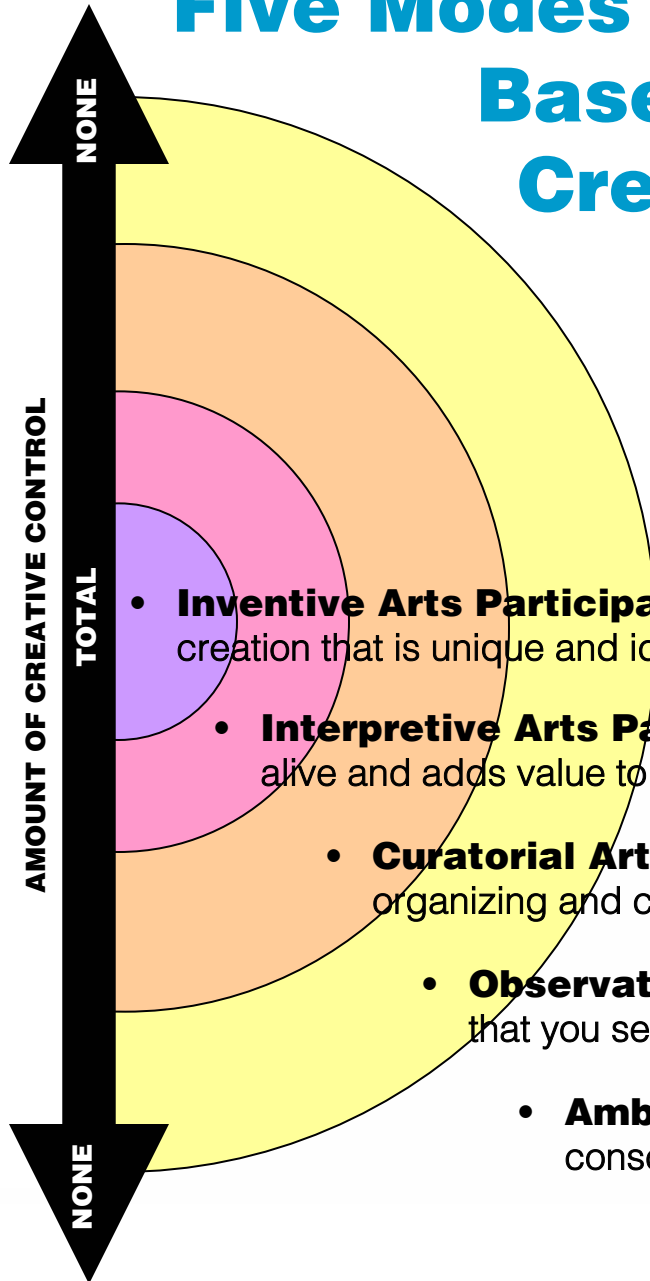
- Chamber Music PLUS
- Connecticut Choral Society
- Neighborhood Music School
- Stamford Symphony
- Westport Arts Center

Discipline Focus: Theater

- Stamford Theater Works
- Curtain Call
- Long Wharf Theater
- CAPA/Shubert Theater
- The Bushnell

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Five Modes of Arts Participation, Based on Level of Creative Control

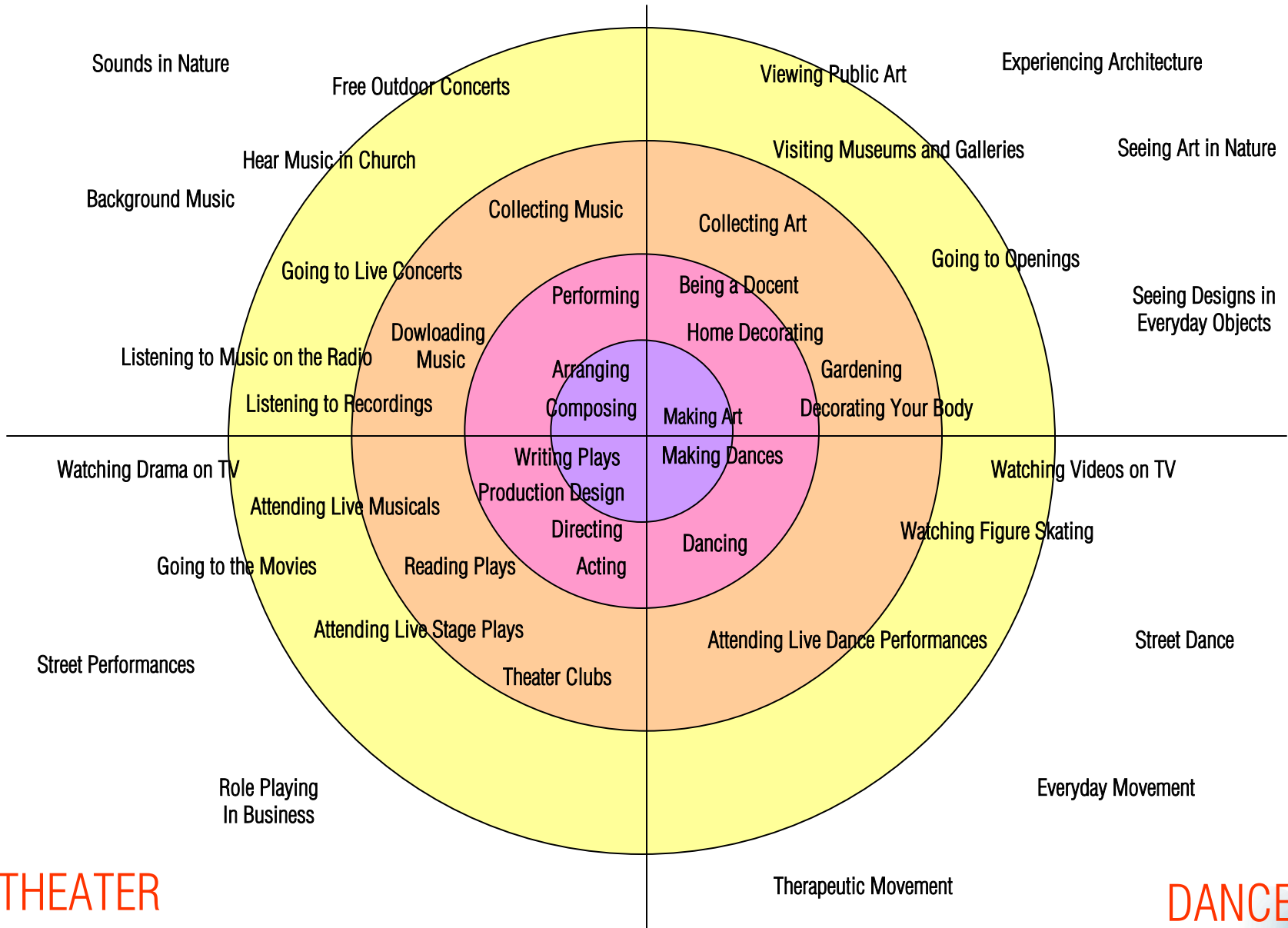


- **Inventive Arts Participation** engages the mind, body and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic, regardless of skill level.
- **Interpretive Arts Participation** is a creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing works of art, either individually or collaboratively.
- **Curatorial Arts Participation** is the creative act of purposefully selecting, organizing and collecting art to the satisfaction of one's own artistic sensibility.
- **Observational Arts Participation** encompasses arts experiences that you select or consent to, motivated by some expectation of value.
- **Ambient Arts Participation** involves experiencing art, consciously or unconsciously, that you did not select.

MUSIC

Involvement Opportunities

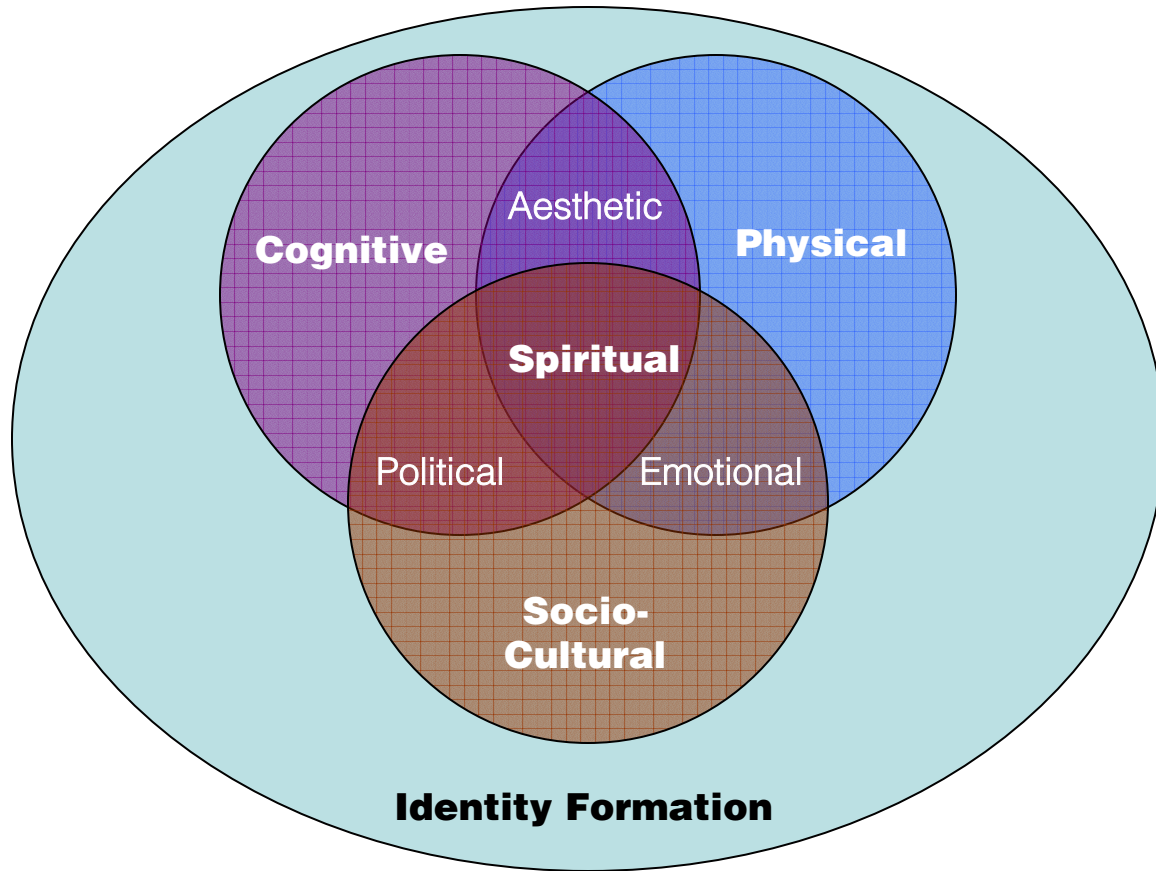
VISUAL ARTS



THEATER

DANCE

Values Derived from Arts Participation: A New Framework

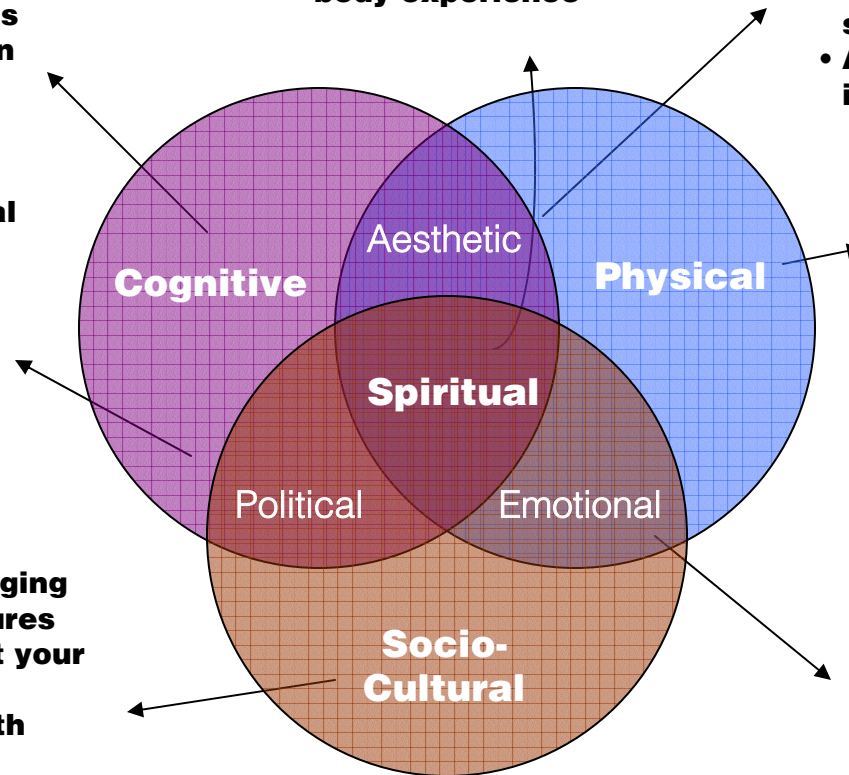


VALUES SURROUNDING ARTS PARTICIPATION

- Lengthen attention span
 - Learn to make choices
 - Activate the imagination
 - Connect ideas
 - Improve analytical skills
 - Improve communication skills
- Civic engagement; political dialogue
 - Get exposed to new ideas and opposing viewpoints
 - Clarify your own values
 - Transfer values to your children
- Civic/community pride
 - A sense of place; belonging
 - Learn about other cultures
 - Understand more about your cultural heritage
 - Better relationships with friends and family
 - Access cultural memory through pageantry, ritual
 - Communicate norms, beliefs
 - Establish a legacy
 - Remember things you've forgotten

- Escape, take a journey
- Express/strengthen your faith
- Renew, replenish energy; nourish the soul
- Transformation/out-of-body experience

- Transform a space into something new or better
- See more aesthetic value in your surroundings, ordinary objects
- Evolve your aesthetic sensibilities
- Awaken new creative outlets in others



- Exercise/stay fit
- Sensory pleasure, stimulation
- Sexual arousal
- Relax, de-stress
- Acquire new technical skills
- Improved coordination, movement skills
- Improved body image
- Gain a sense of possibility for human capacity

- Process emotions, get in touch with your feelings
- Empathize with others
- Relive your childhood
- Have fun, feel happy
- Be comforted, take solace
- Be disturbed

IDENTITY FORMATION

- Enhanced sense of self; who I am, how I fit in
- Improved self-confidence, direction, focus
- Sense of accomplishment, achievement, pride
- Self-esteem, self-worth, dignity

Red Threads

1. In the eyes of the consumer, we are all part of an inter-related arts ecosystem; a continuum of involvement opportunities across the disciplines that occur in a range of settings. The five levels of arts participation are inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational and ambient.
2. Many people who are very talented and creative do not consider themselves to be “artists.” It seems that a lot of people have a low regard for their own artistic abilities. In other cultures, art is more integrated into everyday life. How can we build value around creativity, so that art-making at any level of skill is encouraged, valued and respected in our communities?
3. In almost every interview, we witnessed the impact of childhood arts experiences on adult participation and overall quality of life. The importance of arts experiences for children is a value that transcends politics, race and class. If this is such a deeply held value, then why are such scant resources devoted to arts education?
4. Some people are very attuned to the intrinsic aesthetic value of their surroundings. They appreciate the compositional elements of just about any object or vision: color, form, texture, contrast, etc. They see the art of nature, and notice and appreciate the subtleties and nuances of design. This “aesthetic awareness” enhances their lives enormously.
5. Many people have latent or “unactualized” interests in various art forms and activities. One might infer that our communities would benefit from more “low-threshold success opportunities” to explore and awaken more of our collective creative potential.
6. The more creative control you have over an artistic experience, the more value it can yield. Inventive and interpretive arts participation creates value for others, as well as yourself.

Red Threads - Continued

7. Some people access one art form through another art form that is more familiar to them. Art forms that appeal to “multiple intelligences” are accessible to more people (e.g., musical theater).
8. Value to the individual is not necessarily dependent on the level of knowledge, technical skills or competency with the art form. Higher order values are possible, however, as context rises.
9. Many people derive a great deal of value from collecting or “curating” art for their private use, including music, crafts and fine art. Collected art often takes on the added symbolic value of one’s life experiences.
10. Authenticity is a core value for some people, who are attracted to the “realness” of art, be it folk art, art of indigenous peoples, historically accurate settings, and personal connections with artists.
11. A small number of people seek a high level of risk and provocation in their arts activities (e.g., “I want to be disturbed”). These people are more likely to be arts omnivores – very interested in multiple art forms.
12. Personal connections with artists can bridge a relevance gap and ignite latent arts interests and inspire participation.
13. Parents, especially during their early child-rearing years, often don’t have time for self-guided arts activities and shift their focus to facilitating their children’s arts participation – which is sometimes their only connection to the arts for a long while. Retirement is seen by some as an opportunity to re-awaken old arts interests and to cultivate new ones.

What do all these things have in common?

- Soft metal music
- Art supplies
- My voice
- A classical music CD
- A Bon Jovi CD
- Something I could sing along with
- A recording of Rachmaninoff's piano concerto
- Paper and pencil
- A really fat book
- Yarn
- Movies on DVD
- Yolanda Adams CD
- Nothing
- Writing materials
- Art materials
- Science fiction books
- A powerful PC with MIDI software and a keyboard
- Slides of the 100 most interesting works of art
- A radio

...they were all cited as the sole work of art that people would want with them, if stranded in a cabin in the woods. Why are these things so meaningful to people?

Summary

- Try to look at your programs through the eyes of your current and potential users
 - *What involvement opportunities do you offer at the various levels of participation (inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational, ambient)?*
 - *What value connections are you making with your constituents?*
 - *What other value opportunities might you offer?*
- Strategies for increasing participation (and support) include:
 - *Paint a better picture: sell people on the value, not just the art; be a better advocate*
 - *Improve access: reduce or remove inhibitors*
 - *Create relevance at new levels (e.g., artist relevance, social relevance)*
 - *Enhance the proposition: layer on “value added” features that tap into other values*
 - *Innovate programs that creatively tap into other veins of value*



Process Learnings

- Large investment of time, small investment of money
- Organic, cumulative, participatory learning process
- Deep and revealing conversations; people love to tell their stories
- High level of dialogue across the state
- Everyone is pretty much on equal footing here; small and large organizations at the same table
- A truly collaborative process; you have helped each other learn
- All of your knowledge and experience is reflected in the data
- Individual depth interviewing takes practice
- There can be immediate payoffs, long-term gain in perspective, commitment

