

The “Imbecile” Institution and the Limits of Public Engagement:
Art Museums and Structural Barriers to Public Value Creation

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ABSTRACT

As sites for the promotion and contestation of ideas of beauty, subjecthood, and citizenship, art museums play an important governance role in liberal democracy. They are also a major source of expenditure for local governments, yet they often seem only marginally committed to contributing to the public good. While citizen participation in the arts has demonstrable public benefits, the art museum does not prioritize the kinds of services and activities that build public value. Instead, it caters to a small, liberal elite that in North America is shrinking both as a percentage of the overall population and in terms of real numbers.

My research examines the structural barriers preventing art museums from adapting to their changing environments to create public value. I compare available evidence of the public value of arts participation as identified in the UK's Art and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project (2016) with data and evidence from North American art museums. I pay particular attention to the experiences and opinions of the art museum's "front-line" workers, those who have daily contact with the public, through a survey with members of Canadian Art Gallery Educators and case studies at four Canadian art museums.

I identify barriers to public value creation, including but not limited to: the composition of boards of trustees, hierarchical command-and-control organizational structures and functional departmentalization, staff demographics, the concept of artistic "excellence," and the peer assessment process. I argue, on the evidence compiled, that the art museum is what Veblen (1914) referred to as an "imbecile" institution: one which, once entrenched, perpetuates its power so successfully that it seems eternal, inevitable, and right, even as it disserves the public. I also argue that to build public value, the art museum must dramatically restructure and re-orientate towards a radically democratic mission in which citizen participation and the educational function are prioritized. Finally, I contend that this can only be achieved by policy makers at all levels of government taking bolder steps to develop the art museum as an "agonistic" institution, discouraging the centralization of culture, and requiring greater diversity (both cultural and professional) on art museum boards, in managerial and creative positions, and in the assessment committees that evaluate the organizations.

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DEDICATION

To my children, Alexia and Julian, who are young enough to have no memories of their mother not doing her Ph.D. at the kitchen table. I love you. You can have the table back now.

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PREFACE

In 2009 the City of Saskatoon committed to building a new \$58 million art museum to replace the aging (but serviceable) Mendel Art Gallery. Originally slated to open in 2014, the Remai Modern Art Gallery was inaugurated on October 20, 2017 at a final estimated cost of between \$104.1 and \$108.1 million.¹ At 11,582-square feet, it is five times the size of the Mendel. It was developed in part due to the largesse of the museum's namesake patron, Ellen Remai, who, from her fortunes derived from real estate development,² donated a total of \$103 million towards the project (more than half of which is promised over the next 25 years) (CBC News 2017). Designed by the well-known Toronto architect Bruce Kuwabara, the Remai Modern is built overlooking the South Saskatchewan River. It sits at the western edge of downtown, on the cusp of Saskatoon's historic Riversdale community. Long a low-income neighbourhood, Riversdale has been the focus of intense real estate speculation and debates about gentrification since 2012, as Saskatchewan experienced a short-lived energy-based economic boom. Importantly, 43 percent of Riversdale's population identifies as Aboriginal (First Nations and Métis), and gentrification of their neighbourhood is perceived by some residents as another act of colonial expropriation (Hamilton 2016).

The Remai Modern has been promoted for its potential to make Saskatoon a “creative city,” one to which skilled workers will be lured by the downtown's “cultural corridor.”³ The gallery's supporters have been reassured by promises that the Remai Modern will attract tourists from across Canada and abroad to meet its attendance targets (300,000 in the first year, settling at 220,000 in the following years)⁴ and contribute \$17 million in GDP to Saskatoon's economy

¹ This cost includes the construction of an underground parkade beneath the Remai Modern that was not included in the original plans for the new museum.

² Frank Remai, Ms. Remai's late husband, owned FRM, a management company that had dealings in real estate investment and development. (Frank's brother, Joseph, is the president of the Remai Group, founded in 1963, which likewise deals in real estate investment, development, and management in Saskatchewan and Alberta).

³ See City Councillor and Remai Modern Trustee, Cynthia Block, on the video broadcast “Upfront” that aired October 18, 2017.

⁴ By way of comparison, Edmonton's Art Gallery of Alberta receives just over 50,000 visitors per year, in a city almost four times the size of Saskatoon. In 2016, the Art Gallery of Ontario—with Toronto's much larger population base, already-present tourists, vastly larger and better collection, and greater resources for big-draw exhibitions (the AGO's annual operating budget is at least ten times larger than the Remai's)—saw 965,000 visitors. The Remai Modern's annual target translates into 700+ visitors per day, every day that the gallery is open.

in each of the museum's first two opening years. The Rемаi Modern Economic Impact Study also estimates that the art museum "will support 292 full-time equivalent jobs, generate \$30.4 million in output and \$10.4 million in labour earnings annually from 2017-2019" (SREDA 2015).

The new museum has faced some predictable backlash from residents who wanted to keep the organization in the Mendel building (savethemendel.org, n.d.), others upset at the significant cost overruns and delays (CBC News 2015), and those who protest any additional funding for the arts (Tank 2016). Several concerns have been raised about the soundness of the business plan. Observers from Saskatoon and elsewhere have argued that the attendance targets are unachievable and that the predictions for tourism are both unrealistic and a bad premise for community well-being (Hamilton 2017a; Dunmall 2017). Indigenous artists and their allies in the region have protested the lack of Indigenous staff and questioned the museum's commitment to the principles of Reconciliation (Dunmall 2017). Members of the cultural community have accused the Rемаi Modern's senior executives of prioritizing the museum's international profile at the expense of engaging the local community in the organization's goals and plans (Voon 2017). As a Saskatoon resident and former Mendel Art Gallery curator, I have worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and community members to help give voice to some of their concerns.

The Rемаi Modern comes at no small cost or risk to the City of Saskatoon, which contributed \$30.287 million to its construction, and is expected to contribute a minimum of \$5.4 million in annual operating funds for staff and maintenance (Hamilton 2017a).⁵ The museum itself has been tasked with self-generating \$5.3 million per year, and while Ellen Rемаi promises to match up to \$1 million of eligible donations in this category, it still leaves the museum on the hook for a larger sum than the Art Gallery of Alberta is able to raise in Edmonton, a significantly wealthier and more populous city than Saskatoon (Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority 2015; CBC News 2017; CBC News 2013). At municipal budget hearings in November 2017, Rемаi Modern representatives admitted that their revenue projections are "an area of particular vulnerability for the gallery" and stated that if the museum failed to meet its targets, it

⁵ The City of Saskatoon owns the Mendel Art Gallery building, which was built in 1964 for \$600,000 (\$4.75 million in 2017 dollars). In 2013, the City contributed \$2.1 million to the Mendel's annual operating funds, primarily for staff salaries (Tank 2017a; Mendel Art Gallery 2013).

would cut programming (Tank 2017b; Hamilton 2017b). Such a decision would negatively impact the museum's ability to serve the public, likely resulting in even smaller audiences and the need for further cuts.

During the planning stages for the Remai Modern, the gallery's board, along with Saskatoon City staff and Council, could have drawn lessons from other cities. Over the past decade or more, across North America, there have been many examples of failure when newly expanded or constructed museums are unable to engage publics and meet attendance targets for buildings that are too big and overstaffed. These have resulted in layoffs (of up to 75 percent of total staff, in the case of the Art Gallery of Windsor), ongoing financial bailouts by municipalities, and publicly owned gallery structures devoted more to weddings and corporate events than to engaging citizens with art and culture (CBC News 2013; Steele 2012; Sandals 2013; Wu 2002; Silberberg 2012). Yet the Remai Modern's board of trustees and others responsible for the new building seem confident in the promises of boosters that the museum's "world class" design and collection of Picasso prints will attract ample visitors and donations. In a Saskatoon Star Phoenix column following the Remai Modern's opening, a former City Councillor, a lawyer who served on the Mendel's board and participated in the planning of the Remai Modern from 2007 to 2016, derisively referred to those questioning the business plan as "the complainers and the haters" (Paulsen 2017). Likewise, the museum's board of trustees and management appear tone-deaf to concerns expressed by Saskatoon residents about the organization's disinterest in local engagement, including Indigenous engagement. The museum's executive director and CEO, Gregory Burke, ignored complaints on the public record about the lack of Indigenous staff when he told a reporter from the Globe and Mail: "A new museum that doesn't have a history of discrimination ... such as Remai Modern, has a chance to set a new course, a new direction, in terms of how we engage with contemporary Indigenous art practice" (Lederman 2017).

This is not an auspicious start, but neither is it terribly unexpected. As I shall explore in the following pages, art museums have always had an ambivalent relationship with the broader public and with the "public interest." My research is therefore not about the Remai Modern. Saskatoon's newest museum serves simply as a recent and proximate example of how art museums play a role in public policy and are major sources of expenditure for local governments, and yet often seem only marginally committed to contributing to the public good.

Rather, my dissertation is about the structural barriers preventing one of modern democracy's foundational public institutions—the art museum—from adapting to its changing environment to create public value. I examine the history of its establishment, why and when it faces pressure to better “engage” publics, how it resists this pressure, and the consequences of it not doing so. I also write about the ways that participation in the arts can benefit the public, and whether the art museum is capable of providing these benefits. I argue, on the evidence compiled, that the art museum must dramatically restructure if we want it to make public value creation its central purpose.

As highlighted by the Remai Modern example, my research is timely, if not urgent, and I hope that policy-makers take it to heart. While public engagement and public value are not synonymous, they are inextricably linked. In this era of global democratic deficit, public engagement has been touted as a solution to citizen disenchantment and a means of realigning governments with individuals and communities in collaborative processes of problem-solving and policy design (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2017; Canada's Public Policy Forum 2017). Public value is created when organizations engage citizens in ways that promote justice, fairness, trust, legitimacy, equity, ethos and accountability, as well as efficiency and efficacy. In doing so, the public is not just considered or consulted – it is, and must be, continuously created and constructed (Benington 2009: 235).

Still, public participation requires high levels of public investment, and success in engagement is difficult to measure or assess, especially in the absence of direct cause and effect when participation outcomes are long-term (Anderson, Warburton, and Wilson 2005). Critics of public engagement argue that, even when resources are ample, public deliberation and engagement processes are often done poorly or insincerely, and have therefore largely failed to deliver on their promises of empowerment (Lee 2015). When this happens, the techniques of participatory democracy can be used as tools for social control rather than liberation, and “public engagement” can erode trust in public institutions, diminishing rather than strengthening public value.

The museum is a public institution noted for its resistance to public engagement imperatives and incentives (Lynch 2009). Art museums, especially, have a habit of producing and distributing their services by staff to passive audiences in a consumer model of culture that is finding less and less of a public audience. Although government funding agencies have been

pushing arts organizations to improve their public engagement and demonstrated public value for several years (Brault 2014; Maczko et al. 2014), attendance at North American art museums is decreasing and audiences are becoming less diverse, even as Canadian and U.S. cities are growing increasingly diverse (Department of Canadian Heritage 2012; Farrell and Medvedeva 2010).⁶ Paradoxically, however, North America is witnessing a boom in art museum expansion and construction that rivals the first era of cultural infrastructure creation during the so-called Golden Age of Capitalism, following World War II (Blakemore 2016; Wu 2002). This means that if government funding of services and activities must be justified by appeals to the public interest, the public interest in art museums would appear to be something different than public value. The art museum is supported even when it serves a shrinking minority of the population, mostly white urban liberal elites.⁷ And it is supported even as a growing body of empirical studies establish that there *is* strong public value creation in arts participation, but primarily through modes of participation that are not offered by art museums.

In this dissertation, I do not argue that public engagement is necessary for an art museum's financial well-being. (Indeed, in some cases it is not.) Instead, I argue that the success of any art museum ought to be determined by the organization's ability to create public value, which requires public engagement and the centering of trust and legitimacy in the heart of all its considerations. Attendance is only one small part of this. I argue that especially in the current era of democratic deficit, art museums, like all public and publicly funded organizations, must understand that there are moral aspects to their legitimacy (G. Moore and Grandy 2017) and so align themselves with the public values that strengthen democracy. My research examines the reasons why public art museums often do such a poor job of it, and why they are not held to account for doing better. I argue, after Thorstein Veblen, that the art museum is an "imbecile" institution, one that has perpetuated its power so successfully that it seems eternal and unchanging, even as it serves its own interests, rather than the public's (Veblen [1914] 2011: 28).

⁶ Likewise, in the UK, attendance at the National Gallery and the Tate declined 20 percent between 2009 and 2014, and the UK's Department for Culture, Media, and Sport has reported drops in attendance at museums overall in 2015 and 2016 (Jones 2017).

⁷ With "elites," I reference C. Wright Mills (1956), and members of the sets of small but dominant, overlapping groups of individuals in any city who, through their occupations and social positions, share decisions having local, and sometimes regional and national, consequences.

And finally, in relation to the art museum, I examine the question, posed by the American poet Wendell Berry:

The question for art, then, is exactly the same as the question for science: Can it properly subordinate itself to concerns that are larger than its own? Can it judge itself by standards that are higher and more comprehensive than professional standards?

—Wendell Berry, *Life is a Miracle* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 2000, pp. 88-89).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The art museum is part of the liberal state's "exhibitionary complex," which developed during the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century and was instrumental in ordering and shaping the bourgeois citizenry required for modern democracy (Bennett 1994). Like other institutions, it operates with some degree of distance between its stated aims (that of providing edification on aesthetics and art history for the mass public) and its actual achievements. This space, which institutional theorists refer to as a "lag" (Veblen [1889] 1994, 117) or "gap" (Thelen 2009, 492) provides the conditions for the discourses and practices of reform. As identified by Bennett (1994, 90-91), the specific reform demands made on art galleries and other types of museums, have, for the past century, been characterized by two principles: 1) that of public rights, which sustains the demand that museums should be "equally open and accessible to all" and 2) that of representational adequacy, which supports the demand that museums should "adequately represent the cultures and values of different sections of the public." Both these principles are embedded in the concept of "public engagement," calls for which, over the past two decades, have been taken up with enthusiasm by a new generation of art museum reformers (see: Simon 2010; Brault 2014a; Open Engagement 2017).

Indeed, in an era of global democratic deficit, or democratic recession, "public engagement" is increasingly touted as a solution to citizen disenchantment, a means of realigning governments with individuals and communities in collaborative processes of problem-solving and policy design (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2017; Canada's Public Policy Forum 2017). In theory, public engagement describes "the involvement of specialists listening to, developing their understanding of, and interacting with, non-specialists" (Higher Education Funding Council for England 2006). Public engagement, or citizen engagement, is a cornerstone of public value (Moore 1995; Bozeman 2007; Benington 2011), a still-emerging theory and academic field that has informed numerous policy revisions in the public and private sectors over the past dozen years, from the BBC's charter renewal to the evaluation processes of the German Federal Employment Agency to the public image assessment process of football club FC Bayern Munich (BBC 2004; Strathoff 2016; Meynhardt et al. 2015). Public value advocates argue that public institutions must draw from the public's experiences to assess the ways that basic needs of individuals, groups, and society as whole are influenced in relationships involving the public (M.

H. Moore 1995; M. H. Moore 2012; Alford and O’Flynn 2009; Benington 2009; Meynhardt 2009). Calls for public engagement in the arts sector are therefore connected to a broader discourse about democracy, civic accountability, and social capital, and coincide with an international trend toward increased public involvement and engagement in the affairs and decisions of policy-setting bodies and public service organizations.

In fact, projects seeking to engage citizens in the management of public affairs have become so ubiquitous, globally, that some commentators have dubbed this era the “Participation Age” (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2017, 2). McQuarrie, Walker, and Lee (2015, 7) describe the “participatory revolution” as a phenomenon that crosses the political spectrum, and in which “citizen voice is viewed as a necessary counterweight to elite power and bureaucratic rationality.” Events and processes such as stakeholder dialogue sessions, crowdsourcing, town hall meetings, web-based open government initiatives, and deliberative democracy are championed as antidotes to the democratic deficit, or the decline of civic engagement, and the “thinning” of the contemporary public sphere (Ibid.). This thinning is characterized by vast inequalities of wealth, income, and organization within and across nations, all of which have expanded dramatically since the 1970s, along with rising political partisanship and the exponential growth of corporate power (Boggs 2000).

In many respects, the art museum exemplifies and reproduces this thinning. It is elitist, remaining the least publicly accessible of all museums (Bennett 1994). Although museums in general are noted for their resistance to public engagement imperatives (Lynch 2009), art museums, especially, have a habit of producing and distributing their services by staff to passive audiences in a consumer model of culture that is finding less and less of a public. As I detail in Chapter 2, attendance in recent years is declining in absolute numbers and visitors are becoming less diverse, even as cities in North America diversify (Hill Strategies Inc. 2010; Farrell and Medvedeva 2010; Amadasun 2013). The art museum is also a player in the corporatization of culture. The boundaries between collecting and investing are increasingly blurred, with art museum exhibitions serving to establish provenance, visibility, and critical legitimacy for collectors, dealers, and auction houses in a booming art market (Stallabrass 2004; Horowitz 2011). Since state cuts to the arts in the 1980s, corporations have progressively used sponsorship of art museums and art exhibitions to associate their brands with innovation, grant social distinction to their CEOs, and burnish their corporate image (Wu 2002, 122-31). Corporations, as

well as wealthy private patrons, are also frequently rewarded with naming rights and other publicity (Bartow 2007). Finally, rather than bringing people together to discuss ideas important to building the public sphere, the art museum more often provides a home for acrimonious debates about issues of cultural appropriation and hyperbolic judgements on the power of single artworks (Fusco 2017), a subject I explore in Chapter 9.

This dissertation proposes that the art museum is what the 19th century American economist Thorstein Veblen referred to as an “imbecile” institution: that is, an institution which, once entrenched, perpetuates its power so successfully that it seems eternal, unchanging, inevitable, and right, even as it clearly disserves the public (Veblen [1914] 2011, 28). Among the imbecile institutions identified by Veblen were patriarchy, neo-classical economics, and the American university, none of which have vanished since he wrote. My research asks: What makes the art museum imbecilic, and can this be changed? Within the art museum, could the imperative of public engagement ever cease to be mere rhetoric? Are there people in the art museum who possess the insight to transform the institution who are not being heard? If so, how? And if not, why?

The art museum is a useful case study for examining the parameters, possibilities, and contradictions of public engagement in an era of democratic deficit. Compared to prior policy buzzwords indicating the public duty of state-funded arts organizations – “consultation,” “dissemination,” “outreach,” and “audience and market development” – engagement has been taken up with great enthusiasm by arts funding bodies, professional associations of museum directors and educators, and art museums themselves. Evidence of this can be seen in the 2017 James Irvine Foundation report, “Building the Field of Arts Engagement”; in the Members’ Meeting Agendas of the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization (CAMDO/ODMAC), which since 2014 has included special sessions on public engagement, such as “Engaging Public Engagement” and “The Art Museum as Community Organizer”; and, since 2014, in the speeches and interviews of Simon Brault, CEO of the Canada Council (and former board Vice-Chair) (Ellis and Ramirez 2017; Brault 2014b; Brault 2015; Sandals 2014). A quick Google search for “curator of public engagement” or “curator of community engagement” also demonstrates a growing number of organizations seeking to fill such positions. In the arts sector, particularly in U.S. art museums, visitor or public engagement is emerging as a specialist discipline, with its own conferences (Engage More Now!, Open Engagement), publications (primarily blogs,

including: Museum 2.0, artmuseumteaching.com, and Doug Borwick's "Engaging Matters" on the artsjournal.com website), and genre of art: "socially engaged participatory art," as it has been labelled by Claire Bishop in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (Bishop 2012).

Yet, as I state in the Preface, public participation requires high levels of public investment, and success in engagement is difficult to measure or assess, especially in the absence of clear cause and effect when participation outcomes are long-term or ambiguous, as many outcomes of arts participation are. Even when resources are ample, public engagement processes are often done poorly or insincerely, and fail to deliver on their promises of inclusion and empowerment. When this happens, the engagement activities at best result in futile expenditures of valuable resources, and at worst erode trust in public institutions, diminishing rather than strengthening public value.

My research therefore proceeds from a position of uncertainty about what the new imperative of public engagement is doing. While I consider the engagement strategies of the new class of engagement professionals employed by art museums, my study began with a question about whether the experiences and insights of those art museum employees who have traditionally (and unglamorously) been tasked with "doing" public engagement might illuminate some of the structural barriers to public value creation through engagement. It was possible, I thought, that their work has given them an epistemic privilege in assessing public value creation through the visual arts, and that their marginalized position within the institution has given them what Mouffe refers to "oppositional consciousness" – an empowering mental state that prepares members of a subjugated group to undermine, reform, or rebel against a dominant system (Worsham and Olson 1999, 184). This study therefore employs the perspectives and stories of art museum educators, along with other staff and managers with backgrounds in education, who value the role of education in the art museum and the principle of operating for an inclusive public rather than specialists and elites.

Despite the art museum's apparent imbecility, there may be reason to work towards improving its public engagement. As DiMaggio has established, art museums display a wide range of art forms that are diverse in their subjects and politics, so that familiarity with the offerings of art museums serves as a "currency that lubricates interaction across a range of loosely bounded, partially articulated, contexts and networks" (DiMaggio 1996, 174). Art museum visitors tend to display more open, tolerant, and trusting dispositions, "an expansive cosmopolitanism reflected in

more positive attitudes towards political and social non-conformists, multiple artistic forms, and racial and international ‘others,’ as well as less punitive attitudes towards criminals,” along with greater respect for science and a more secular orientation (Ibid., 175). Because of this, the art museum plays a potentially meaningful role in negotiating and maintaining the precarious relationship between “liberal elites” and non-elites in modern democracies – a relationship that is in dire need of repair (Rorty 1997; Mouffe 2000; Murray 2012).

However, my general approach is to proceed with a sense of caution about the appeal of “engagement,” while focusing on the concept’s broader appeal and what this appeal means in light of the art world’s preoccupation with “diversity” over structural inequality (Fusco 2017). In particular, what does “public engagement” aim to achieve? Why are art museums and other arts organizations under pressure to better “engage” the public? Who do they think this public is? And who, within the organizations, is responsible for public engagement, and why? What institutional factors help and hinder their progress? When does public engagement become an imperative, and does the imperative transform the institution? These are some of the questions I pose in this dissertation as well as to educators and other staff tasked with public engagement in art museums, and whose insights and responses are layered throughout the dissertation.

John Dewey wrote: “The factors that have glorified fine art by setting it upon a far-off pedestal did not arise within the realm of art nor is their influence confined to the arts” (Dewey 1934, 4-5). This dissertation describes how the “imbecility” of the art museum is bound up with those of the other institutions that were scorned by Veblen: patriarchy, which devalues not only women but the labour of reproduction (including social reproduction) in order to glorify acts of creative destruction; neoclassical economics, which underwrite an economic system predicated on the concept of a world comprised of atomistic, selfish, and invidious individuals, and which made colonialism morally defensible; and the university, which, with its disciplined organization of knowledge, played a critical role in the production of modernism and postmodernism, producing professionalized artists, complete with a highly specialized language and a manner of working, who claim separation from applied art, amateurism, cultural work, ornamentation, and other forms of art-making embedded in people’s everyday lives. Furthermore, insofar as the art museum represents liberalism’s universalist anthropology, which conceives of cultural difference not as essential but as an “incidental and transitional” attribute of human beings (Gray 2002, 6),

the institution fights against reality of value pluralism within the public(s) it is mandated to serve.

As I elaborate in the next chapter, my research employs techniques from institutional ethnography, historical analysis, and political theory and philosophy to describe the challenges of public engagement by art museums and to understand why, when most of the public has essentially never been engaged by art museums, public engagement is now viewed as an imperative. This project asks whether the incremental efforts to “engage” broader publics by art museums (and, by extension, other liberal institutions) will create appreciably improved public value, or whether these institutions, founded on the liberal ambitions to level down, marginalize, rationalize, or universalize all instances of cultural difference, are incapable of fundamental change. If the latter, policy makers and funding bodies will need to radically rethink their funding rationales and priorities in order to build public value. Thus, I will assess the possibilities for, and institutional limits to, improving the art museum’s public engagement, and explore the possible consequences of doing so, or not.

Organization of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, I provide some background to my professional interest in this research area, which entails 20 years of complicity and frustration with the art museum and related institutions. I ask why public engagement is a key issue today, when the public’s prior and historic lack of engagement with the art museum has never seriously threatened the art museum’s public subsidies. Gender bias factors into the art museum’s order, and I introduce this foundational issue here. Finally, I discuss my fieldwork and methodology, and provide brief introductions to my four case studies.

Chapter 3 is devoted to an examination of the art museum as an institution, as a frame for the efforts of individuals to produce encounters between members of the public with works of art, and to promote and contest ideas of beauty, subjecthood, and citizenship. Following Duncan and Bennett (Duncan 1995; Duncan and Wallach 1980; Bennett 1994), I argue that the art museum served during the modern period to construct and elevate a modern, individualist self that exists at the centre of a “boundless, a-social universe” (Duncan 1995, 130). I link this

formation of modern subjectivity to what some political theorists call the “empty place of power” in modern democracy (Mouffe 2000; Lefort 1991).

In the fourth chapter, I review art museum governance, in the form of board composition, as an essential part of the institution’s structure, demonstrating that the “empty place” of the art museum is in fact organized to preserve and uphold the cultural norms and values of ruling elites, and quite often their financial interests.

In Chapter 5, I explore the concept of public value and its requirement of public engagement, using the theories of Moore, Talbot, and others. I also assess the three main arguments that have been made to justify arts subsidies in Canada, the US, and other Anglo nations—the “intrinsic” argument, the “instrumental” argument, and the “cultural value” argument—in relation to the concept of public value.

My sixth chapter looks at the available evidence of the ways that publicly funded arts—and art museums in particular—contribute to public value. I draw largely, but not exclusively, from the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council’s report, *Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture* (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). I seek evidence of the ways that the arts contribute value to the public sphere by promoting or creating equity, diversity, empathy, innovation, social capital, and other attributes of public value, paying particular attention to evidence related to the visual arts and the actual or potential offerings of art museums.

I shift my focus in the seventh chapter to examine the practical work and perspectives of a class of actors in the institution: the front-line workers, or educators, public programmers, and interpreters. Using data from my online survey of Canadian art museum educators and selected interviews, I explain how they work with and against the traditions and hierarchies of the art museum in attempt to create public value. I compare the aims and values of these museum employees with the values and standards of traditional museum management. I consider the degree of agency that these workers have to effect change in the institution, and how the institution acts upon these individuals to coordinate their work in line with its dominant priorities.

In Chapter 8, I turn to my case studies, and attempt to understand how public engagement becomes an organization-wide imperative, and the ways this transforms the institution. In the process, I demonstrate how field-level heterogeneity can result from the shifting of institutional goals from institutional preservation to public value creation. I also advance further answers to

the question of structural barriers to public value creation, as each of my four case study museums has run up against different barriers in their efforts to transform.

Returning to Veblen, in Chapter 9 I argue that the art museum has maintained its institutional “imbecility” by focusing all its reform efforts at issues of content and representation, rather than structure or function. In doing so, it has been both a vehicle and a driver for what Cornel West called “the new cultural politics of difference” (West 1990). Following Rorty (1997) and Mouffe (2000, 2013), I contend that this exclusive focus has contributed to structural inequality and the democratic deficit.

Chapter 10 offers some reflections on the role for funders and policy makers in better engaging citizens in and through the arts, and the reasons why they should. I review John Cotton Dana’s admonitions of the art museum in *The Gloom of the Museum* (1913) and his policy recommendations made over a century ago. Finally, I ask whether the art museum is likely to be transformed as a result of the current public engagement imperative. I suggest that we should not abandon the aspirations of public engagement or public value creation, but contend that these ideals are both too large and too contentious to be operationalized within existing institutional structures.

In my conclusion, I briefly review my research questions and discuss my project’s key findings, as well as its limitations. I examine the implications of this research and make recommendations for further research.

Contribution to Scholarship

Cultural policy typically falls between an array of academic disciplines, and this dissertation is no exception. My research is a useful case study for understanding issues of political dominance, value, and modernity, and will contribute to the interdisciplinary literature on institutions and institutional work, which includes scholarship in sociology (including feminist sociology) and organizational studies. It will enhance the body of academic and professional literature offering an ethnographic approach to the art museum, as well as to cultural policy studies of arts funding paradigms. Finally, it will be a significant addition to the small but growing bodies of literature on cultural value, public value creation in arts organizations, and public engagement by art museums.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

My interest in the question of public engagement with or by art museums emerges from 20 years' experience working in the visual arts as a writer, curator, and program officer at a federal funding agency. Much of my work in the sector has been focused on improving accessibility and representational adequacy in art journalism, exhibition-making, and granting. This has entailed both ongoing complicity and frustration with the art museum's resistance to engaging broader publics through what Bennett describes as its continuing commitment to display principles and related professional standards and traditions "which entail that the order subtending the art on display remains invisible and unintelligible to those not already equipped with the appropriate cultural skills" (Bennett 1994, 10).

Our most basic statistics on the public's engagement with art museums are depressing. Although most North American cities have greatly diversified since the 1950s, the demographic characteristics of art museum visitors have not: they remain predominately white, affluent, and well-educated (Schuster 1991; DiMaggio 1996). Measuring attendance and participation in the arts is notoriously difficult (Allin 2009), and Canadian data is weak. The most comprehensive recent data on art museum attendance in this country is a 2010 report by Hill Strategies, which claims that just over 30 percent of Canadians visited an "art gallery" that year (Hill Strategies Inc. 2010). However, there are strong reasons to doubt that anywhere close to that many Canadians set foot in an art museum in 2010. The Hill Strategies data was pulled from Statistics Canada's 2010 General Social Survey, which focused on the time use of individuals and was conducted through hour-long random digit-dial land-line telephone surveys. The survey method ensured a selection bias, as wireless-only adults, who were unable to participate in the survey, are more likely to be young, living in low-income households, renting their homes, and living alone (Blumberg and Luke 2007). I participated as a respondent in the survey. The sole question on art gallery attendance was embedded in the middle of the questionnaire, a point when respondents typically have become fatigued, disinterested, or distracted, and are more prone to satisficing (providing the first answers that seem acceptable) and acquiescence (answering yes) (Krosnick and Presser 2010). When I asked what was meant by "art gallery," my interviewer was not permitted to clarify the question for me. Thus, the 30 percent of Canadians who claim to have visited an art gallery in the previous year may have visited an art museum, or a commercial

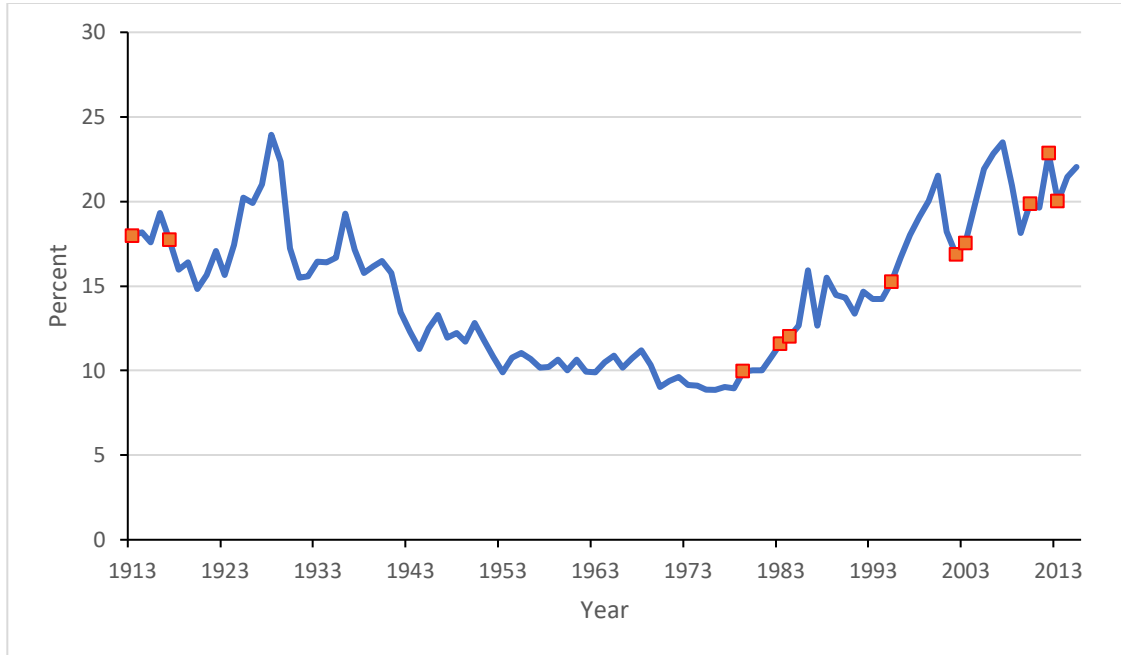
art gallery, or a display of art in a shopping mall or classroom, depending on their personal understanding of “gallery,” and a few may not have visited any art displays at all. The Hill Strategies report was commissioned by Heritage Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council, agencies with vested interests in demonstrating high rates of participation in cultural activities, and the ambiguity of the questionnaire is not made explicit in the report (Hill Strategies Inc. 2010). Most art museum professionals I have spoken to over the years have estimated that fewer than 10 percent (many say fewer than 5 percent) of their cities’ residents visit their organization in a given year.

Although we really have no idea how many Canadians visit an art museum annually, the Hill Strategies report still demonstrates that “art galleries” do a particularly poor job of attracting Indigenous audiences and individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the report shows that “culturally diverse” (i.e. racialized) visitors tend to be much younger and wealthier than average (Ibid.). Other recent American, Canadian, and U.K. studies suggest that the absolute number of visitors to art museums is dropping (Janes 2004; Farrell and Medvedeva 2010; Department of Canadian Heritage 2012; Blakemore 2016; Jones 2017). American studies indicate that, over the last 20 years, attendance at art museums by people of colour has declined by a larger percentage than that of white attendees (Farrell and Medvedeva 2010). In short: art museum audiences are whiter, richer, and better educated than most of the population, and they seem to be getting more so. Indigenous people, racialized people, poor people, and most of the shrinking middle class constitute the “unengaged.”

The Call to Engage

Why people *should* care about public engagement by art museums is obvious, since issues of access and equity legitimate public expenditure in most domains. However, public engagement has not always been the institution’s burning concern and in most cases this has not adversely affected its public subsidies. So why do people care about public engagement now? A comparison of the literature calling for art museum reform against a timeline of income inequality in North America reveals that most calls for democratization of the art museum have been written at times of intensifying economic and social inequality.

Figure 2.1: Publication dates of significant critiques of art museum elitism and calls for democratization of the art museum mapped onto a timeline of income inequality in the United States (percentage of national income held by the top 1% of earners, 1913-2015)



Source for timeline data: Piketty and Saez, “Income Inequality in the United States 1913 to 1998” (updated to 2015) (Piketty and Saez 2003)

Date	Publication
1913	John Cotton Dana, The Gloom of the Museum, Harvard University
1917	John Cotton Dana, The New Museum, The Elm Tree Press
1979	Karl E. Meyer, The Art Museum: Power, Money, Ethics, A Twentieth Century Fund Report Pierre Bourdieu, La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement, Les editions de minuit
1983	Alan Feld, Patrons Despite Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy, A Twentieth Century Fund Report
1984	Edward C. Banfield, The Democratic Muse: Visual Arts and the Public Interest, A Twentieth Century Fund Report Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Routledge
1995	Carol Duncan, Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums, Routledge
2002	Stephen E. Weil, Making Museums Matter, Smithsonian Institute Press
2003	Douglas Worts, On the Brink of Irrelevance?: Art Museums in Contemporary Society, Kluwer Academic Publishers
2010	Nina Simon, The Participatory Museum, Museum 2.0
2012	Jennifer Barrett, Museums and the Public Sphere, Wiley-Blackwell
2013	Robert E. Janes, Museums and the Paradox of Change, Routledge

The correlations in timing of publications critical of the art museum with rises in overall social inequality suggest that the art museum functions as a curious barometer for the general well-being of democracy. It is, then, no coincidence that as the prices for art become inflated during times of growing inequality (Huebscher 2009), there is an inverse relationship between art market growth and the economic factors that bring stability to democracies.

On the other hand, the relationship between democracy and the building of art museums is not so obvious. During North America's most "equal" period, that following WWII until the early 1970s, the civic optimism of the era saw a parallel support for art museums and an art museum construction boom (Banfield 1984). By contrast, today the calls for art museum reform are very strong, attendance is down, and some critics even warn of the museum's impending demise, citing threats from the impact of new technology, demographic and generational change, financial uncertainty, declining attendance, and institutional inertia (Worts 2003; Weil 2002a; Black 2012). Yet, at the same time, cities across North America are experiencing a second paroxysm in art museum construction (Blakemore 2016). Civic optimism may still play a role in today's boom, but private capital plays a larger role (Wu 2002), as does the influence of Florida's "creative class" thesis, which has more to do with attracting capital through cultural infrastructure than faith in the ability of cultural projects to contribute to public value creation (I explore this further in Chapter 4). In other words, in terms of "dimensional publicness"⁸ (Bozeman 1987) the art museum has become "less public" and "more private" than it was in past decades, and more private than its current legal status would indicate, much like some other public sector agencies and nonprofits today, including universities. This makes the question of "public engagement" by these institutions more vexing and crucial. Adding further urgency, in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called upon museums to comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Call to Action no. 67, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2012). This requires that Canadian art museums engage in serious discussions about decolonization and its implications for operations.

⁸ Bozeman (1987) argues that in fact there are no wholly "public" or "private" organizations, but that all organizations are based on two sources of authority – economic authority and political authority – and that these authorities are best viewed as dimensions, thus every organization, regardless of legal status (government or business or some mix of the two) can be viewed in terms of "publicness dimensions."

The Fieldwork

Sara Ahmed writes, “We can get stuck *in* institutions by being stuck *to* a category” (Ahmed 2012, 4). This seems to be true for art museum educators. As I began to observe the burgeoning discourse around “engagement” at art museums, I was surprised to note that it was not being led by traditional front-line workers with experience in art museum education, but by a new category of more visible and celebrated employee typically called some variation on “public engagement” or “museum engagement” “manager/officer/curator.” Thus, my first research task was to find out what these practitioners conceived engagement to be, and how this intersected with the ideas and tasks of traditional front-line workers. To this end, in the fall of 2015 I participated in a three-week online workshop on public engagement by art museums, offered by the University of British Columbia’s Cultural Planning program, and attended a two-day conference on public engagement in art museums—Engage More Now!—at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (detailed in Chapter 7).

While still assessing the opportunities and limits of the emerging field of engagement, I worked with a focus group of three senior art museum educators to craft an approximately 30-minute online survey (see Appendix A). This was distributed to members of the professional organization Canadian Art Gallery Educators (CAGE) in April 2016. The survey received a 51 percent response rate, with 26 individuals completing the questionnaire within three months.

Informally, I polled senior educators in my network of colleagues, and colleagues from various arts funding agencies, to find out which Canadian art museums were noted for being particularly “engaged with engagement.” Which museums were grappling with building their public value, rather than maintaining the status quo? The list of public art museums was surprisingly short (I deliberately excluded university art galleries⁹) and there was nearly universal consensus among the individuals I spoke with. I reached out to five of the six

⁹ Historically, university and college museums have been conceived as “teaching museums,” that is, places where students can experience art objects first-hand, as opposed to merely studying them in textbooks. Campus art museums were also meant to push conversations and collaborations across disciplines and departments. The specialized focus of the university art museum “public” is important, and certainly there are variations in the degrees of public value offered by these organizations, but its public is qualitatively different than that of the public art museum: the public art museum’s public is not as uniformly educated and is much more diverse in terms of age, class, and other features.

recommended museums, and secured four as case studies for this research project (see Chapter 8 for details).

From May to August 2016, I conducted semi-structured interviews and guided group conversations with 21 individuals at six Canadian art museums, spending two days at each of the four case studies. My interviews with individual front-line staff, along with a number of their curators, directors, and managers of operations were conducted one-on-one, but I also held a group conversation at each organization, at which I shared general observations I had made in my research to date, and pushed participants to collectively explore problems related to public engagement and public value creation. Finally, I gathered documents related to the organizations' grants, budgets, strategic plans, and organizational structure.

To conclude my field work, I conducted two telephone interviews with: 1) a senior exhibition interpreter at a very large North American art museum, whose job it is to reframe curatorial theses and make them relevant and interesting to non-specialist publics, and 2) a senior educator who, in the online survey, had identified her mid-sized to large organization as operating with a public value deficit. Both museums shall remain unidentified to preserve confidentiality.

The museums I visited were the following:

- The MacKenzie Art Gallery, in Regina, SK, the largest museum among my case studies. Most staff, including the Chief Curator, are unionized under the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 5791. At the time of my visit, union members had been without a contract for a year. They were engaged in tense negotiations with management, including a labour consultant hired by a relatively new Executive Director/CEO, Anthony Kiendl, whose tenure had begun in May 2014. The MacKenzie Art Gallery had been recommended to me by colleagues in the field due to its longstanding commitment to Indigenous artists and curators. The MacKenzie Art Gallery states as its mission: “The MacKenzie Art Gallery engages people in transformative experiences of the world through art” (MacKenzie Art Gallery 2013). Of all my case studies, the MacKenzie Art Gallery was the most traditional art museum in terms of staff functions and hierarchies, with a clear split between curatorial and educational departments, and a strong focus on curatorial vision. The MacKenzie Art Gallery is housed in a large Provincial government-owned building located in the fourth largest urban park in North America, at the edge of a stately but historically NDP-voting neighbourhood, It holds nearly 5,000 works in its

permanent collection, which was until recently the largest and highest quality public collection in Saskatchewan.

- The Nanaimo Art Gallery, in Nanaimo, BC, a small operation comprising a store-front gallery and education space (Art Lab) in the heart of the city's bustling shopping and tourist district. Founded by faculty of Malaspina College (now Vancouver Island University), the Nanaimo Art Gallery had two spaces—one on campus, one downtown—for decades. Following a major revisioning process in 2013/14, they amalgamated into the single space on Commercial Street in May 2015. Nanaimo Art Gallery's mission is to be "a welcoming place of enlightenment, enjoyment and education. It is a focal point for the community. Through exhibitions, programs, and our growing art collection, we explore the boundaries of artistic imagination, with and for the people of Nanaimo, the region and beyond." Its vision is simply: "Inspiring and challenging our community through art" (Nanaimo Art Gallery 2017). Significantly, both the Executive Director, Julie Bevan, and the Curator, Jesse Birch, have backgrounds as educators, which is unusual in their ranks. Furthermore, where art museum curators and directors are increasingly "nomadic" (Gielen 2013), Birch was born and raised in a semi-rural area of Nanaimo, and now, after two decades studying and working elsewhere, he once again makes his home in the city.

- Two Rivers Gallery of Prince George and Region, in Prince George, BC. Two Rivers Gallery is an organization that emerged from the activities of a local artists' group which first met to exhibit their work in 1949. It is housed in a purpose-built \$5.2 million construction completed in 2000 in the heart of Prince George's downtown. The museum has two main galleries and a community exhibition space, along with an outdoor sculpture court, a large gift store, and open access to staff offices on the second floor. Unlike any other art museum with which I am familiar, its dedicated space for education, workshops, and public studios (including the MakerLab and the Make Art Make Sense space) eclipses the space devoted to exhibitions. Two Rivers Gallery also boasts a unique tripartite management structure, which was established by a now-departed Managing Director, Peter Thompson, a Caribbean-born-and-raised engineer and information technologist who, finding himself in the top leadership position of a Canadian art museum without a background in the arts, gave full reign to both the Curator/Artistic Director and the Director of Public Programs to deploy their budgets as they saw fit. Together, all three positions write and sign the Management report in the museum's Annual Report. Thompson was

a strong advocate for community participation in the form of maker-spaces, workshops in which Prince George residents can both learn to make arts and crafts and teach skills they know. When Thompson returned to Barbados in 2015, the Director of Public Programs, Carolyn Holmes, moved into the position of Managing Director. Artists from across Canada who exhibit at Two Rivers Gallery speak of the extraordinary public turnout to gallery events.

- The Art Gallery of Mississauga, in Mississauga, ON, opened in 1987, along with the Mississauga Civic Centre on Celebration Square, in which it is housed. The relatively new Executive Director, Mandy Salter (appointed in May 2015) describes herself as supporting “the cross section of art and communities” and says she is “inspired by the politics of collaboration” (Art Gallery of Mississauga 2016). In 2016, the Art Gallery of Mississauga’s mission statement began with the words “Engage. Think. Inspire.” (Ibid.). Unique among art museums I have studied, the Art Gallery of Mississauga proudly states its education philosophy on the first page of its annual report (most museums do not have an articulated education philosophy). In one of Canada’s most culturally diverse cities, the small staff of six women manages to reflect the community, speaking ten languages fluently between them. Sadaf Zuberi, the Business Operations Manager, who moved from Pakistan to Canada only a few years ago, keeps her desk not in the administrative office, but in the centre of the studio space, so she can greet visitors personally and talk to them about art from her own non-expert position. The Art Gallery of Mississauga experiments with radical inclusivity. For instance, when they found they could not afford to convert both their washrooms to accommodate wheelchairs, they closed one room to create additional storage and now boast a single gender-neutral multi-stall washroom. At the same time, they offer culturally sensitive programs such as female-only exhibition tours for local Muslim women. The museum’s biggest challenge is its location inside the futuristic and architecturally aloof Civic Centre. Though the large public plaza outside the building provides programming and outreach opportunities in the warmer months, the Art Gallery of Mississauga remains hidden away in an unsuitable space. One of the organization’s aims for the future is to inhabit a more sustainable and inspired environment.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of case-study organizations, 2016

	MacKenzie Art Gallery	Nanaimo Art Gallery	Two Rivers Gallery	Art Gallery of Mississauga
Year Established	1953	1976	1971	1987
Total Ft.² (m²)	100,000 (11,310)	5825 (541)	16,000 (1,486)	4,200 (390)
Galleries Ft.² (m²)	24,000 (2,200)	1,376 (128)	3,200 (297)	2,800 (260)
Annual Operating Budget	\$4.2 million	\$517,000	\$1.2 million	\$580,000
# of employees	21 full-time 23 part-time	6 full-time	7 full-time 20 part-time	6 full-time
# of works in Collection	4,500+	200+	400+	500+
City Population	240,000	90,000	73,000	781,000
Annual Attendance (in gallery)	74,869	18,000	40,183	13,085
Annual Attendance (off-site)	92,074	7,000	16,986	73,003
City median income	\$85,000	\$48,500	\$76,545	\$66,464
City poverty rate	12%	15-50%	10.7%	13.6%
City median age (years)	37.3	45.2	39	38.5
Aboriginal Population as % of Total	13%	6.3%	12.8%	0.5%
Non-Aboriginal Racialized Population as % of Total	5.6%	7%	7.2%	53.2%

A Note on Public Value Creation, Gender, and Hierarchy

One of the most obvious and yet essential observations of my research is that responsibility for public engagement is unevenly divided in art museums, and the distribution of this responsibility is political. Everywhere, but especially in organizations where public value creation is less valued, those responsible for public engagement inhabit institutional spaces that are also less valued. The individuals most accountable for public value creation are art museum educators and public programming staff, and, where they exist, interpretation staff. Apart from interpreters, these are primarily front-line workers responsible for facilitating “art experiences” for non-elite publics, including children, school groups, seniors, and others. Most individuals occupying these institutional positions are women, and although their levels of education, training, and experience may equal or exceed those of the curators and directors, their work pays less. These individuals are also less likely to occupy management positions in their organizations and they are rarely consulted by funding agencies when the agencies seek input on the evolving needs and challenges of the sector. As Dewdney et. al. discovered while writing a history of the emergence and practice of education at London’s Tate Gallery since 1970, there has been a “consistently uneasy relationship between collection and exhibition curators, and the educational department (‘the poor cousin’...); the former invariably looking upon the latter as a necessary corollary to the public service of the museum, but not one significantly invested in the aesthetic or intellectual project of the art museum” (Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh 2013, 28).

The disregard for art education afflicts not only curators and directors, but also arts policy makers. For example, in 2014 staff from the Canada Council for the Arts toured to several cities across Canada to consult with stakeholders in the visual arts in preparation for a granting system overhaul. I was invited to the Saskatoon event, along with approximately 20 colleagues from across Saskatchewan. We were a group of curators, artist-run centre and museum directors, and a handful of professional artists, being asked what we needed to improve our work’s public impact. I was struck by the fact that not a single art educator was among the invited participants. I later polled colleagues in other provinces, and they confirmed that art museum educators had also not been present at their consultations. Thus, the key link of the professional visual arts to the Canadian public was neither considered a stakeholder nor an informant of value, even when the Canada Council was reorienting its programs to emphasize public engagement. It is clear that as a sector, art museums continue to privilege the author (or auteur) function normally accorded

to the (male) exhibition curator, (male) CEO, and (male) artist, while denigrating the labour of care or “social reproduction” (Federici 1975), which is traditionally an unwaged or poorly paid labour assigned to women. Accordingly, it should come as little surprise that among my case study organizations, three were headed by women, two with strong backgrounds in education, and all three female directors had either elevated education positions to levels on par with curatorial functions or employed curators with education backgrounds. And while these observations are not the driving point of my research, one cannot properly comprehend the structural barriers to public engagement without conceding the gendered order of the institution.

Of the 29 educators who participated in my research as focus group members and survey respondents, 26 self-identified as women. To preserve confidentiality, while also underscoring the gendered order of the profession, I refer to all these individuals using the feminine pronoun *she*, along with the derivative forms *her*, *hers*, and *herself*.

Methodology

For much of its data, this dissertation draws on a century’s worth of art museum critiques and publicly available information on funding, attendance, and programming at art museums. Like art exhibition-making, the research in this dissertation is interdisciplinary. I draw from museum studies, the sociology of art, art theory, political theory, organizational studies, institutionalism, and public policy analysis, as well as data I collected from attendance and participation in public engagement events, the four art case studies, additional interviews, the survey, and first-hand experiences from my own two decades of work in the sector. And just as the primary products of art museums do not simply express ideas but are also constitutive, contributing to the formation of subjectivities, the structure of this dissertation moves back and forth between history, theory, empirical research, and analysis, with each perspective building and reflecting on the other, sometimes to support an argument and at other times to contradict or question it.

Although I employ no single methodology, the overall framework for data collection and analysis draws from institutional ethnography or IE (D. E. Smith 1987; D. E. Smith 1999; Devault 2006; Devault and McCoy 2006). IE combines theory and method, is concerned with the mapping of social relations and interested in overt and latent operations of power. Its

practitioners also employ a certain amount of reflexivity in their approaches to data analysis. Most importantly, IE is concerned with policy-relevance, and is therefore pragmatic, situating itself between the extremes of objectivism and relativism, and deriving its theories from empirical evidence (Devault 2006). The methods of IE provided me with guidance in gathering and understanding information related to the work processes of art museums, and how they are coordinated through texts and discourses. Beyond IE, Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu 1990) assisted me in analyzing how art museums as agents are situated in relation to other agents, sectors, or ideas (potential 'fields') such as 'the public,' the university, the government, and the market. Reliance on Bourdieu also compels me to acknowledge the inescapability of culture and framing, and thus the necessary incompleteness of this study. In this regard, field theory aligns very well with the theories of Thorstein Veblen, whose term "imbecile institution" I have borrowed for my dissertation title, and who denied the possibility of perfect objectivity, given that every researcher's perspective and limits of knowledge are institutionally shaped.

As a general framework for my analysis, I assess the art museum from a pragmatist public value perspective (Bozeman 2007; Benington 2011; Talbot 2008). I have chosen this approach for the pragmatist commitment to prediction, problem-solving, and action, as well as for the important theoretical reframing of public interest by public value scholars as fundamentally different from the aggregate of individual interests. I also rely heavily on Chantal Mouffe's theorizing of the "democratic paradox" facing liberal states and the role of public institutions in addressing current threats to functioning democracy (Mouffe 2000; Mouffe 2013). Bozeman defines an ideal public interest as "those outcomes best serving the long-run survival and well-being of a social collective construed as a "public" (Bozeman 2007, 17), a definition that accords with Mouffe's. He acknowledges that it is a normative standard, thus raising the whole panoply of problems associated with standards in general, but he argues that this is not in itself a valid reason for abandoning the standard. Pragmatism also sees no fundamental difference between practical and theoretical reason, nor any ontological difference between facts and values. Both facts and values have cognitive content: knowledge is what we should believe, and values are hypotheses about what is good in action. My research is intended to help guide action.

CHAPTER 3: THE ART MUSEUM AS INSTITUTION

In this chapter, I examine the art museum as an institution, as a frame for the efforts of individuals to produce encounters between members of the public with works of art, and to promote (or contest) ideas of beauty, subjecthood, and citizenship. Following the classic studies of Duncan and Bennett (Duncan 1995; Bennett 1994), I describe how the art museum served during the modern period to construct and elevate the ideal subject for liberal democracy and consumer capitalism. I then link this formation of modern subjectivity to what some political theorists describe as the “empty place of power” that is foundational to modern democracy (Lefort 1991; Mouffe 2000).

What is an Art Museum?

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as “a nonprofit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of humans and their environment” (International Council of Museums 2007).

However, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), a U.S. professional group, insists only on the use of objects, not on their ownership. According to the AAMD, an art museum is:

a legally organized, not-for-profit institution or component of a not-for-profit institution or government entity with a mission to study, care for, interpret, and exhibit works of art. It is essentially educational in nature, engaging the public and community in regularly scheduled programs and exhibitions. Most, but not all, art museums have collections. A museum is administered by a professional staff and governed by a body that sets general policy and is legally and financially responsible for the museum. A museum may also have volunteers who serve a variety of support functions. A museum generally carries out its mission in facilities that are open to the public for designated hours on a regular basis (Association of Art Museum Directors 2017).

AAMD's sister group in Canada, CAMDO/ODMAC, has a more cursory definition of the art museum, describing it simply as "a public institution primarily concerned with the exhibition of works of art, staffed by professionals, governed by a Board of Directors and led by a Director or CEO." Their sole elaboration is that "(a)rt museums vary in size. Some are very large, employing hundreds of people, while others are smaller, employing only a few people. Small or large, art museums all present works of art to the public" (CAMDO/ODMAC 2017).

From these functional descriptions, it would be difficult to fathom why the art museum should have been the focus of much scrutiny and debate over the past 125 years. Yet, as Zolberg observes, more than any other arts institution in North America, the art museum has always been held accountable in the public imagination for promoting the democratization of culture—even if, from the beginning, public service has always been at best the art museum's secondary goal (Zolberg 1986). To understand why this responsibility is projected onto the art museum, we must review its historical development as an institution, the important role it has played in developing and promoting modern subjectivity, and the institution's special relationship to political power in liberal democracy, which exists in both symbolic and real dimensions.

What is an Institution?

What is an institution? How is the art museum an institution? When is an art museum an institution, rather than a "mere" organization? What aspects of the art museum count as institutional? And importantly, why do institutions matter?

Institutions are conceptualized in different ways across and within the various scholarly disciplines making up the social sciences. From the mid-19th century to mid-20th century, scholars addressing the question of institutions included institutional economists (Veblen, Commons, and Mitchell), political scientists (Toqueville), and sociologists (Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons, as well as more contemporary scholars Mead, Schutz, Bourdieu, Berger and Luckmann). At the time, however, their important insights were eclipsed by the prevailing focus on individualism and rational choice. Today we understand that these individuals (and others) anticipated many of the distinctions and understandings that have been rediscovered by contemporary scholars, who, beginning in the 1970s, began intersecting institutional theory with organizational studies. The current field—referred to as "the new institutionalism" or "neo-

institutionalism”—has transformed institutional economics, management theory, and organization sociology. Yet the field itself remains marked by a lack of cohesion between participating disciplines regarding central concepts and discussions. This renders it, according to sociologist W. Richard Scott, “a jungle of conflicting conceptions, divergent underlying assumptions, and discordant voices” (W. R. Scott 2014, vii). In the following few paragraphs, I attempt to create some order in this jungle, to account for and to justify the conception of “institution” that I employ in this dissertation.

Institutions are interpreted most narrowly by some neo-institutional economists as the rules and governance systems that develop to regulate or manage economic exchanges (Coase 1937; Williamson 1981; North 1990), and by historical institutionalists in political science as the “formal structures and informal rules and procedures that structure conduct” (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 2). Other economists and rational choice political scientists have employed a game-theoretic approach to examine institutional frameworks as equilibrium phenomena. This approach recognizes that rule systems operate at multiple levels: at the level of operational rules, affecting day-to-day decisions; collective-choice rules, determining who is eligible to participate in decision-making; and constitutional-choice rules, laying out deeper level frameworks for the capabilities and limits of rules (Ostrom 2005).

Cultural theorists perceive institutions as the embodiment of explicit and implicit patterns (or “webs”) of historically derived and selected ideas. On this basis, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz pioneered the practice of “thick” description, to explain not just the behaviour of humans, but its context as well, such that the behaviour can become meaningful to outsiders (Geertz 1973). This notion of thickness was taken up by March and Olsen, who suggested that a “thick” approach to institutional studies would consider “routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies” (March and Olsen 1989, 22).

Sociological scholars range the most widely in their approaches to institutional analysis, even as they share an attention to cognitive frames and cultural frameworks, rather than normative systems (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Incorporating phenomenology, Berger and Luckmann (1967) conceptualized the construction of common meaning systems as proceeding through three phases: externalization, when symbolic structures are produced through social interaction and meanings become shared by participants; objectification, when the production becomes experienced as something existing external to participants; and internalization, when

the objectified world is “retrojected” into consciousness through socialization (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 60-61). Bourdieu emphasized the internalization of cultural rules with his concepts of *disposition*—lasting, acquired schemes of perception, thought and action, akin to an individual’s “sense of the game”—and *habitus*—the system of dispositions embodied by an individual, which integrates past experiences and “functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” (Bourdieu 1977, 82-83). Individuals structure their personal behaviour across different social fields according to their socially constructed *habitus*, making *habitus* an important factor contributing to social reproduction, because it is central to generating and regulating the practices that make up social life. And finally, DiMaggio and Powell, whose edited volume, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (1991) has been enormously influential, distinguished three important mechanisms—coercive, mimetic, and normative—by which institutional effects are diffused through a field of organizations. Their approach emphasizes structural similarity (“isomorphism”) as an important consequence of institutional processes (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

There are other approaches used within the arena of new institutionalism, but my own understanding has been shaped primarily by those outlined above, and made navigable by Scott’s comprehensive survey *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* (2014). Acknowledging the breadth and multiplicity of methodological approaches, Scott provides a useful, dense, “omnibus” definition of the term “institution”: “Institutions comprise regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott 2014, 56). He stresses that institutions are “multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources” (Ibid., 57). Symbolic systems, which include rules, norms, and cultural-cognitive elements, are the central components of institutions, but they must be accompanied by associated behaviours—“‘brought to life’ in actual human conduct” (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 75)—as well as by material and human resources, in order to account for asymmetries of power (Scott 2014, 57-58).

Scott regards the primary disagreements amongst neo-institutional scholars as centering on which institutional elements—regulative systems, normative systems, or cultural cognitive systems—are accorded primacy. The divisions are not minor. Rather, the models are associated with profound differences in the assumptions made about the nature of social reality and the

ways in which actors make choices in social situations. On account of these assumptions, neo-institutionalists disagree significantly on whether to attend primarily to regulative rules or constitutive rules (which operate at a deeper level of reality creation and construct the social objects and events to which regulative rules apply) and, by extension, on the utility of rational choice theory as an explanation or predictor of human behaviour (Ibid., 71-84).

It is the sociological emphasis on cognitive frames and cultural frameworks that is most useful for my study of the art museum and public engagement, as the institution's advocates promote it on the basis of assumptions and values that are far from universally shared. Only those members of the public who have developed the "correct" aesthetic dispositions can enjoy the art museum and perceive its symbolic systems as "possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact" (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 55). Professionals and others highly trained in the field of art tend to enjoy more sophisticated understandings of symbols, representations, and environmental contexts, but their ongoing suspension of disbelief is key to their successful museum participation. Put bluntly, it is only when the realities of class privilege, Eurocentrism, colonialism, patriarchy, and the luxury goods market are willed away that one can approach the art museum on the terms upon which it is promoted: as a civic sanctuary, dedicated to the enjoyment and contemplation by the public at large.

In the next section, I review classic analyses of the art museum's formation, including Carol Duncan's *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (1995) and Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* (1994), texts which have become foundational in the field of museum studies, but are less known outside this field, even in the milieu of artists themselves. I outline how the art museum came to be instituted over time, or how it acquired the regularity and stability that allows museums to be recognizable as institutions in the first place. Following my description of the art museum's evolution, and a brief overview of the "story" of modern art, I address the political symbolism of the public art museum and its relationship to liberal democracy.

The Art Museum as Symbolic Institution: An Empty Place of Power

Although architecturally, the art museum shares fundamental characteristics with traditional ceremonial monuments, such as temples, churches, shrines, and some types of palaces, it is a modern invention, borne of republicanism, anti-clericalism, and war. It was designed, quite explicitly, both to serve and to shape the emerging bourgeois publics of modern European nation states (Duncan and Wallach 1980; Duncan 1995; Bennett 1994; Hooper-Greenhill 1989). The Louvre, in Paris, was the most politically significant and influential transformation of a royal collection into a public art museum, when, in 1793, the French revolutionary government confiscated the king's art collection, along with the palace that housed it, and radically reorganized it as a "museum for the people, to be open to everyone free of charge" (Duncan 1995, 22), an institution that proclaimed at once "the tyranny of the old and the democracy of the new" (Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 63). Only propertied males were full citizens at the time, but the transformation of the palace into a public space accessible to everybody made all people equal in principle, if not in fact. Thus, the public art museum became "an especially pointed demonstration of the state's commitment to the principle of equality" (Duncan 1995, 24), a commitment that neither the state nor the art museum has ever been able to meet.

To fulfil the educational function of the public museum, the seized royal collection was rehung. The "gentlemanly hang" favoured by men of "taste and breeding," which emphasized formal and symbolic connections, was dispensed with. In its place was installed an arrangement based on "scientific" classifications that underscored the nationality of artists, their "schools," and, through the use of chronological groupings, the Enlightenment values of artistic and intellectual progress towards a single, universal ideal of beauty (Duncan 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1989). This rehanging marked a transition between one moral cosmology to another, from the pre-modern viewpoint, which saw intergroup hierarchies as positioned according to natural law, to a liberal, individualist, and egalitarian perspective, which relied on allegedly universal "virtues" such as intelligence, beauty, and elegance, but which of course were shaped to valorize particular groups (Schwarz 2016). The modern discipline of art history, which emerged in this rehanging, allowed the incipient middle class to put the experience of art to its own ideological purpose, that is, to demonstrate that history is a story of individual genius and achievement. Through the new hanging—along with a new overhead lighting system that illuminated areas of the building and aspects of the works of art that had previously been hidden—the bourgeois

visitor became “the gazing subject, where the laying out of seriating ranks of things demonstrates a fundamental natural order” (Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 70).¹⁰ The new approach “institutionalized the bourgeois claim to speak for the interests of all mankind” (Duncan and Wallach 1980, 456). Although most people did not go to the museum and, of those who went, many could still not grasp the higher meanings of the art on view, the implication was that the values celebrated by the art museum belonged, or ought to belong, to everyone.

The art museum served another real need of the new Republic, as the education of the masses for participation in the public sphere could not be accomplished without a fundamental retraining of citizens’ behaviour in public space. Museums and other high culture activities were actively employed by policy makers to help transform the morals and manners of individuals so as to endow them with the “new capacities for self-monitoring and self-regulation” required by modern forms of liberal government (Bennett 1995, 19). Public museums were spaces where the formative bourgeois public could meet and “render itself visually present to itself” (Ibid.), thereby acquiring a degree of the collective self-consciousness and self-discipline necessary for the polite and rational discourse that comprised the public sphere. As Shapiro describes, museums taught middle-class audiences that “the restraint of emotion was the outwards expression of the respect for quality,” so that exhibitions became not simply informative, but “textbooks in public civility” (M. S. Shapiro 1990, 236). Here, the bourgeois public also began to distinguish itself from others, because the construction of the public sphere as one of polite and rational discourse necessitated the construction of a “negatively coded” other sphere from which it might be differentiated: that comprising places of popular assembly, such as bars and taverns, as well as spaces of spontaneous protest.

Finally, there was another, more abstract consequence of the rehangings at the Louvre and at other palaces transformed into public art museums in cities including Vienna, Madrid, Naples,

¹⁰ Although art museums played a lesser role than other sorts of museums in colonial justifications, the machinery of visibility and representation is the same and bears noting. Jean-Louis Comolli (1980) explains that a “frenzy of the visible” developed in the second half of the 19th century, with the ever-wider distribution of illustrated papers, print journals, caricatures, and of course public museums, along with a “geographical extension of the field of the visible and the representable: by journeys, explorations, colonizations, the whole world becomes visible at the same time that it becomes appropriable” (Comolli 1980, 122). Anthropological and natural history museums became key sites for the production and reproduction of racist fantasies used to justify colonialist expansions. Mitchell (2013, 501) writes: “(T)he construction of the colonial order is related to the elaboration of modern forms of representation and knowledge.” Museums were instrumental in formalizing the understanding of unchanging racial and cultural essences, almost always in negative opposition to the West – for example, “others” as “passive rather than active, static rather than mobile, emotional rather than rational, chaotic rather than ordered” (Ibid.).

Milan, and Amsterdam. For if, in the past, the princely gallery had spoken for and about the prince's virtue, taste, and wealth, in the new public art museum, the prince was replaced by the state as an abstract entity, and the political context of the former palaces housing the Louvre and other art museums receded from focus (Duncan 1995). The museum did not ask visitors to identify with the modern state per se, but with the state's highest values of individualism and nationalism. This dissolution or abstracting of the viewing context for works of art (of the actual building housing the museum) marked the beginning of the museum's ultimate transformation into an architectural structure enclosing the "white cube" galleries that we know today.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the US was experiencing "redundant wealth," due in part to the absence of a restraining income tax (Wittlin 1970, 138). The new millionaire industrialists of New York and other metropolitan centres, many of them art collectors, came to realize their desire to build cultural monuments – museums that would rival the Louvre.¹¹ The desire was both to cement their own status in the public eye and to mark their cities' importance. New York's Metropolitan Museum, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, and the Art Institute of Chicago were all built in the 1870s. The model of the public art museum as a site of learning and uplifting pleasure was consciously borrowed from Europe. This institutional model, Duncan explains, conceived the public art museum "as a ritual that makes visible the ideals of a republican state, frames the 'public' it claims to serve, and dramatizes the unity of the nation" (Duncan 1995, 49). In doing so, the American art museum also constructed the visitor as an "ideal bourgeois citizen": self-improving, autonomous, politically empowered (and thus male), who comes to the museum in search of moral and spiritual enlightenment. "As a dramatic field," Duncan argues, "the public art museum prompts visitors to enact—and thereby, ritually assume—this identity" (Ibid.).

The Progressive Era (1890s to 1920) saw a generation of museum reformers leading a movement for more democratic or socially inclusive museums. The reformers ranged from "progressive connoisseurs," such as Metropolitan Museum trustee Robert de Forest, to the more radical Newark Museum Director, John Cotton Dana. Informed by social theorists including John Dewey and Thorstein Veblen, these men called for greater integration of art and labour—

¹¹ Alma Wittlin (1970, 138-39) notes, wryly: "The alchemy that kept a Charles Freer indifferent to the condition of his underpaid immigrant workers while he was piling up millions by manufacturing railroad cars, and at other moments released an extraordinary sensitivity to an Oriental vase, is beyond the scope of our considerations; so is the amalgam in the strikebreaker Henry Clay Frick of ruthlessness with delight in delicate paintings by Boucher."

particularly industrial production—to link aesthetic appreciation to everyday activities. For some, their reformist zeal was motivated by fear of the growing industrial labour force, which included new immigrants with socialist ideologies (Trask 2012; Temin 1991). They desired museums to promote the ideal bourgeois citizen to these Sunday visitors¹² to inoculate society against potential socialist uprisings and the persistence of “problematic” cultural traditions, such as Catholicism, using the values of individualism, self-reliance, connoisseurship, and consumerism. Their democratization efforts ran tandem to the professionalization of art museum administration, the latter strongly influenced by Melvil Dewey’s standardization of methods for library cataloging, accessioning, and classifying (Trask 2012). As in the libraries, where Dewey promoted librarianship as a public service and advocated the hiring of women for this work, when the Met and other art museums established their first education departments, young unmarried women staffed most positions. The legacy of this gender preference is visible today in the overwhelming dominance of women in the field of art museum education.

Museums in Canada developed similarly – in many cities they were established by wealthy entrepreneurs who wished to “leave a legacy” in the public imagination: for example, the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon (founded by meat-packing mogul Fred Mendel); the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa (financed by Ewart McLaughlin, an industrial landlord and heir to a car-manufacturing fortune); Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria (building donated by Sara Spencer, daughter of department store chain owner David Spencer); and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton (founded by William Maxwell “Max” Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, a British-Canadian business tycoon, politician, and newspaper publisher); and, of course, the brand new Remai Modern. The largest of my case-study organizations, the MacKenzie Art Gallery, was built upon an impressive collection of art works bequeathed in 1939 to the University of Regina by the lawyer and arts patron Norman MacKenzie. The collection included paintings and drawings of the Italian Renaissance, antiquities of Asia and the Middle East, and works by contemporary artists of MacKenzie’s day, including James Henderson and Inglis Sheldon-Williams (MacKenzie Art Gallery 2017). Other museums had groups of prominent businessmen behind their establishment, such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada’s first civic art museum, which, according to its website, “was established in 1912 when a group of Winnipeg

¹² Following years of bitter debate amongst its trustees, in 1891 the Met opened its doors on Sundays, the only day of leisure for working people (Morgan 2017).

businessmen, recognizing ‘the civilizing effects of art,’ each contributed \$200 to open a gallery in the Winnipeg Industrial Bureau Exposition Building” (Winnipeg Art Gallery 2017).

Management functions began to shift from trustees to curators in the 1920s. Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, as a new cadre of “professional” curators—notably, always male—consolidated their power, the art museum’s educational functions were largely neglected and in many cases support for education declined, in terms of both financial support (as a percentage of operating budgets) and personnel (Zolberg 1986). Remarkably, this has remained true to the present day, despite repeated claims by museum officials, since the 1970s, that art museums are shifting their focus from collecting to public service (Sweeney 2008). The result has been a diminished focus on art’s relationship to the everyday and an increasing fixation on the narratives of art history and theory. These narratives are also important in the shaping of modern subjectivity, dominated as they are by the story of modernism as a progressive march from representation towards pure abstraction.

Art History, Space, and Modern Subjectivity

Those who have studied art history know the modernist progression well. It begins with Cezanne and the post-Impressionists in the late 1800s, and is followed in the first years of the 20th century by Fauvism and Cubism – the latter which was thought to be the style most heralding the future. Around the time of the First World War, and partly in response to the war’s horrors, Dada and Surrealism pushed modern art’s earlier “conquests” of the subjective self to new depths, particularly in works by Miro and Duchamp. Although the standard art historical narrative mostly fails to address gender issues, it is germane to note that most of the (male) artists of these modernist movements took the nude female figure as a primary subject matter, dissecting, disfiguring, and flattening it. Artists including Picasso, Gauguin, and many others in Europe and in European outposts such as Brazil also borrowed freely from what they regarded as the “primitive” art forms of colonized people in Africa, the Pacific, South America and elsewhere, employing images of Black and Indigenous bodies to signify authenticity and originality. Following World War II, Abstract Expressionism began to unfold, and the seat of the centre of the art world moved from Paris to New York. With each of these movements, the picture plane became more and more “literalized” – that is, paintings became less and less about

representing something, and more about exploring the nature of mark-making, the canvas, and the frame itself.

The standard narrative of art history is one of forward-moving development, with art's progress propelled by individual acts of creative destruction. The most celebrated artists (all men) are those who are thought to have most transformed the field. In this century-long narrative of modernism, artistic invention, or the ability of artists to free themselves from representing recognizable objects in space, is equated with moral achievement (Kuspit 2010). Minimalism, which appeared in the 1950s, entailed the utter turning away from the objective world in favour of an inward-looking obsession with subjective experience. As paintings became "flatter" and "emptier," their relationship to the walls they hung on became more significant, so that the white walls of the gallery (now understood as a "white cube") came to participate equally in the viewing experience.

Thus, the actual architecture of the art museum had to transform to better support and present modern art. Wood-paneled or canvas-lined gallery walls were stripped and painted stark white. Lighting was recessed, molding removed, and electrical outlets hidden along the floorboards. No longer was the "vanishing" of the princely palace left to the public's imagination: by the late 20th century, the ideal gallery now subtracted from the artwork all signs that might obstruct the fact it was "art," isolating artworks from everything that detracted from their own evaluations of themselves. O'Doherty explains that this isolation "gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values" (O'Doherty 1976, 14).

In other words, just as the ability to abstract became a moral achievement, the emptiness of the white cube gallery became a social value. O'Doherty argues that this social value is a specifically liberal value:

The exclusive division between [abstraction and reality] has blurred the fact that the first has considerable practical relevance – contrary to the modern myth that art is "useless". If art has any cultural reference (apart from being "culture") surely it is in the definition of our space and time. The flow of energy between concepts of space articulated through the artwork and the space we occupy is one of the basic and least understood forces in modernism. Modernist space redefines the observer's status, tinkers with his self-image. Modernism's conception of space, not its subject matter, may be what the public rightly conceives as threatening. Now, of course, space contains no

threats, has no hierarchies. Its mythologies are drained, its rhetoric collapsed. It is simply a kind of undifferentiated potency. This is not a “degeneration” of space, but the sophisticated convention of an advanced culture which has cancelled its values in name of an abstraction called “freedom.” (Ibid., 38-39)

Minimalism was followed in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Pop Art, which I view as the apogee of modernism. Formally, it was a shock, after the emptiness of minimalism. But in fact, its flattening of the products of consumer capitalism into a system of formal signs and symbols was made comprehensible as “art” only by the pristine emptiness of the white cube gallery, which minimalism had established. Pop artists, particularly Americans, and especially Warhol, vacated themselves and the subjectivity embodied in their artworks from any moral-political attachments. Warhol’s reproductions presented people as commercial products, and presented commercial products as strangely personal, that is, “with a crowd-pleasing personality” (Kuspit 2010). Here, in my opinion, is where the modernist narrative ends, where it reached its peak of “emptiness,” and where the liberal subject of modern democracy collapsed into the ethos of consumerism.¹³

Singerman (1999) explains that this modernist trajectory developed in tandem with the professionalization of American artists through university training. Traditionally, artists had been instructed in independent art academies. By the turn of the 20th century, modernist artists were rejecting the isolation such schooling bred, as well as the academy’s fixation on the techniques of drawing and painting, rather than theory or connections to the world of ideas. In 1912, the newly formed College Art Association began encouraging young artists to study at universities, where they would be afforded opportunities to become “producers of culture” instead of mere manual labourers (people who simply demonstrated their manual dexterity with a paintbrush). Importantly, although most fine art students were—and still are—female, “art education constructed a masculine model for the university artist out of its discomfort with the private studio, the easel picture, and the individual practice of art, its fear of the caricature that popular discourse... had constructed for the painter” (Ibid., 39). In short, university training raised the

¹³ Almost every nation outside of the US and every region outside of New York has its own variation on the modernist trajectory that I outline in this dissertation. The essence is the same, with artists moving from classical representation to abstraction over time, finally achieving some local or regional version of Abstract Expressionism or Minimalism, before “rediscovering” representation, usually in the form of pop or kitsch, followed by political content.

status of the artist: “In contrast to the long-fingernailed, foppish artist of Greenwich Village and the studio, he was marked by his liberal education, his rightful place in society, and, most clearly, by an insistently repeated masculinity” (Ibid.). With an attitude borne of both overt misogyny and homophobia, modernism rejected artistic practices associated or conflated with femininity: domesticity, ornamentation, display, and consumption, and other processes of social reproduction.

What emerged from the university fine art program was a “science of design, where design is a knowledge of the order of vision” (Ibid., 88), and vision was conceived as “primary and primordial” (Ibid.: 89), that is, as a language that existed prior to any written one. Modern art, in its progressive abstraction, was thus based on a “will to silence” and a “hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse” (Krauss 1985, 9). Artists became professionals, not like doctors, lawyers, or others who make money solving clients’ problems, but like the “laboratory scientist or university professor, who formulates problems in relation to the discipline’s present and whose performance is judged by colleagues” (Singerman 1995: 193). Individuality was essential. Students were taught that their job was to discover and exploit their unique responses to set problems and to lived experience. They were not to reproduce tradition, but to individuate themselves by smashing it, while at the same time making it clear they were smashing it by referencing past art works. The irony, of course, is this made “the visual” difficult to comprehend for anyone not trained in art history and theory. As the modernist critic Hilton Kramer wrote in a 1974 New York Times review, to lack a persuasive theory for an artwork became “to lack something crucial—the means by which our experience of individual works is joined to our understanding of the values they signify” (Kramer, quoted in Wolfe, 1975, 2). The journalist Tom Wolfe ridiculed this irony, quipping, “without a theory to go with it, I can’t *see* a painting!” (Wolfe 1975, 2). This meant, he explained, “Not ‘seeing is believing,’ you ninny, ‘but believing is seeing,’ for *Modern Art has become completely literary: the paintings and other words exist only to illustrate their text*” (Ibid., 5, italics in original). Wolfe was correct to observe that art had become about the theory of looking and, in this regard, paintings and other art works existed primarily to illustrate a larger, ongoing text about vision. One had to “know” this text (and “believe” it) in order to “see” the painting. Pop Art did not change this, as it was, in Wolfe’s words “a new order, but the same Mother Church” (Ibid., 73).

With “vision” positioned as a science, the uniqueness of artworks was not equated to self-expression, but to differences in intellectual approach. And it was only when individual subjectivity represented in modern art became as empty as the evenly lit white walls of the museum that challenges to this isolated, amoral, apolitical individualism were permitted to enter the discourse of the art museum. Some of the consequences of this entry of cultural politics will be explored in Chapter 9. By the time this occurred, the museum had been well-constructed to prevent a moral-political self from emerging. Duncan argues that it is on this deeper level of ideology that art museums dedicated to 20th century art accord with the tactics of the advertising industry: both accommodate only isolated individuals for whom life’s greatest values and pleasures exist in private or subjective realms that appear to be outside the politically organized world (Duncan 1995, 130).

O’Doherty and Duncan both write about the ritual nature of museum-going, including the museum’s central narrative of progress (towards “nothing”), the constant negating in this narrative of what has come before, as well as the sacramental atmosphere of the space. The art mounted on clean, white surfaces exists in a kind of “eternity of display” so that “though there is lots of ‘period’ (late modern), there is no time” (O’Doherty 1976, 14). Quips O’Doherty: “This eternity gives the gallery a limbo-like status; one has to have died already in order to be there” (Ibid.). In this space, viewers, with their living, cumbersome bodies, are always “out of place,” clumsily stooping and peering, and—especially when confronted with complicated contemporary art installations—“stumbling around between confusing roles” (Ibid., 41). It is in their efforts to “fit in” to the ritual space of the art museum that visitors are prompted to enact, and thereby “ritually assume,” the identity of the self-improving, autonomous, politically empowered (and therefore ritually male) individual “who enters the museum in search of moral and spiritual enlightenment” (Duncan 1995, 49). A visitor begins to fit in once they learn to cultivate the disinterested “pure gaze” (Bourdieu 1984, 3). This is a gaze removed from “real” life with its material conditions, economic concerns, and necessities of reproduction. This gaze, or this capacity to gaze, is what Bourdieu calls the “aesthetic disposition.” To possess it is to define oneself in terms of a certain distance from practical exigencies, including the body; thus it is a mark of distinction (Ibid.).

Of course, the more the actual body of the visitor moving through the art museum resembles that of the ideal visitor—and the more the *habitus* of the actual visitor matches that of

the ideal—the easier it is for them to navigate the space and take pleasure in their visit. Those who feel most immune to the material consequences of power differentials, and whose bodies are least encumbered by disparities from the ideal (and thus most able to “disappear”), are the most at ease in the white cube. Bodies that are differently abled—too short, wheel-chair assisted, hard of sight or hearing—visit the art museum at one third or less the rate of others (Hill Strategies Inc. 2010). Similarly, bodies that threaten the ideal, such as Black or Indigenous bodies, which represent disenfranchisement and therefore potential deviance, are over-policed by museum security, much as they are over-policed on the streets and in shops. Furthermore, their cultures and aesthetics are not typically represented. Art museums are not “for them,” so they too visit at much lower rates than average (Heaton 2014; Hill Strategies Inc. 2010). People still tied to non-bourgeois cultures and living traditions, whose artistic expressions remain grounded in pre-modern spiritual traditions and/or everyday practices, find little meaning in the art museum (Amadasun 2013). And, finally, working class individuals and those with less formal education in the liberal arts, whose experiences may not have prepared them for the ritual of “pure” contemplation, find more discomfort than pleasure in art museums, so tend not to visit often or at all (Bourdieu 1984). Within the ritual space of the art museum, bodies that cannot “disappear” into the individualistic, apolitical “empty place” of the museum are either shameful or out of place. Studies confirm that the common focus on admission fees as an obstacle to art museum visitation (a complaint that has been raised against the Remai Modern) is misguided. Art museums have distinct content and reputational barriers that contribute to negative affinities: most people are not simply disinterested in the content, they feel actively unwelcomed (Dilenschneider 2017e; Dilenschneider 2017c). The primary tool of inclusion in most gallery spaces are didactic panels and tiny wall labels, mostly technical tools of reference of interest to specialist audiences, what Dewdney et. al. call a “cursory nod to a public viewer” and a “hopelessly ineffectual form of communication” (Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh 2013, 27).

The Art Museum and Liberal Democracy

I have described how the art museum, as part of the state’s exhibitionary complex, assists in the state’s regulating of citizen self-identity, particularly by fashioning and reinforcing codes of acceptable public behaviour, in the defining of space and the public’s senses of time and

progress, and in the ways it tests and constrains the bounds of acceptable representation and speech. In these processes, the art museum works hand in hand with the market, as the liberal state does in most pursuits. These are reasons enough to study the institution's relationship to public engagement. However, I want to further argue that the art museum is not simply a mechanism of social control, but also a mirror for liberal democracy. By this I do not simply mean that the works of art displayed in museums reflect the concerns and aesthetics of liberal society, although they may often do this. Rather, the art museum is structured like liberal democracy in miniature, with all of its contradictions and limitations: the belief in individual expression and achievement, the entrenchment of power among certain elites, the jockeying for recognition by excluded subjects, a bondage to powerful market interests that is never fully admitted, and constant conflicts over the role of regulation, along with the "invisible" but indispensable labour of maintenance and social reproduction that is performed by underpaid (female) employees and (female) volunteers, with the assistance of community organizations and the public school system, whose barely recognized participation provides the primary source of institutional legitimacy.

Claude Lefort claimed that it was a *symbolic* transformation that made possible the advent of modern democracy, and this was "the dissolution of the markers of certainty" (Lefort 1991, 19). In the premodern era, he argued, power was embodied in the person of the prince and tied to a transcendental authority. The democratic revolution dissolved this power, so that power, law, and knowledge came to experience a radical indeterminacy. A new kind of "institution of the social" was thus inaugurated in which power became "an empty place" (Ibid.). By holding empty the symbolic place of power, modern democracy succeeded in severing the link between political legitimacy and a transcendent moral foundation. This breakage permits those who disagree about the source and meaning of political legitimacy to carry those disagreements into their political life, while demanding that all citizens be extended civil and political liberties. In other words, it is the "emptiness" of the place of power that allows for the liberalism in liberal democracy (Lefort 1991; Mouffe 2000; Roess 2012). As an overarching symbolic framework for modern democracy, this emptiness permits individual liberties, human rights, and tolerance to be exercised.

Emptiness, as the symbolic framework for modern politics described by Lefort, is both everywhere and nowhere. Yet it does have a point of origin, where modern subjectivity,

competing claims to citizenship, political grievances, and experiments in tolerance continue to play out, and this point of origin is the art museum, the palace from which princely power was literally and symbolically vacated.

Of course, the modern form of democracy cannot simply be equated with this symbolic framework of emptiness. Mouffe (2000) points out that this framework is one of two aspects of modern democracy, which consists, in the other part, of democracy as a form of rule, or the principle of the sovereignty of the people. She argues that the core values of the democratic tradition—equality and popular sovereignty—are different from the politics of liberalism. Unlike liberalism, popular sovereignty requires “a people,” that is, an “us” to be distinguished against a “them” – a polis that is formed by boundaries shaped by values, ethnicity, or other factors. Modernity’s union of equality and popular sovereignty with liberalism, which is based up on the principle of individual rights and therefore permissible difference, is a “contingent historical articulation” rather than a necessity (Ibid., 2-3) and has resulted from “the articulation of two logics which are incompatible in the last instance” (Ibid., 5). Today’s critics of liberalism, from the Radical Right to Indigenous traditionalists, are therefore not wrong when they argue that modern democracy “belongs” to and obliges one demographic above others, and that is the liberal elite – or the kind of person who most frequently visits art museums. And although today the art museum plays a smaller role in a very large and complex liberal-democratic machinery, as an arm of modern democratic governance systems (even at arm’s length), it continues to reinforce liberal biases and the class interests of elites. In the following chapter, I explore how some of these interests are represented in the governance operations of the art museum itself.

CHAPTER 4: ART MUSEUMS, MONEY, AND POWER

In the preceding chapter, I described the art museum as a symbolic institution – a place from which the prince’s power has been vacated to make way for the “empty” place of power in modern democracy, and which ritually conditions citizens’ subjectivity to the ideal model (or, just as often, tests them against it). In doing so, the interests of a certain class are preserved within a space that admits to no hegemony but merely “freedom” and “universality.” However, art museums are also conduits for the flow of money and actual, traceable power. In this chapter, I review art museum governance as an essential part of the institution’s structure, demonstrating that the “empty place” of the art museum is in fact organized to preserve and uphold not only the cultural norms and values of ruling elites, but also quite often their financial interests.

It is important to recognize that art museums do not merely display things of monetary value, they also contribute to changes in the value of objects and places. To begin with, they play an important role in the economic valuation of works of art, and since the 1980s have increasingly served to inflate the value of corporate and individual private collections (Wu 2002). Second, they tend to have an inflationary effect on the economic activity of their immediate surrounds, which can appeal to politicians and business leaders aiming to advance particular municipal districts (Schuster 2000). What is often overlooked by municipal politicians is that when art museums are built as part of urban regeneration schemes, their development is usually accompanied by gentrification, or the disruption and exclusion of surrounding low-income communities who are forced out by rising prices (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Third, art museums often receive funding from state lotteries, and since low income players spend the most money on lottery tickets as a percentage of their total income, this practice functions as a regressive tax (Wyatt 1991), taking money from the poor and giving it to the wealthy, who, as I have established, are the primary beneficiaries of art museums. Finally, art museums provide cost-effective marketing opportunities for corporate sponsors, who can associate their brands with exhibitions to signal that they are innovative, timeless, local, or some other desirable quality that the art promotes (Wu 2002; Stallabrass 2004). Thus, while public subsidies to art museums may be awarded on criteria such as artistic “excellence,” the funds museums receive also contribute to non-art outcomes, some of which are not in the public interest.

Direct public support for all nonprofit arts organizations, let alone art museums, accounts for only a small portion of federal, state, provincial, and local budgets. In the mid-1990s, total direct spending on the arts from all levels of government was US\$6 per capita in the US, and US\$46 per capita in Canada (indirect aid, through foregone taxes, is the preferred method of support in the US, and the Canadian figure also includes funding from lotteries – hence the discrepancy between funding values) (Schuster 2000). My estimate, based on available information from CADAC¹⁴ and other sources is that direct public spending on art museums operations in Canada totals roughly CAD\$200 million.¹⁵ (This does not include public funds put towards museum construction, which could significantly multiply this figure, depending on the year.) However, it is not the amount of public funds spent on art museums that is of primary interest to this section of my study. Rather, I am interested in the way that taxpayer dollars are redistributed, who decides how the money is spent, and who benefits. This is governance, “the set of formal and informal arrangements by which power is allocated and exercised in any system with interdependent actors” (Atkinson and Fulton 2017, 8; Fulton, Fairbairn, and Pohler 2017, 6). It is what front-line workers at art museums must ultimately confront if they are to instigate meaningful and lasting changes to improve the art museum’s public value through public engagement.

In 1979, Karl Meyer wrote:

According to Museums USA, eight out of every ten art museums are governed by boards of trustees, the average size of which is twenty-three members. Not surprisingly, 63 percent of the roughly 8,000 art museum trustees in the United States are white males and 44 percent are at least fifty years old. In ancestry, education, club memberships, and dynastic and business affiliations, they are strikingly alike. ... A Twentieth Century Fund analysis of the biographies of 156 art museum trustees carried out in 1969 confirmed this essential

¹⁴ CADAC (Canadian Arts Data / Données sur les arts au Canada) is a web-based application dedicated to the collection, dissemination, and analysis of financial and statistical information about Canadian arts organizations. It launched in 2008, and has been in development since 2004. Municipal and provincial arts organizations and funding agencies from across Canada contribute data to CADAC, with some exceptions, including the National Gallery of Canada.

¹⁵ To obtain my rough estimate, I combined figures from a CADAC report on the public funding of 77 art galleries in 2013 (Canada Council for the Arts 2015) with information from the financial statements of the National Gallery of Canada (National Gallery of Canada 2015), making some allowance for those art museums whose information was not included in the CADAC report. The estimate of \$200 million includes university art galleries but not artist-run centres.

homogeneity. Of these, 60 percent were graduates of Ivy League schools, roughly 33 1/3 percent were bankers or financiers, and 20 percent were lawyers; nearly 40 percent were Episcopalian; and almost 60 percent were at least sixty years old.

Boards do not elect new members; they clone them. (Meyer 1979)

Almost 40 years after Meyer's analysis, not much has changed on the boards of art museums, either in the US or in Canada, as my own web-based research on Canada's largest art museums reveals. In June 2017, the Art Gallery of Ontario (Appendix B, Table B1) had 41 trustees, of whom over 60 percent are male, 88 percent are white, 32 percent are bankers or financiers, another 27 percent are CEOs of holding, real estate, or media companies, five percent lawyers, and four percent professional philanthropists (through inheritance or marriage). Of the five non-white board members, four are artists or represent the arts, and one is a dentist and well-known collector: these individuals carry the full burden of representing both diversity and the artists' perspective. The Vancouver Art Gallery (Appendix B, Table B2) had 25 trustees, of whom 80 percent are white, 24 percent are investment bankers or wives of investment bankers, and 16 percent are real estate developers – and while 44 percent of the trustees are female, four of these 11 women are known primarily as the wives of executives and developers or as the heirs to large inheritances. And the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Appendix B, Table B3) had 18 trustees, of whom 100 percent are white, 72 percent are male, 22 percent are investment bankers, another 22 percent are lawyers, and 22 percent are beneficiaries of inheritances (Molson, Reitman, etc.) who work full-time as “community leaders” and philanthropists.

Mid-sized and small art museums tend to be little different, my case studies included. Their boards are smaller, and there is more representation by professions outside of law and banking, such as medicine and academia. However, they tend to be equally white. In June 2017, the MacKenzie Art Gallery (Appendix C, Table C1) had 14 trustees, of whom all but one appear to be white, two (or 15 percent) are lawyers, two are investment bankers, two are nonprofit CEOs, and four (21 percent) are connected to the University of Regina (two professors, the Provost, and the wife of the Chancellor). The MacKenzie Art Gallery had one First Nations trustee, and another who, according to one of my informants, “may be Metis.” The Nanaimo Art Gallery (Appendix C, Table C2) had only eight board members, all of whom are white. Half are women, and a broad range of professions are represented, including a lawyer, an accountant, a

real estate developer, an architect, a marketing executive, a professor of art education, an artist, and a conservator. Two Rivers Gallery (Appendix C, Table C3) had 12 trustees, of whom 66 percent are women, including one Indigenous woman (an archeologist). As at Nanaimo Art Gallery, Two Rivers Gallery board members' professions are diverse, coming as they do from marketing, law, academia, accounting, forestry, hospitality, visual art, and other fields. In terms of ethnic diversity, the board of trustees at the Art Gallery of Mississauga (Appendix C, Table C4) was a notable exception. With only seven members, four are women, and three (or 43 percent) are non-white (two lawyers of South Asian ancestry and an Indigenous community leader). Lawyers were significantly represented on this board (25 percent), while other represented professions include communications and marketing, real estate development, and fundraising. Women are better represented in the smaller boards, supporting Ostrower's discovery that in U.S. arts boards, "(t)he percent of women on the board is negatively related to organizational size" (Ostrower 2005, 23).

Elites, of course, have always dominated nonprofit governance, both as members of boards of trustees and volunteer committees (Abzug and Galaskiewicz 2001). Neo-institutionalists, such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983), argue that this is because nonprofits have been influenced by funders, the state, trade, professional associations, and peers to adopt elements of the business model as a means of establishing credibility with stakeholders and ensuring continued access to grants and donations. In other words, organizations gain legitimacy insofar as their policies, practices, and structures conform to the dominant style of organizing behaviour or the "rationality agenda" (J. W. Meyer and Rowan 1977). The over-representation of professionals such as lawyers and investment bankers on the boards of art museums signifies this adherence.

In a study of 8,672 trustees in 15 nonprofit organizations in six major U.S. cities at three points in time—1931, 1961, and 1991—Abzug and Galaskiewicz (2017) found that women have always been underrepresented on the boards of most (but not all) nonprofits, including art museums. Their presence increased from 28 percent to 35.1 percent between 1931 and 1991. Non-whites have been very poorly represented, although the gap appears to be closing faster than that for women – increasing from 0.1 percent to 13.7 percent between 1931 and 1991, whereas the percentage of non-whites in these same metropolitan areas increased from 8.2 percent to 19.2 percent. The average for non-white trustees is misleading, however, as pockets of non-whites

have emerged on the boards of certain sectors only, while the boards of other nonprofit sectors have remained nearly all white. Art museums, for instance, have seen an increase in non-white trustees from 0 to only 6.1 percent between 1931 and 1991 (better only than hospitals and Jewish organizations), and lagging far behind major social service providers such as the United Way and YW/YMCA, who by 1991 had over 25 percent nonwhite trustees. A recent report by the American Alliance of Museums at its 2017 annual meeting confirms Abzug and Galaskiewicz’s findings:

The demographic profile of museum board members reveals considerable ethnic and racial homogeneity along with minimal age diversity. Board composition is tipped to white, older males—more so than at other nonprofit organizations. Forty-six percent...of museum boards are all white, compared to 30 percent of nonprofit boards. (BoardSource 2017, 9)¹⁶

¹⁶ To give context to these figures, according to the most recent census data, self-identified whites (including Hispanics who identify as white) still constitute the majority in the US, at 76.9 percent (this figure is reduced to 61.3 percent when Hispanic whites are excluded). From state to state, white populations constitute a low of 25.8 percent (Hawaii; 22.1 without Hispanic whites) to a high of 94.8 percent (Maine; 93.5 percent without Hispanic whites) (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Interestingly, the highest concentrations of museums (of all disciplines), with concentrations of 30 or more per 100,000 people, are found mostly in very “white” states: Maine and in Wyoming (white population=92.8 percent; 84.1 percent without Hispanic whites). Next, with 20 to 24.9 museums per 100,000 residents, are Alaska (white population=66.1 percent; 61.2 percent without Hispanic whites); Montana (white population=89.2 percent; 86.4 percent without Hispanic whites); North Dakota (white population=87.9 percent; 85 percent without Hispanic whites); South Dakota (white population=85.1 percent; 82.5 percent without Hispanic whites); and Iowa (white population=91.4 percent; 86.2 percent without Hispanic whites). They are followed by seven states home to 15 to 19.9 museums per 100,000 people: Oregon (whites=87.4 percent; 76.4 percent without Hispanic whites); Nebraska (whites=88.9 percent; 79.6 percent without Hispanic whites); Kansas (whites=86.6 percent; 76.3 percent without Hispanic whites); Wisconsin (whites=87.5 percent; 81.7 percent without Hispanic whites); Rhode Island (whites =84.4 percent; 73.3 percent without Hispanic whites); Connecticut (whites=80.6 percent; 67.7 percent without Hispanic whites); and Delaware (whites=70.1 percent; 62.9 percent without Hispanic whites) (IMLS 2014; United States Census Bureau, n.d.). Thus, with the clear exception of Alaska and Delaware, the twelve most museum-rich states in the US are among the whitest states in the US, with white populations much larger, as a proportion of total population, than the national average. None of these states is all white, however, so the 46 percent of museums with all-white boards are not representative of any state.

The concentration of museums in whiter-than average states goes some distance in explaining the BoardSource figures on board composition. It also begs the question of why more museums are found in whiter states. Do more people go to museums in these states, as a percentage of total population? Or is the very construction of museums (of all disciplines) part of the machinery of white supremacy? A major contributing factor is likely that the number of museums per capita reflects the ubiquity of small-town museums and the lower population densities of the whitest states. For the purposes of my research, it must be noted that art museums with budgets greater than US\$500,000 are found in the highest numbers in the “usual suspect” states, along the American northeast coast (Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, DC, Maryland, Delaware), as well as in Chicago, California, Florida, and Washington State (IMLS 2014). Many of these states—but not all—have lower than average white populations. However, there is no direct correlation to diversity of region and diversity of boards. In her study of board composition across all artistic organizations, Ostrower notes: “In counties that are over 75 percent white, the average board was 96 percent white (standard deviation of 12). However, when we turn to counties where the population drops to 50 to 75 percent white, the average board is still 93 percent white (standard deviation of 12). In counties

In the US, all-white boards are far more prevalent among smaller organizations (69 percent of organizations with budgets under \$100,000), both because larger organizations have larger boards and because larger organizations tend to be located in urban centres where racial diversity is more of a concern (Ostrower 2005). Additionally, 93 percent of museum directors are white, as are 92.6 percent of board chairs and 89.3 percent of board members. But even though “museum directors and board chairs believe board diversity and inclusion are important to advance their missions,” they are failing to prioritize action steps to advance these priorities. Only ten percent of directors indicate that their boards have developed a plan of action to become more inclusive. Instead, the top three priorities for recruitment of board members are: “passion for the mission, community connections, and ability to fundraise” (BoardSource 2017, 5). Data specific to art museums only were not available, although they represented 24 percent of all museums surveyed in the report. There is no equivalent data set for Canadian museums.

Why are art museum boards whiter and more elite than other nonprofit boards? There are at least two possible explanations.

One interpretation, following neo-institutionalist logic, might be that the ambiguity of art museum output requires it to be monitored and legitimated by a board that more plainly represents the rationality agenda. As DiMaggio (1991) noted, most art museum directors favour a management and communication style that de-emphasizes the tensions among the museum’s multiple missions (collecting, conservation, research, education, public outreach, etc.). For example, they may focus on abstract objectives with few operational consequences, or avoid open discussion of trade-offs among functions. Standards for “output” are established in specialized terms, which makes it difficult for non-art professionals to propose different policies or question the executive director’s choices. The economists Frey and Pommerehne went so far as to claim that the role of the museum director is to ensure that “the production function connected with the museum's services is actively hidden . . . and cannot easily be detected” (Frey and Pommerehne 1980, 250). One may argue that under such circumstances, oversight by financial and legal professionals, managers, and other university-educated individuals familiar

with populations that are less than 50 percent white, the average percent of white board members drops considerably – but at 74 percent (with a standard deviation of 25), it is still considerably higher than the county average” (Ostrower 2005, 11).

with “bottom-line thinking” is essential to minimize the risk of chicanery or even fraud, and to legitimate the institution in the eyes of donors, patrons, and funding bodies.

A different interpretation, utilizing a social-class perspective, might be that trustees with privileged backgrounds represent class interests, and are not mere resources or legitimating signifiers. That is, the elites who have always dominated art museum boards do not simply bring their skills and expertise to the boardroom and lend legitimacy to the organization, but actively bring their interests and identities to the table. In her chapter “Public Spaces, Private Interests,” Duncan takes pains to emphasize the fundamental difference between European and North American art museums. The former were “strongly associated with bourgeois political struggles for civic power ... [and thus] commemorate a triumph over the principle of aristocratic privilege” (Duncan 1995, 53). The latter, however, were established by “bankers and business tycoons” whose motives were complex and contradictory, “a mix of personal and public ambitions, elitist and democratic sentiment” (Ibid., 54). Besides providing a place for education or “civilizing” of the public, North American art museums conferred social distinction on the newly wealthy individuals who financed and governed them. Association with the art museum helped the newly wealthy to secure both their political base and their social prestige. Furthermore, even while they reinforced class boundaries, art museums could appear as “unifying and even democratizing forces in a culturally diverse society” (Ibid.). What became disseminated as the philosophical and moral heritage of the burgeoning North American nations was the culture of Western European Protestant elites. This gave the founders and trustees of the art museums “an identity that was seemingly above class interests” (Ibid., 55), allowing them to naturalize this identity as the universal ideal subject of the new liberal democracy. This interpretation is supported by Ostrower’s candid interviews with the trustees of two elite American art museums in *Trustees of Culture: Power, Wealth, and Status on Elite Arts Boards* (Ostrower 2002).

One might argue that this perspective over-integrates the state-museum-class relationship and fails to capture the complexities of how class plays out in North American art museums – how, particularly since the late 1960s, the art museum has been a site of conflict and struggle for recognition and acceptance of histories, identities, and subjectivities that diverge from the modernist ideal (a subject to be explored in Chapter 9). To this end, Fyfe (1995) argues that there is an internal relationship between museums and modernization. The discourses and rules of

classification that the art museum presents are not simply the reflection of pre-constituted interests. Rather, “the identities of classes (and other groups) are produced partly through the medium of museums which interpret class [and other group] relations” (Fyfe 1995, 212). Thus, the museum does not just reproduce identities and relationships, but is what Mouffe would call an “agonistic institution” (Mouffe 2000), wherein interdependent groups compete for the advantages of symbolic power and difference. Fyfe concludes:

A feature of cultural interdependency is the struggle of dominant groups to stabilize signs, to freeze classification whilst disrupting the classification of subordinate groups. Stabilization can be fragile – the flux that is the multipolarity of classification may offer the potential of hybridizations and of realignments between groups which transform the rules of classification and admit new artefacts to the canon. This is why any attempt to assign the museum to a class or class fraction, to make it the creature of a class or the state, is unproductive. (Fyfe 1995, 212)

I take Fyfe’s point, but we must be realistic about the breadth of the flux that he describes. If the power of art museums is to classify, to define and to redefine the limits or bounds of the liberal subject through periodic reconfigurations of the canon, and if the point of view of museums is produced through the contradictions of the cultural forces in which they are enmeshed, we must assess the achievements of those who have challenged the canon not only by the museum’s content, but also by its governors, those who supervise and finally give permission to the content.¹⁷ In the latter aspect, the old authority prevails.

One educator who participated in the CAGE survey stated: “There’s a big problem when the board is disconnected from staff and from the community – when they are all millionaires, like on our board, they have no sense of the community’s needs and whether our organization is meeting these needs. There’s a problem when there’s no artists on the board. Our board has no idea what the staff do. They meet with each other three or four times a year, they have an agenda, they have items to approve ... Their biggest concern is to make sure they have no deficit, so they

¹⁷ An excellent example of an art museum patron dictating the terms of the museum’s engagement (or lack of engagement) of the public is the Thompson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). When Ken Thompson donated 2,000 works of art to the AGO in 2002, he was Canada’s wealthiest individual, and his donation was the largest ever to a Canadian museum. It came with one condition: there were to be no labels identifying the art works for visitors. As a result, visitors must either already know enough about the work to be able to “read” it, or they are simply out of luck.

won't be held accountable for any financial mess. Beyond this, they don't care or really know how our work impacts the public." I have heard versions of this complaint from art museum staff across Canada. Their perception is that their trustees work in large part to serve their own private interests behind the organization's façade of public legitimacy. As such, there is little motivation for boards to seek the museum's transformation through increased public engagement and public value creation.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC VALUE AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SUBSIDIES TO THE ARTS

This chapter has two purposes: 1) to give shape to the concept of public value and its requirement of public engagement; and 2) to assess the three main arguments that have been made to justify arts subsidies in Canada, the US, and other Anglo nations—the “intrinsic” argument, the “instrumental” argument, and the “cultural value” argument—in relation to the concept of public value. The concepts surveyed in this chapter will be used in Chapter 6 to frame and assess existing empirical evidence for the benefits of participation in the arts, and particularly in art museum activities.

Public Value

In 1995, Mark H. Moore proposed public value creation as an alternative to both traditional “bureaucratic” public management and “businesslike” New Public Management, as defined by Hood (1991). He described public value as the public-sector equivalent of shareholder value in private firms, that is, the “return” public organizations ought to generate for citizens. Public value is distinguished from more frequently cited concepts of the “public interest” drawn from Bentham’s (1776) utilitarianism, which is the summation of individual preferences and selection of policies that offer the “greatest happiness for the greatest number.” In the utilitarian framework, the public is made up of individuals—individual citizens, voters, and taxpayers—and of collective bodies and institutions such as the voting constituencies of elected public officials, elected legislatures, the courts, and those who influence these institutions, such as interest groups and the media. The public exists “downstream” in the production process of public services and may be indifferent to everything about their public organizations, other than what they do for them as individuals (M. H. Moore 1995).

Public value adherents reject this framework. They argue that the public “exists in the complex *processes* of democratic government that combine individuals and aggregate institutions into an imperfectly formed and somewhat inarticulate collective that expresses what it would like to produce with the assets of government” (M. H. Moore 2013, 20, emphasis in original). In terms of process, the public exists “above” the public organization, providing it

(ideally) with the resources according to the degree to which the agency can produce a collectively desired, aggregate social outcome. This outcome may or may not include the satisfaction of individual beneficiaries, because it must consider justice, fairness, trust, legitimacy, equity, ethos and accountability, along with efficiency and effectiveness. Viewed in this light, public value can be seen to have its philosophical foundation in Aristotle's "common good," which has to do with the polis: "the good of the polis is apparently greater and more complete good to acquire and preserve. For while it is satisfactory to acquire and preserve the good even for an individual, it is finer and more divine to preserve it for a people and for poleis [the plural form of polis]" (Aristotle 1985, 1094b). The common interest, the good of the polis, is distinct from the exclusive good of the individual, which is inferior (Sison and Fontrodona 2012). Recognition that public value is created in the polis compels us to acknowledge that political and cultural communities are formed through loyalties and cooperation, along with the human capacity for altruism (Stone 1988). It also requires acknowledgement of the existence of influence and power, which make public value creation inherently political, and its creation therefore discursive and deliberative (Fischer 2002).

Many of the concepts in public value literature are built on ideas that were expressed by classical pragmatists in the first half of the 20th century. For instance, Dewey maintained that effective democratic participation required people from all political perspectives to come to public deliberation processes with open minds, and find themselves welcomed in the process (Dewey 1927, 364). Similarly, contemporary scholars argue that as "value *from* the public, i.e., 'drawn' from the experience of the public" (Meynhardt 2009, 206), public value shifts the focus "from results to relationships" (O'Flynn 2007, 360). Thus, public value requires public engagement, and engagement of the *public* is qualitatively distinct from the engagement of individuals. As Benington (2009, 235) writes, "the public is not given but made – it has to be continuously created and constructed." He notes:

Part of the role of government is to take the lead in shaping and responding to people's ideas and experiences of the public, of who we are, and what we collectively value—what it means to be part of, and a participant in, the public sphere, at this moment in time and in this place/space, and what adds to public value and what detracts from it. This involves a constant battle of ideas and values, because the public sphere is heavily contested territory, and there are many competing interests and ideologies in play. The public realm is under

current challenge from tendencies which undermine the sense of inter-dependence within a multi-cultural society—for example, racism, sexism, fascism, fundamentalism, brutalization and consumerism, which fragment the notion of what we have in common as a public. (Ibid.)

In short, public value is not “public” because it is produced by government or by publicly funded organizations, but “rather because it is ‘consumed’ *collectively* by the citizenry” (Alford 2011, 144, emphasis added). Most importantly, public value must be considered not just in terms of “what does the public most value?” but also “what adds value to the public sphere?” (Benington 2009, 233). As a result, maintaining trust and legitimacy of the organization is perhaps the most important point of public value theory, and its most novel aspect (O’Flynn 2007; Stoker 2006).

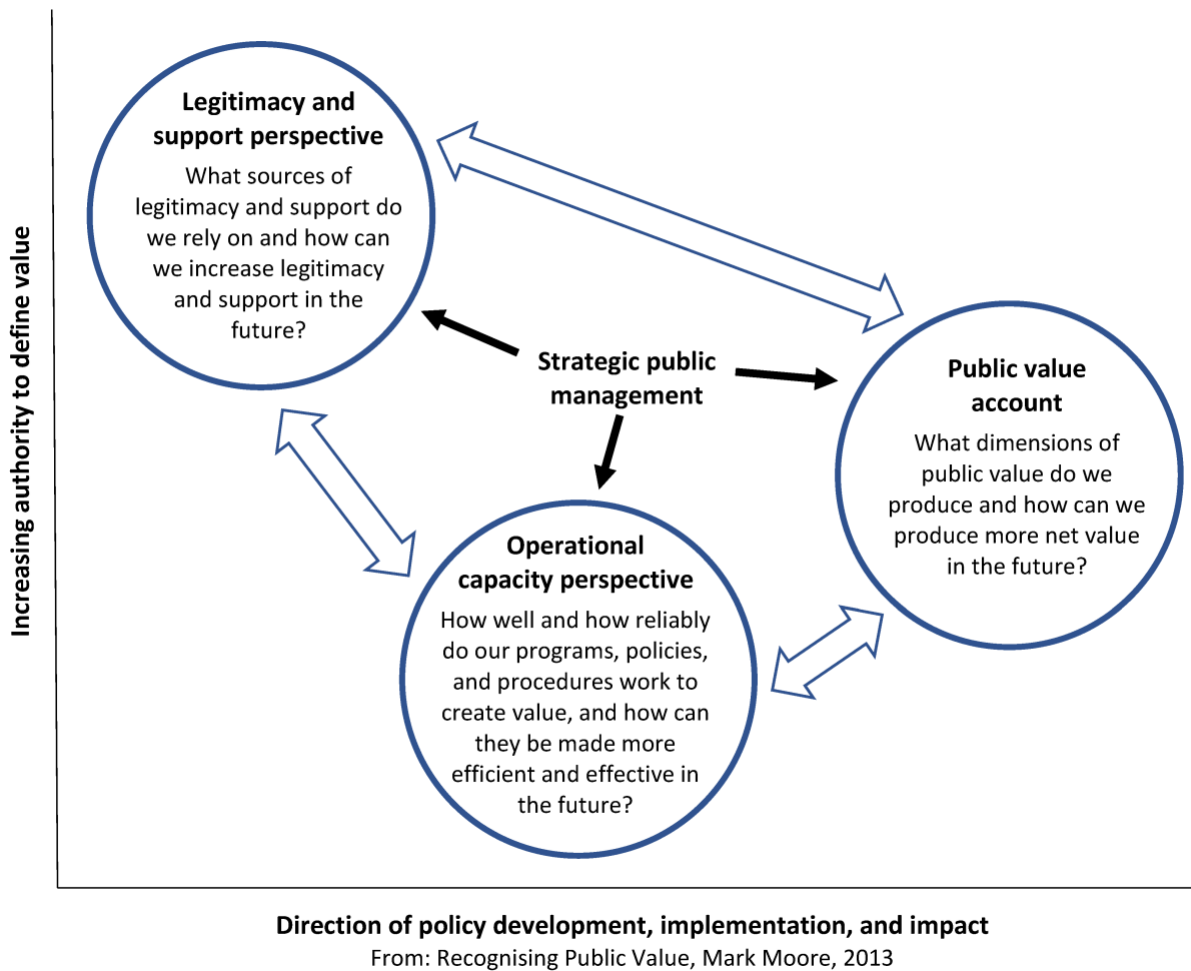
Two decades after it was first conceived, public value has become an established (if still minority) approach to evaluating public services and publicly funded organizations in states including the UK, Australia, and, to a lesser degree, Canada and other Anglo nations (Talbot 2008). Academics have seized it as a new paradigm for thinking about government activity, policy-making, and service delivery (O’Flynn 2007; Stoker 2006). Public value criticizes New Public Management for having failed to recognize that public management not only delivers services but also enshrines deeper governmental and social values, including institutional legitimacy, which the economic efficiency criterion largely fails to capture (Hefetz and Warner 2004). Stoker (2006) argues that public value is the management paradigm most compatible with network governance, which is a framing of collective or “pluricentric” decision-making that involves a wider range of participants as legitimate members of the decision-making process. He views network governance as the most efficient, equitable, and accountable form of governance in the contemporary global context, which is characterized by complexity and considerable uncertainty or turbulence. Public value sees participants in the decision-making process as motivated not by rules or extrinsic incentives, but by their involvement in networks and partnerships, that is, “in their relationships with others formed in the context of mutual respect and shared learning” (Stoker 2006, 41). Relationship-building is thus the key to networked governance and to public value creation, and should be the core objective of the management supporting it. The public value concept has also been adopted by private sector companies and not-for-profit organizations interested in maintaining a social license to operate or in understanding the impact of their operations on public value creation or destruction (M. H.

Moore 2003; Alford and O’Flynn 2009). It is in this emphasis on public participation in public value creation that the concept of public value and the practices of public engagement are entangled.

How to measure public value has been the subject of some debate (Alford and O’Flynn 2009). Because public value is a question of process as much as outcome, simple metrics such as output or efficiency do not suffice. Art museum educators understand this. One CAGE member wrote in her survey: “Better relations/conversations/dialogues with all community members are important but we can never know what the effects [*sic*] of a museums can produce ... As an art museum educator, I never think in terms of value but in terms of ‘experience.’” Another survey respondent noted that the managers of her organization, which has an Indigenous advisory committee, cited this committee as “proof” of engagement. Yet, “educators have no access to this group, no opportunity to take their feedback forward within programming efforts. The intention is there, however the process/system is lacking.”

Moore proposed the “Public Value Scorecard” (M. H. Moore 2003) to deal with the problems associated with public value measurement in nonprofit organizations. It is, in part, a rejoinder to Kaplan and Norton’s “Balanced Scorecard” (1992), a strategy performance management tool that has been widely adopted by nonprofits. The Public Value Scorecard is represented in the mnemonic device of the “strategic triangle,” which is meant to direct the attention of nonprofit boards and managers to three calculations they should make before committing to a strategy:

Figure 5.1. The “strategic triangle” (M. H. Moore 2013)



According to Moore, strategies for nonprofit organizations must meet three broad tests. They must: 1) be aimed at creating something of substantive social value; 2) be legitimate and politically sustainable; i.e., attract sufficient ongoing support and resources from the authorizing environment (government agencies and donors) with due recognition of their differential power; and 3) be operationally feasible, keeping in mind that nonprofits typically rely on strategic collaborations and coproduction with other organizations. Moore underscores that the social aim of the organization must be clearly stated, no matter how intangible or idealistic these goals are. Funders are conceived as “upstream” customers, and should be treated as ends as well as means. Finally, when organizations consider partnerships as part of their operational capacity, they are

required to think clearly about how much of their resources to expend on themselves, and how much to use in mobilizing contributions from other organizations.

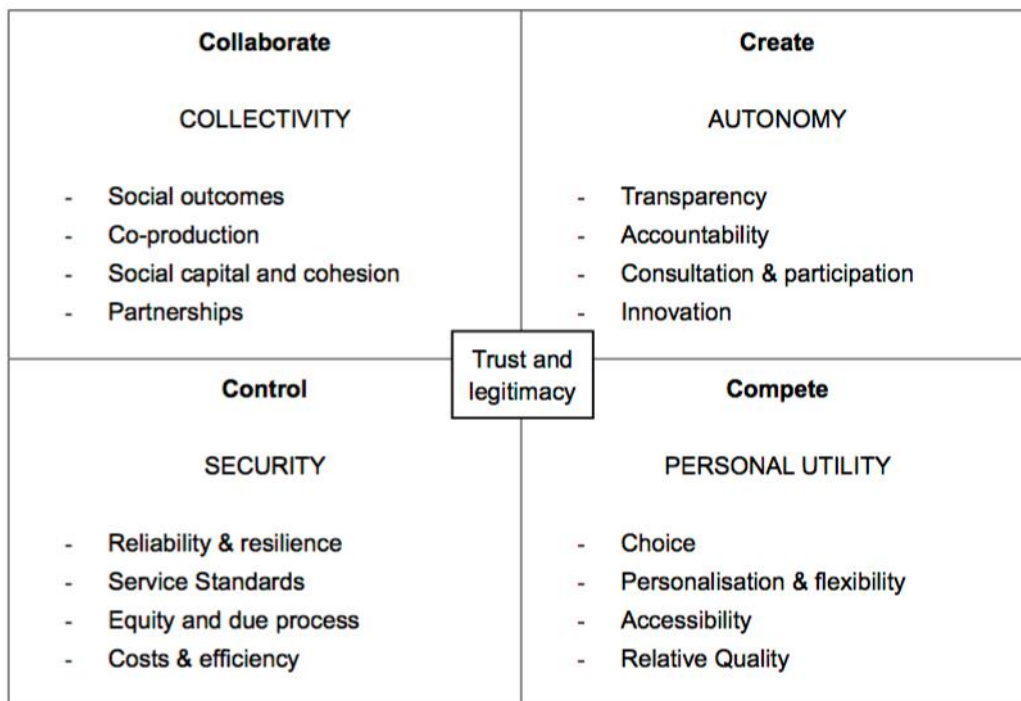
Moore argues that these three points of the triangle should also be the focus of the measurement systems used to monitor organizational performance. He suggests that organizations create “pyramids” of mission/subgoals/objectives, moving from the broadest ideas to more specific, concrete, and measurable ideas in the “Values” circle, taking as many measures as possible and not restricting them to outcomes alone, but including process and input measures as well. Nonprofits must also develop and use measures to monitor the strength of their relationships with financial supporters (including volunteers) and authorizers. Growing the nonprofit’s “account” with each “upstream” customer, and conceiving of relationships with these parties as ends in themselves, not just means, will help nonprofits monitor their performances in the arena of Legitimacy and Support. Finally, the third point, Organizational Capacity, should be measured in terms of organizational outputs, efficiency of production of these outputs, financial integrity (looking at what may have been lost to fraud, waste, or abuse), staff morale and capabilities, morale and capacity of partner/co-producer organizations, and the status of learning and innovation in the organization.

Moore’s model is simple and compelling. Yet as Talbot (2008, 2011) contends, it fails to account for the contradictory and conflicting demands placed on many public agencies and publicly funded organizations. Art museums are a case in point, as they have tensions of missions and goals, as well as a wide variety of customers (both upstream and downstream) who possess diverse and often competing values (Zolberg 1986). Complex contexts, such as the art museum, increase the difficulty of planning and measuring success or failure. As Talbot argues, the public sphere more generally is nearly always contradictory and conflicting, in part because human nature is also contradictory—both self-regarding and other-regarding, selfish and altruistic. Furthermore, individuals are not only concerned with what they get and for how much (a premise underlying New Public Management’s focus on efficiency), but are greatly invested in procedural fairness (Talbot 2011). Thus, public attitudes are “cognitively polyphasic,” that is, the public perceives problems and issues in more than one way simultaneously (Talbot 2008, 8). Talbot explains that these three sets of interests—self-interest, altruism, and concern for procedural fairness—can be exhibited by the same people at the same time. He states: “This answers the paradox that people genuinely, and with often altruistic motives, support more

public provision or calls that ‘something must be done’; demand appropriate procedural fairness, however inefficient; and at the same time demand less taxation” (Talbot 2011, 30). Each of these interests can come in conflict with one or both of the others at any given time. In short, people are paradoxical: individuals do not have stable preferences, or even stable ways of thinking about their preferences, but flip-flop between different desires and analytical processes.

To deal with this complexity, Talbot proposes a new public value model, one that recognizes the paradoxical nature of the public. To do so, he draws from the literature of Competing Values (Quinn 1988; Quinn and Cameron 1988). His Competing Public Values framework puts trust and institutional legitimacy at the centre of all considerations, as follows:

Figure 5.2. Competing Public Values (Talbot 2008)



Talbot suggests that an organization’s contributions to public value could be assessed on the following dimensions: 1) trust and legitimacy (measured through stakeholder, user, and public surveys, analysis of audits and inspections, and levels of complaints); 2) collectivity (measured through social outcomes, active co-production, general measures of social capital and social cohesion, and effective partnerships); 3) security (measured through resilience and reliability, service standards, equity and due process, costs and efficiency); 4) personal utility

(measured through degree of choice available, personalization and flexibility of services, accessibility, relative quality); and 5) autonomy (measured through transparency and freedom of information, accountability, degrees of consultation and participation in shaping services, and innovation in services). This, he argues, is a public value model grounded in the paradoxical reality of actual human values.

It is a big leap from the high-level theories of Moore and Talbot to on-the-ground operations at art museums. At this point, I note only that Talbot's centering of trust and legitimacy, values that prioritize reciprocal relationships with an organization's public, is at odds with the top-down production processes of most art museums. At most art museums, strategic plans are established by the director, working with the board and senior (mostly curatorial) staff: 47 percent of the art museum educators in my survey reported that they are "never" or "rarely" invited to attend strategic planning sessions, 52 percent attend "sometimes," and only 1 percent is "always" invited. Without the input of the museum's front-line workers, planning effectively takes place in the absence of practical knowledge of the museum's public impact or community needs. The training and career ambitions of directors and curators result in institutional commitments to reiterations of accepted art histories and the reputed aesthetic hierarchy of "excellence," with one eye forever cocked toward the judgements of peer assessors who will review the next round of funding applications, or toward the opinions of esteemed colleagues in other museums who may provide the individuals' next jobs. As a driving standard, "excellence" is hopelessly subjective and laden with cultural and class biases. The result is a "public culture" largely reflective of the interests of private culture as defined by visual art professionals on peer assessment panels. Funding is awarded with scant attention to public cultural need, as art museum attendance statistics confirm. Art museum educators are not immune to the art field's biases, yet only two percent in my survey agreed that their organization's exhibitions offered "excellent" public value overall. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) thought the exhibitions offered "very good" public value; 49 percent "good"; and 25 percent rated the public value of the exhibitions as "somewhat poor." One art museum educator described her job as "mostly compensating for the failures of the art on display to 'speak for itself' to lay audiences." The lukewarm esteem expressed by educators for their galleries' exhibitions should give art museum curators pause for thought.

Arts Policy Rationales

The promotion of “excellence” was for many years the sole rationale for public funding of the arts. However, while it has not disappeared from the vocabulary of policy-makers and practitioners, there are now other rationales for arts subsidies. In the field of policy analysis, it has become customary to talk about arts policy rationales in terms of three distinct paradigms. Each paradigm offers some version of “the arts and culture are good for us,” but they differ significantly in their expression of what constitutes the public good.

The initial, founding paradigm is built on an “intrinsic” or “art for art’s sake” argument—that of “excellence”—which relates to the subjective experience of art, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Historically, it has catered very much to the cultural preferences of elites, which is why Dworkin (1985) called it the “lofty” model. The lofty approach assumes that elites know best what is “good” for people to have, and insists that art and culture must reach a certain level of sophistication that the market cannot provide, as too few people are appreciative. The lofty model is thus premised on concepts of market failure – both the elitist view that popular culture (culture supported by the market) is inferior to high culture, as well as Baumol’s cost disease theory (Baumol and Bowen 1966), which holds that fine arts productions cannot benefit from economies of scale, so inflation will cause the same level of cultural productivity to require ever-increasing state allocations over time. This approach was the dominant justification for arts funding from the time of the creation of the first funding agencies in the Anglophone nations¹⁸ until roughly the rise of the UK’s New Labour in the mid-1990s – with the exception of Australia, whose Labor government rejected the argument of intrinsic value in 1973 (Phiddian et al. 2017). The lofty approach, now considered paternalistic, was never enthusiastically supported by outsiders to the realm of high art, but it managed to maintain a façade of legitimacy until the late 1960s, that is, until the end of the Modernist period in visual art. From the advent of Pop Art

¹⁸ The first arts funding agency was England’s Council for the Encouragement of Music in the Arts, which was established in 1940 to help promote and maintain British culture during the Second World War. In 1946, it was renamed the Arts Council of Great Britain, and in 1994 this agency was divided into Arts Council England, the Scottish Arts Council, and the Arts Council of Wales (Morgan 2017). The first arts funding agency in North America was the Saskatchewan Arts Board, established as part of the CCF government’s larger program of building a public infrastructure “to enable individual growth and self-realization” (Pogrebin 2017). The Canada Council for the Arts was established in 1957, and the National Endowment for the Arts, in the US, in 1957. The Australia Arts Council was not established until 1967, and Creative New Zealand not until 1994.

forward, this was no longer the case. Even as arts councils and established arts organizations (including art museums) sought to maintain the status quo, artists from diverse demographics and political perspectives lobbied for change. In Canada, various groups, including Québécoise, Indigenous, women, and people of colour, began to pressure governments to facilitate ways in which their political and cultural demands could be met. The postmodern questioning of concepts such as beauty, truth, delight, and transcendence, combined with the insight that these ideas are temporally and geographically specific, made the lofty argument for arts subsidies appear increasingly retrograde. As Belfiore writes, “Even the principle of ‘access’, which together with “excellence” represented the keyword of cultural policy since the post-war years, had now lost its hold” (Belfiore 2002, 5).

The second paradigm is the “instrumental” rationale, in which funding of the arts is viewed as the means to achieving “non-art” outcomes. Since the intrinsic values of culture are experienced at the level of the individual, the lofty argument for arts subsidies was difficult if not impossible to articulate in terms of mass outcomes. Not so the instrumental approach. This argument has its origins in the 1970s, when the ubiquity of economic impact studies as a tool for arts advocacy began to reinforce the habit of thinking of the value of the arts in simple economic terms (Toepler, 2001, 516). Instrumental rationalization began to solidify in the 1980s, as the principles and practices of New Public Management led to a widespread tendency in the Anglophone nations¹⁹ to use cultural projects and investments as a means of attaining goals in other than cultural areas, such as job and wealth creation, urban regeneration, social inclusion, community development, and social cohesion (Belfiore 2004). The paradigm was explicitly adopted in national arts funding policies in England in the mid-1990s, when the Blair government reformed arts councils in line with New Public Management principles, and it continues to inform policy decisions in Canada, Australia, and the US. This is particularly true at the municipal and provincial/state levels, where decision-makers have been influenced by the economic promises of Richard Florida’s (2002) popular “creative class” thesis.

Indeed, the tendency to advocate for the arts on purely instrumental grounds was not only supported but in some cases driven by Florida’s arguments in his extraordinarily successful book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which focused on the concentration of “technology, talent

¹⁹ It is in Anglophone nations that the tenets of neo-conservatism and New Public Management have had the most significant impacts (Sara Selwood Associates 2010).

and tolerance” in successful American cities in an era of de-industrialization. In 2004 UNESCO formed a Creative Cities Network, which now has 116 city members from 54 nations. Its purpose is to develop and share “new strategies, policies and initiatives aimed at making culture and creativity a driving force for sustainable development and urban regeneration through the stimulation of growth and innovation and the promotion of social cohesion, citizen well-being and inter-cultural dialogue” (UNESCO 2017). The interest in “creative cities” persists despite claims by other scholars that Florida’s research is unsound, and that his book’s conclusions rest on “a dubious set of political and, indeed, sociological assumptions” (McGuigan 2009, 298). The “art world” has been itself complicit with the production of misinformation. Belfiore argues that economic and other instrumental arguments for the arts, in combination with both the “intentional obscurity and impenetrability of a certain portion of academic writing” (Belfiore 2009, 352) and the confusion between arts research and arts advocacy by many employed in the field have together led to a “lack of connection to a concern with truth” and “indifference to how things really are” (Frankfurt 2005, 34, cited in Belfiore, *Ibid.*, 343), or, more bluntly, “bullshit and mindlessness” (*Ibid.*, 354) in cultural policy analysis, particularly in the framing and fudging of impact studies. Other critics of the instrumental model argue that, regardless of evidence, the philosophical argument of the instrumental model is circular: “demonstrating public benefit meant rationally justifying cultural activities, which in turn meant demonstrating public benefit (Phiddian et al. 2017, 176). The shift to instrumental rationales was perceived by many in the arts sector as an attack. Accountability came to mean responding to the priorities of the government of the day: “It was now not public policy that needed to understand culture, but culture that needed to comply with public policy” (*Ibid.*).

Both the intrinsic and instrumental rationales for arts funding are now being challenged by a third, emerging paradigm, based on Holden’s (2004) “cultural value” proposition. The concept of cultural value has garnered particular attention since the 2016 publication of the report “Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture” (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016), which summarizes and appraises the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Cultural Value Project. Holden’s compelling argument is that a more holistic model is needed to capture the range of benefits, outcomes, and impacts arising from engagement with the arts. He maintains that the political “nervousness” about art and culture is the result of a democratic deficit (Holden 2006, 12), elaborating: “Public approval of culture is hidden; politicians are scared off culture by

the media; and cultural professionals have spent too much time in a closed conversation with their funders, feeding them with statistics and ‘good stories’” (Ibid., 12-13).

To build the cultural value model, Holden draws from four different fields: anthropology, environmentalism, intangibles accounting, and public value theory. From anthropology, he understands cultural value as comprising historical value, social value, symbolic value, aesthetic value, and spiritual value. He notes that cultural value may be impossible to quantify, yet it is often an important determinant of economic value: “It may be seen for example in the difference between the cost of materials of a painting and the amount that the painting raises at auction” (Holden 2004, 36). Drawing from environmentalism, he argues that in considerations of culture, we must also consider “duty of care” or sustainability, as well as intergenerational equity, fairness of distributional benefit, and diversity (which, like biodiversity, builds resistance). We must heed, too, the precautionary principle that irrevocable change requires greater caution, and we must learn to recognize creativity and fecundity as signs of systemic resilience. Inspired by intangibles accounting, Holden contends that the cultural sector must develop shared “definitions/explanations/characterizations” of things that are difficult to value, that there must be consistency in the use of terms, and a common approach to disclosure. And finally, from the theory of public value, he derives the idea that organizations must determine and commit to their own purposes, rather than be given them by funders, and that funding models require a radical conceptual shift “from a top-down, target-driven culture” towards “a concordat of understanding between funders and funded” that prioritizes the creation of value recognized by the public, rather than the delivery of benefits recognized by administrators. Cultural value also views legitimacy (or public trust in institutions), equity, and fairness as essential, requiring stakeholders to pay attention to *how* organizations operate, not simply to what they aim to achieve, and to explicitly recognize professional judgement and discretion as factors in good administration (Ibid., 46-47). Yet values identification should not just include the perspectives of professional experts – the public must also be involved in the process as both recipients and creators of value. For art museums, this speaks once again to the need for less curatorial focus on peer approval, and an increased focus on building stronger relationships with diverse publics, as well as giving greater authority and voice to educators. Holden views the many elements of cultural value as operating dynamically within a triangle, inspired by Moore’s, that is formed by intrinsic, instrumental, and institutional values, and which government must recognize.

It can be useful to think of arts funding rationales in terms of the three paradigms outlined above—instrumental, intrinsic, and cultural value—in part because the models help us to consider how arts policies have developed in relation to broader social, economic, and political trends. However, it would be a mistake to assume that funding agencies have ever strictly limited themselves to any paradigmatic agendas or decision-making processes. On the contrary, Cohen et. al's well known “garbage can theory” of policy development is a more apt model for how arts policies have come to take shape, at both governmental and agency levels. The garbage can theory describes an organization as “a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work” (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972, 81). In the garbage can model, problems and solutions are discussed more for the positive rewards associated with participation in debate, and less for the purpose of arriving at decision outcomes (Ibid., 174). Problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities flow in and out of a garbage can, and the attachment of problems to solutions occurs more by chance than by processes of logical analysis.

Marquis (1995) illustrates this nicely. She describes the early days of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as adhering only superficially to its “truth and beauty” rhetoric, while “more covert non-art motivations carried the day” (Marquis 1995, 86-87) She notes that in the late 1960s:

Consonant with Americans' pragmatic bent, the arts were sold as satisfying not only the soul but also many practical considerations. In New York, the emphasis was on providing a livelihood for hordes of artists and on attracting even larger hordes of tourists. Elsewhere in the northeast, the arts were to help lure suburbanites back to the central city. In the Midwest, the arts were expected to keep educated young people from migrating away from declining farm towns and to attract professionals and industries. In the Sun Belt, the arts were part of the rambunctious local boosterism that also lusted after major-league sports teams. In Indiana, the chairman of the state arts council, an elderly newspaper publisher, saw arts promotion as gainful employment for his equally elderly mistress. Named as the council's executive secretary, this lady submitted funding applications to Washington adorned with Valentine paper lace, cute little hand-drawn angels, and busy bees. (Ibid., 87)

Similarly, when the Canada Council for the Arts was established, the requirement of regional representation meant it “could not be a meritocracy” – it needed to be a “nation-builder” first (Vance 2009, 367). The Council, influenced by the Massey Commission (1951), and wary of American cultural imperialism, adopted a “liberal humanist nationalist” model. As for the governance of social welfare systems, the arm’s length funding system for the funding of the arts relied on the truth claims of “expertise” (J. Mills 2001, 163) and emphasized “excellence” in decidedly elitist, Eurocentric terms: the largest grants were awarded to large urban organizations producing ballet, opera, symphony, and Shakespeare, and artists who could afford to work full-time on artistic endeavours were prioritized ahead of those who needed to earn an income (Fatona 2011, 95). At the same time, although committees and task forces concluded time and time again that culture was essential to “maintaining” Canadian identity, there was a constant subtext that culture was growing in economic importance and should be treated like other sectors of the economy (Vance 2009, 401). For example, as early as 1971, cultural funding was perceived as a means of supporting the tourism industry in Newfoundland: “A book or a painting was like cod or potash: it provided employment and generated economic activity, and so was deserving of government support” (Ibid., 403). And, as I shall explore further in Chapter 9, since the 1990s “multiculturalism” and “diversity” have, broadly speaking, played two roles in cultural policy: 1) in a continuation of the citizen-building project, multiculturalism has been harnessed to address anxiety about changes in cultures and values in Canada – i.e. to encourage social cohesion; and 2) under the influence of liberalized trade agreements, diversity has been employed in the interests of strategically adapting cultural production in a rapidly shifting, competitive international market (K. Mitchell 2003). The distinctions between these two terms and agendas have by no means always been clear to artists, curators, or others working in art museums and the visual arts sector.

Adding further complexity, the peer review system virtually guarantees the intermittent rewarding of artists and projects that are difficult for arts councils to defend according to any rationales. In 2004, for example, the artist Istvan Kantor, known for performances in which he takes his own blood and splashes it onto walls, canvases, or the audience, was awarded a Governor General Award in Media and Visual Art by a jury of his peers at the Canada Council. At the time, I worked at the Council in a cubicle adjacent to the communications department, and I witnessed the staff’s reaction to the jury’s decision: incredulity, followed by outrage, followed

by panic, as they prepared their statements for the media. Of these sorts of peer review outcomes, Mulcahy (1991, para. 20) remarks: “It needs to be recognized that the determination of what is ‘good’ public culture is not a prerogative that can be enjoyed solely by the recipients of public cultural funding.” Although many argue that the specialized nature of cultural decisions requires decision-making be left to experts, “this is analogous to arguing that defense policy is too complex to be decided by elected representatives and the electorate but should instead be the exclusive preserve of military officers and defense contractors” (Ibid.).

Holden’s cultural value model is excellent—sophisticated and nuanced—yet is unlikely to be adopted by governments with any more sincerity or aptitude than governments embraced the lofty or instrumental models. To begin with, there has yet to be tested an efficient and meaningful method for assessing cultural value. A relatively new Australian measurement framework, Culture Counts, aims to harness “intrinsic value data” by triangulating information from three types of arts participants: “self-assessors” (artists, curators, producers), peer assessors (other professionals in the sector), and the public. Culture Counts’ platform is built around a set of consistent, sector-developed value metrics, using criteria such as a challenge, captivation, relevance, and rigour. Yet Phiddian et al. (2017, 178) argue that this program is “a sophisticated and entrepreneurialised version of the misguided belief that everything that matters in culture can be counted, and that doing so will secure the sector’s social and political base.” They explain:

The categories are nuanced enough to provide usable feedback for practitioners and bureaucrats with the time and desire to think hard about what the numbers mean. But, they remain essentially marketing analytics rather than a window on artistic value, which does not occur as a benchmarked numerical snapshot, but within specific cultural forms, over time. We argue that metrics systems for artistic quality imply a spurious homogeneity of purpose in the arts, invite political manipulation and sequester time, money and attention from arts organisations without proven benefit. The incommensurability inherent in concrete instances of creative practice is not something that will be addressed by standardised measurement techniques. A new novel, in its network of practices and meanings, can never be quantitatively equivalent to a production of the Ring Cycle. There is simply no numerically valid way of valuing one over or like the other and only a fool or a knave will claim they can be assessed comparatively without making use of a critically informed judgment. (Ibid.)

Heedless of the Australian perspective, Arts Council England is also adopting Culture Counts, making it mandatory for all organizations granted above £250,000 (approximately CAD \$430,000).²⁰

Thinking in terms of policy paradigms also risks ignoring other interesting proposals for arts and culture subsidies which have not found as ample traction. For example, Zuidervaart (2011) argues more ardently than Holden for explicit diversity and equity considerations, in line with public value theory. He contends that current funding models rest on an unproven “trickle down” theory of benefits through the arts. Public funding, he argues, must instead be allocated on the basis of three essential components—cultural, political, and economic—and it is only when these three come together at once that a case for direct state subsidies emerges:

Culturally ... the arts are an institutional setting for imaginative disclosure that is societally important. Politically ... to promote public justice, democratically elected governments need to protect and support art’s creative articulation of issues and interests in the public sphere. Economically ... arts organizations in the civic sector provide important social-economic alternatives both needed and threatened by the capitalist market and the administrative state. (Ibid., 85)

Zuidevaart maintains that continued public funding of the arts can only be justified if funded organizations are compelled to better serve inclusive publics “without discriminating according to social status, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other such factors” (Ibid., 183). This, he notes, will require that control of these organizations becomes much more diverse.²¹ His approach is compatible with the claims made by other analysts that arts funding should be allocated for the purposes of social capital creation, also an important element of public value (Toepler 2001; Belfiore 2004; Stanley 2005). Looking at the arts from a social capital angle requires a greater focus on those aspects of cultural organizations that provide venues for citizens to participate and interact, which fosters social bonds and increasing levels of trust. Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital” (Bourdieu [1979] 1984) provides yet another

²⁰ A pilot project completed in 2016 determined that, despite serious misgivings about certain aspects of the program, 74 percent of Arts Council England organizations found Culture Counts to be “very useful” or “somewhat useful” (Higgins 2016). Critics argue that the program will be used to construct “league tables” (rankings based on metrics) and that this will result in attempts to compare “apples, pears and pineapples” (Ibid.). Arts Council England commences with Culture Counts in April 2018, and the results will surely influence granting agencies worldwide.

²¹ In line with this thinking, in July 2017 the City of New York announced that funding for arts organizations will in the future be linked to the diversity of the organizations’ boards and staff (Pogrebin 2017).

justification. This is the idea that artistic taste is more than idiosyncratic pleasure, but is a “cultural weapon” in the battle around the persistence of structures and social reproduction. In capitalist societies, exposure to the arts builds one’s cultural capital, the possession of which gives individuals competitive advantage. State intervention targeted at the redistribution of both cultural and social capital could help level a playing field that is currently very uneven.

CHAPTER 6: ART MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC VALUE

In this chapter, I review the available evidence of the ways that publicly funded arts—and art museums in particular—contribute to public value. I draw largely, but not exclusively, from the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council’s (AHRC’s) Cultural Value Project report, *Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture* (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). This report summarizes 70 studies on cultural value and the arts—a mixture of new research, critical reviews of the literature, and specialist workshops—that were commissioned by the AHRC in years leading up to the report. Reading through the summary and selected commissioned studies, I sought evidence of the ways that the arts contribute value to the public sphere by promoting or creating equity, diversity, empathy, innovation, social capital, and other attributes of public value, paying particular attention to evidence related to the visual arts and the actual or potential offerings of art museums.

Although public engagement has become a driving rhetoric of arts funders and arts organizations, public value as a dialogic practice has seen minimal application in the arts. As I shall explore further in Chapter 7, the value of publically funded arts still tends to be measured using a limited number of quantitative indicators such as participation (attendance, number of unique visits to websites) and, less frequently, effort (willingness to pay and time spent as a physical visitor, website visitor, or volunteer). Other weak and unsystematic indicators of value include media commentary and comments in guest books and blogs (C. Scott 2010). In Australia, where concern for public value of the arts precedes Holden’s cultural value concept, Scott observes that concerted public value research conducted over the last two decades by national and state/territorial arts councils revealed that “there are limits to the knowledge and understanding of public needs and values even among well-intentioned authorizing environments and industry stakeholders, and that the insights provided by the public offer a significant, and often different dimension on the subject of what should be considered valuable” (Ibid., 280). Notably, the studies revealed that in urban centres the public applies the term “arts” to a much wider array of activities than professionals do, directly challenging the arts sector to examine the narrowness of its set of definitions. It also found that public measures of value tend to stem from perception and personal experience rather than notions of “excellence.” By contrast, in regional, rural, and remote Australia, where communities are challenged by chronic drought and the

migration of young people to cities, the arts are more valued for instrumental purposes, such as their contributions to the economy in the form of tourist attractions and job creation (Ibid.). Scott's empirical research has focused on the public value of Australian museums as a general category; aside from one American study that is restricted to visitor surveys (Yocco et al. 2009), there is limited data specific to public value in art museums, and none, to my knowledge, from a Canadian perspective.

So, what do we know, or what can we surmise, about the art museum's contribution to public value? Do art museums contribute to shaping more reflective, engaged, or compassionate citizens? Do they redistribute capital—economic, social, or cultural—in ways that promote justice, equity, or fairness? Do they inspire political engagement? Do they nourish and promote diversity or innovation?

Within the 70 studies making up the AHRC Cultural Value Project, researchers examined many modes of cultural engagement, including culture in the home, amateur arts, commercial and popular culture, as well as subsidized art and culture. The project directors prefaced the summary of the findings by underscoring the enormous degree to which involvement in arts and cultural activities is differentiated by classic drivers of inequality, such as class, status, gender, ethnicity, and disability (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 30). Inequality manifests not just in consumption of culture, but also in relation to employment and leadership in the cultural sector. The latter fact is important, as it affects the institution's ability to form relationships with its diverse publics, and even inhibits the institution's basic awareness of diversity and the need for inclusive practices.

In Chapter 4, I outlined how social inequality is reflected in the composition of the boards of trustees of art museums in the US and Canada. But the staffing of art museums is not much different, marked as they are by relative underrepresentation of people of colour and the preponderance of men in high-profile leadership positions. A 2015 survey of American art museums found that in the job categories most associated with the intellectual and educational mission of museums, such as curators, conservators, educators, and executives (directors, chief curators, heads of education, etc.), 84 percent were "Non-Hispanic white," six percent Asian, four percent Black, three percent "Hispanic white," and three percent "two or more races." In a nation where only 64 percent of the population is "Non-Hispanic white," the report concludes that "these proportions do not come close to representing the diversity of the American

population” (Schonfeld, With, and Sweeney 2015, 3). Furthermore, the authors note that there is no “youth bulge” that would indicate that demographic change is coming any time soon, since “even promotion protocols that are maximally intentional about the organizational benefits of diversity are not going to make museum leadership cohorts notably more diverse if there is no simultaneous increase in the presence of historically underrepresented minorities on museum staff altogether” (Ibid., 4). This is a particularly urgent problem in the professions that drive the museum’s programs in collection development, research, exhibitions, and education.

The only comparable dataset for Canadian art museums is a somewhat more informal count of diversity amongst art museum employees undertaken by Maranda (2017) for *Canadian Art* magazine. He did not rely on self-identification for this study, but researched racial profiles of museum employees online and by consulting colleagues. Studying 80 art museums across Canada, and a total of 184 employees occupying leadership positions, he determined 92 percent to be white, less than four percent Indigenous, and just over four percent people of colour. All non-white art museum employees, save one, occupied curatorial positions rather than executive director roles. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to occupy the most senior positions in all but the fourth quartile or highest earning art museums. Art education departments in Canada seem to be equally homogeneous, or even more so: 100 percent of CAGE members who responded to my survey self-identified as white (and among them, only two individuals self-identified as male).

The relative underrepresentation of non-whites in staff positions has been a concern for Canadian art museum reformers and funding agencies for at least thirty years. The Canada Council began taking steps to address racial equity one year after the passing of Canada’s Multicultural Act (1988). In the 1990s, it created programs catering to “culturally diverse” artists and arts organizations, such as the Quest program for new and emerging culturally diverse artists and the Visual Arts Section’s assistance to culturally diverse and Aboriginal curators. Typically, the program for curators would directly fund one to two culturally diverse curators and one to two Aboriginal curators, at modest salaries, to work with an art museum for a one- or two-year period, during which time they would have the opportunity to develop their own exhibitions and publications, and to assist on other programming. However, three decades after these initiatives began, Clayton Windatt, executive director of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, states that there are still only “a half-dozen Indigenous curators across the whole country that have

permanent jobs” (quoted in Michelin 2017), and Maranda’s tally verifies this. In other words, despite the arts sector’s reputation for progressive politics, the art museum displays negligible regard for its responsibility to build public value through equitable hiring processes. Instead, because museum leadership positions are typically accompanied by some degree of public profile (in newspapers, on noon-hour local television, at openings, etc.), the art museum does not merely replicate broader social inequalities through its disproportionate hiring of white people, it continues to promote racial stereotypes that contribute to inequity and injustice, putting a white face on sanctioned culture.

Inequity in staffing and governance at the art museum is not a mere employment issue. The lack of diversity among staff translates into a narrower range of perspectives and community connections, limiting the art museum in its ability to engage publics and build public value. This provides an important context for understanding the limits of the art museum’s contributions to public value.

In the following pages, I summarize some of the key findings of the AHRC Cultural Value Project, and situate the art museum’s relationship to public value via the report’s conclusions on the arts’ contributions to the following key areas, as identified by project’s directors: 1) shaping reflective individuals; 2) inspiring citizen engagement; 3) contributing to community regeneration and public space; 4) economic contributions; 5) contributions to health, ageing, and wellbeing; and 6) the arts’ role in education.

Art Museums and Reflective Individuals

The arts have long been promoted for their capacity to shape reflective individuals, which in theory improves the quality of participation in the public sphere and thus builds public value. Studies in the AHRC’s Cultural Value Project confirm that some art forms do help people grow more empathetic and capable of engaging with challenging subjects or changing their habitual ways of thinking. In many cases, the arts provide audiences with a “rehearsal-type” situation in which to practice moral responses (Niemi 2010).²² In most cases, the arts are more successful in building empathy and changing minds where there is an “affective” element, or establishment of

²² For this reason, arts programs have been found to be useful practices for rehabilitating prisoners, ex-offenders, and those on probation and parole.

an emotional connection. Live arts, such as theatre and music, and narrative arts, such as film and literature, are the most efficient producers of emotional connection. On the other hand, in some highly stressful environments, individuals find space for reflection better when participating in solitary, calm activities, such as needlepoint or other visual arts practices. This can contribute to the attainment of public value goals such as prisoners' reintegration upon release (Ibid., 53).

Selwood (Sara Selwood Associates 2010) cautions that in studying museums, it is not always easy to discern actual effects from potential impacts, only in part because visitor feedback may reveal enthusiasm or scorn, but rarely longer term effects. A rare longitudinal study (Niemi 2010), drawn from data collected over a period of 20 years in the American National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1979, posits that engagement with the visual arts is strongly correlated with psychological openness to new ideas and experiences, tolerance of ambiguity, and the ability to maintain productive thinking in the midst of uncertainty, and that an early interest in the visual arts predicts objective indicators of occupational innovation in the general population of workers.²³ These qualities are not only important for innovation in the workplace, but are increasingly necessary for human survival in an epoch of political instability and unpredictable climate change. Drawing from Selwood's study of the cultural impact of British museums (Selwood 2002), I would further submit that art museums help shape reflective citizens to the extent that they "say the unsaid" or offer artists and program participants opportunities to express and to witness perspectives on sensitive or traumatic material that typically remains undiscussed. Similarly, I believe art museums can challenge some public perceptions and attitudes through exhibitions and programs that encourage participants to imagine new possibilities for our collective future, or that re-evaluate contributions that people or groups in our communities have made or can make. However, such exhibitions and programs do not make up the bulk of art museum offerings. Moreover, as I explored in Chapter 2, the demographics of art museum visitors means that those experiencing the programming are

²³ There is a possibility of a reverse relationship, that is, that individuals with personality characteristics required for innovation are more likely to have been interested in the visual arts at an early age. However, given that exposure to the visual arts tends to be limited outside of elite households, the study suggests at a minimum that efforts should be made to expose all children and youths to the visual arts at least as much as they are exposed to STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math).

typically a limited audience of mostly privileged individuals who likely have ample access to other opportunities for self- and social reflection.

Art Museums and Civic Engagement

Arts advocates have claimed that participation in art and culture is conducive to fostering civic dialogue and commitment, essential elements of public value creation. Nussbaum argues that the arts and humanities generate “vital spaces for sympathetic and reasoned debate, helping to build democracies that are able to overcome fear and suspicion and, ultimately, creating a world that is worth living in” (Nussbaum 2007). In theory, the arts can inspire civic engagement through didactic actions (instructing or persuading people in campaigns and movements), discursive actions (providing settings for people to discuss issues and share thinking as a basis for civic action), and “ecological” or spillover effects (where participation in the arts builds social capital and thus community capacity for action) (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 70). The AHRC Cultural Value Project report notes that causal relationships in these areas are “difficult to evidence” (Ibid., 58) although there is strong evidence of correlations between cultural engagement, voting patterns, volunteering, and pro-social behaviour. Particularly among socially disadvantaged youth, participation in arts activities has been identified as a precondition for future civic engagement (Catterall et al. 2012). For example, one study demonstrated that arts “interventions” developed a capacity and confidence for wider citizenship in youth who were tasked with producing media, videos, and artistic events dealing with regeneration plans for their neighbourhood (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 61).

When the focus of art’s influence on people’s civic engagement is broadened to the general population or narrowed to the activities of art museums, the evidence provided in the AHRC Cultural Value Project report is weak. For instance, although the arts have been touted as an important vehicle for raising awareness and concern for climate change, the report claims there is little evidence of this happening in art museums or elsewhere.²⁴ Selwood (2010) acknowledges projects by several museums, including some art museums, that have engaged marginalized groups—particularly Black and minority ethnic groups—with the intention of

²⁴ I have seen some individual art works dealing with climate change in art museums, and one of my case studies, Two Rivers Gallery, has dealt with climate change in an exhibition of photographs by Christine Germano—*Portraits of Resilience*, 2014—but I am not aware of any sustained programs examining this issue.

“broadening their audiences, giving them a voice and contributing to their sense of belonging” (Ibid., 40). As curator at the Kamloops Art Gallery, I organized two such projects myself,²⁵ working with Indigenous youth. My perception was that both projects were important in building the participants’ self-esteem, capabilities, and confidence. At the same time, each project required a significant redirection of museum resources, both financial and labour, which did not come without persistence on my part and occasional messages from colleagues and superiors that the workshops were perceived as inconveniences.

Cultural projects have been used in attempts to help healing and peacebuilding after armed conflict, and there have been some successful (at least in the short-term) bridge-building projects in theatre and other “living arts” practices in which audience members are asked to be co-creators (Ibid., 66-68). These projects contribute to public value through their creation of social capital. Art museums are not typically venues for such projects. Indeed, the AHRC Cultural Value Project report warns that museums frequently play a counter-progressive role in conflict, as they tend to represent “official” memories and tell conservative and essentialist histories. Contemporary art museums are more likely to present exhibitions in which conservative histories are challenged, but because contemporary art can take more experimental forms than the displays found in history museums, these exhibits may or may not be “legible” to lay audiences, and they may or may not be accompanied by public programs that involve attendees as more than passive audiences. Evidence of success in such programming is again largely anecdotal, although anecdotes should not be automatically discounted.

It is possible, however, for art museums to do more harm than good in the presentation of “counter-historical” works. An example is the Walker Art Center’s 2017 installation of the white artist Sam Durant’s public sculpture, *Scaffold*, evoking gallows and the world’s long history of public executions. Among the artist’s stated references in this work was the 1862 Mankato hangings of 38 Dakota men (the largest public executive in U.S. history), which came at the tail-end of the Indian Wars, when the Dakota were already suffering the full impact of their loss of

²⁵ *Overstepped Boundaries* was a two-year research project I facilitated for Indigenous youths at the Kamloops Art Gallery, which resulted in an exhibition drawn from the permanent collection, curated and designed by the youths, along with a catalogue (See: Neville 2008). I also organized the *Native Youth Art Workshop*, a two-year collaborative art-making, story sharing, and song producing workshop with Indigenous youths, their parents, grandparents, and children, which was facilitated by Jayce Salloum and Meeke Morgan and resulted in the production of several large-scale collaborative paintings and a CD of recorded spoken word poetry and original music (See: Budney and Salloum 2012).

land, starvation, and government-enforced assimilation. The hangings remain a traumatic history for Dakota people and are commemorated in an annual walk in memory of those killed (Hopkins 2017). Both the artist and the Walker failed to consult local Indigenous communities before installing the work outdoors (Chow 2017) and so the sculpture was met with hostility by many local Dakota, who viewed it as overtly threatening to a people who still feel themselves to be at conflict with the U.S. government.²⁶ Those who protested were particularly offended by the spectacle of children and other visitors clambering over the wooden structure as if it were a playground. Incidents such as the Durant sculpture controversy do not always build public value by fostering “critical and productive conversations around . . . complex questions,” as institutional gatekeepers are wont to stress during public apologies (Eler 2017). Instead, in volatile situations, these art productions can just as easily erode institutional legitimacy and build distrust between and across communities. In the case of the Durant sculpture, an Indigenous senior staff member at the Walker—had there been one—would likely have been able to foresee that the historic hangings would be a painful subject for many local Dakota. An Indigenous curator would have also likely understood that the local Dakota population could not be discounted as audience, even if, as the artist explained, the sculpture was installed to raise “needed awareness among white audiences” (Cascade 2017). A well-placed Indigenous staff member may have been able to forestall the incident, perhaps by convincing the artist and senior museum staff that the sculpture should be installed by means of an inclusive process designed to build trust with Dakota community members. What the incident tells us is that art in and of itself does not build public value – the relationships between the organizations exhibiting the art and their local public(s) are key to public value creation. This begs the question of the limits to the art museum’s ability to be civically engaged when its staff do not adequately represent the public.

²⁶ Although we typically think of Canada and the US as post-conflict nations—that is, as domestically at peace—there are marginalized and oppressed groups, including Indigenous and Black groups, who argue that our nations are in fact in perpetual war against some citizens. For example: “There has never, not for one minute in American history, been peace between black people and the police. And nothing since slavery – not Jim Crow segregation, not lynching, not restrictive covenants in housing, not being shut out of New Deal programs like social security and the GI bill, not massive white resistance to school desegregation, not the ceaseless efforts to prevent blacks from voting – nothing has sparked the level of outrage among African Americans as when they have felt under violent attack by the police” (Butler 2017). Likewise, some Indigenous scholars argue that Indigenous people are engaged in an ongoing war for survival under imposed colonial and capitalist governance systems (See, for example: Coulthard 2014).

Art Museums and Communities, Regeneration, and Space

Art and culture play significant roles in city life, particularly in shaping people's sense of identity, belonging, and place, and in urban "regeneration" or "revitalization" (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016: 72). Here we find an obvious role for the visual arts, in the creation and placement of public art and in museum architecture. Public art, as commissioned by local governments, is generally intended to aestheticize public space or to enhance the social cohesion of a city or district. At the same time, unofficial or "informal" public art interventions can deliver alternative commentaries on the civic space, which, as the report notes, "may be a necessary part of urban cohesion when the absence of consensus is part of making cities energetic and productive" (Ibid., 73). However, limited evaluations mean the effectiveness of both official and unofficial public art remains unclear.

More pertinent to this research project, however, is the fact that art museums are only occasionally commissioners of public art projects, as most museum exhibits take place inside the museum's walls. It is the building of these walls that public officials celebrate most frequently: large new art museums, designed by celebrity architects, are thought to "hard-brand the cultural city" (Evans 2003, 417). Evans notes that between 1998 and 2000 alone, more than 150 museums were built or expanded in the US, at a total cost of \$43 billion (Ibid., 431). The result, he says, is "a kind of *Karaoke* architecture where it is not important how well you can sing, but that you do it with verve and gusto" (Ibid., 417). While support for new museum development is often generated through promises that a new or significantly larger art museum will develop local art scenes and build public support for the arts, evidence suggests that this will only happen if local governments simultaneously invest in smaller organizations that support the production and promotion of local artists (Heathcote and Vicario 2017).

The AHRC Cultural Value Project report notes that studies of culture-led urban regeneration are marked by inconsistent reporting methods and an absence of longer-term studies. Some studies demonstrate that those responsible for new museum developments frequently overlook local community engagement in favour of the immediate needs of new infrastructure. Sacco and Blessi (2009) argue that, to be effective, those managing new cultural infrastructures must attend carefully to both the locale's "hardware" (facilities) and its "software" (culturally mediated accumulation of knowledge, sociability, and identity assets). When the "software" is neglected, the project will not deliver its promised results. We have seen

evidence of this in Canada, with poor consideration of community needs and capacity resulting in financial crises for a few art museums shortly after their occupation of new or renovated buildings. These include the Art Gallery of Windsor (Steele 2012), the Rooms Art Gallery and Museum in St. John's, Newfoundland (Sandals 2013), and the Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (CBC News 2013). Furthermore, as I noted in Chapter 4, culture-led regeneration and the building of large-scale infrastructure often displaces poor populations through gentrification—see, for example, the ongoing Saskatoon debate over gentrification in the district of the new Remai Modern (Hampton 2016; Hamilton 2016).

There is evidence that what strengthens communities more than large-scale infrastructure are smaller-scale commercial, community-based, and nonprofit cultural facilities, particularly when they are located in less affluent neighbourhoods. These sorts of organizations increase social capital and reduce stress levels (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 80). In fact, formal cultural infrastructure may be a poor indication of cultural participation in a community. Studies have found several low-income, diverse communities in which formal facilities are absent yet cultural participation abounds in activities such as knitting circles, book clubs, dance groups, church choirs, and community festivals (Ibid., 81). “Culture” is lacking in these settings only when the settings are evaluated using a “deficit model” that identifies the issue as people’s “absence from defined, often publicly-funded cultural activities” (Gilmore 2013, cited in Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 8). Insofar as art museums are concerned, the community-engaged, participatory programs that many education departments offer may go some distance (if only a short distance) in contributing to the vernacular, small-scale cultural participation that brings well-being to urban neighbourhoods.

Economy: Impact, Innovation, and Ecology

As previously noted, especially since the rise of Florida’s “creative class” thesis, it has become common practice to consider arts and culture in terms of their contributions to the economy. Indeed, economic impact has become the principal way for arts advocates to argue for the sector’s importance, even if their wider consequences for creativity and innovation in the economy might be more significant. Critics of these studies, including many economists, have warned for thirty years now that by stressing economic impact, arts proponents are “choosing to

play one of their weakest cards, while holding back their aces” (Seaman 1987, 280). Madden (2001, 164) states that it “would not be inappropriate to caricature ‘economic’ impact studies as a distraction of arts and cultural advocates,” noting that more money has been spent on assessments of the impact of the arts than on any other arts policy question. Most people are familiar with the argument that, because economic impact studies of the arts are typically commissioned by organizations with a special interest in promoting the arts, there are questions about their objectivity (Madden 2001; Belfiore 2009). Beyond this, economists have raised red flags about the technical and practical limitations of the methodologies employed. They point out that spending-based impact studies are not terribly relevant to decisions on the allocation of public money. The preoccupation with demonstrating the “size” of the arts sector as evidence of its importance is misleading, critics say, especially as they attempt to demonstrate jobs “generated” or “created” by art and culture. This is because the circular flow of income requires that money not spent on the arts—for instance, providing an art museum with a project grant—would simply be invested elsewhere. “The impact measured by ‘size’ analysis,” writes Madden, “is better described as a ‘diversion’ than a ‘creation’” (Madden: 166). Economists have also pointed out that the use of multipliers do not present a very convincing argument to secure more funding from government. The use of multipliers in advocacy attempts to appeal to the argument that governments can increase demand for the output of the arts through government expenditure, and thereby “create” wealth (grow the GDP) by the amount of the multiplier. But government expenditure is not exogenous. Madden explains: “Increases in government expenditure must ultimately come from somewhere — either diverted away from alternative policy expenditures, or away from the expenditures of citizens through higher taxes. The net effect depends on the ‘inverse’ impacts of the areas from which the extra money is diverted” (Ibid., 167). In other words, changes in government expenditure may just as easily degenerate as generate wealth in terms of the GDP. Similarly, predictions of tourist revenue should be of little interest to federal funding agencies if the tourists are expected to come from within national boundaries, except where regional redistribution is a concern. And finally, there is the counterfactual, which is rarely included in economic impact studies for the arts: could the government not stimulate similar or even larger levels of economic growth from investments in a different sector?

Most empirical studies show that broader quality-of-life issues, such as the availability of good-quality schooling, are important factors in labour-attraction, and cultural amenities feature in this mix. However, as the AHRC Cultural Value Project report notes, perceptions that a vibrant arts and cultural environment is a major factor in attracting a highly skilled workforce “remains a proposition in need of testing” (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 93). On the other hand, proximity to creative industries, and training and participating in the arts, are correlated with the development of skills that are increasingly needed across developed economies. Cultural engagement is linked to communication skills and the “openness to new ideas and experiences, tolerance of ambiguity, and an ability to maintain productive thinking amid uncertainty, which are all important for being innovative in the workplace” (Ibid., 94). The strongest association of these qualities with the arts is with the visual arts, which holds even when controlling for personality characteristics thought to underlie innovation and creativity, such as self-mastery, risk-taking, and educational attainment and aptitudes (Ibid.). This is a public value that art museums would do well to cultivate and build on in both exhibitions and public programs. Beyond this, the AHRC Cultural Value Project report authors note that the culture sector, which includes art museums, can itself be a generator of innovation within its own activities “through new business models, new ways of reaching audiences and new forms of co-production” (Ibid., 95). (That said, the business models of most art museums are very traditional.) Holden notes that the culture sector should be regarded as part of our “ecological system”—as an “organism” rather than a “mechanism”—with cultural organizations linked in dynamic relationships to other organizations in the sector, as well as to industry, education, government, and additional areas of the economy and the human ecosystem (Holden 2015).

Health, Aging, and Wellbeing

Outside of museums, visual art has long been used in therapeutic practices, both in psychotherapy sessions as well as in hospital settings such as children’s wards and palliative care. Research around art therapy is more dynamic and robust than elsewhere. For instance, it has been found that visual art and music can be effective in reducing anxiety and depression during chemotherapy. Attentiveness to art and design in hospital environments can improve outcomes for patients and enhance the moods of patients, staff, and visitors, particularly when

artists and designers engage with staff and users in a process of co-design (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 102-4). The AHRC Cultural Value Project report cautions that not all visual art is appropriate for hospital settings, as patients seem to have strong preferences for nature settings and dislike abstract art. “Inappropriate” styles, including abstraction and surrealism, can increase stress and worsen other outcomes (Ibid., 104) – a phenomenon that may indicate the human need for connection, which the radical individualism of abstraction opposes. But this presents an opportunity: most art museums have a large supply of nature paintings, still lifes, and other “innocuous” artworks made and donated by local community members, and in most cases these art works are rarely if ever exhibited (J. Mills and Falconer 2010). Art museums could therefore develop mutually beneficial partnerships with healthcare settings such as hospitals by providing them with appropriate artworks to assist the patients’ healing. Such arrangements would be subject to the museums’ willingness to deaccession works, or create “B” lists of objects that are permitted to circulate in the absence of the normally required climate and security controls. (I will further address collections at the end of this chapter.)

Community arts activities are effective at engaging people in thinking about their own health and building the capacity to address it, particularly in disadvantaged areas and where programs are offered by professionals. Questions remain, however, about the ability of such programs to improve social inclusion and mental health (Ibid., 105). However, longitudinal studies in Nordic countries have demonstrated associations between long-term engagement with arts and culture and positive physical health comes, after attempts to control for relevant social, economic, and demographic variables. Factors in this association may include social capital, cognition, occupational health (art’s ability to help people cope with stress), and physiological dimensions such as psycho-neuroimmunology and endocrine and metabolic effects of stress reduction (Ibid., 106). Participation in the arts shows distinct positive effects for older age groups, particularly in areas of memory and cognitive function. Most studies in the AHRC Cultural Value Project examined participation in music, storytelling, and other social or “live” arts practices (Ibid., 108-11). However, visual arts are used successfully as therapeutic practices in nursing homes, such as the Sherbrooke Community Centre in Saskatoon (Biber 2016). Visual artists also work directly with the elderly on co-designing projects that enhance wellbeing – for instance, NSCAD University professor Gary Markle designs clothing for people with limited mobility (Lambie 2017).

Art museums keen to examine their relationships to local communities and their role in the cultural ecology of their region would do well to extend their vision to health, aging, and wellbeing. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) broke new ground in 2015 when it partnered with Concordia University to rebrand itself as a “humanist” institution and created the largest educational and art therapy department of any museum in North America, dedicating one third of its total floor space to the Michel de la Chenelière International Atelier for Education and Art Therapy (Seidman 2015). Yet in my conversations with art world professionals, I have noted excitement for this development among museum educators, but little interest among curators or museum directors.

Arts in Education

The AHRC Cultural Value Project report ends on a note of caution about the cuts to arts education in British secondary schools, cuts that have been mirrored in most other Anglo nations (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 114; People for Education 2004). The authors argue that the arts might be less subject to cuts if the importance of participation in the arts, and arts education at the school level, were viewed as “less about a simple set of generic or transferable skills, and more as contributing to the habits of mind that provide a platform needed for all learning, such as following curiosities and possibilities, having a willingness to practice repeatedly, not taking things for granted, and developing a strong inner critic” (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016, 115). Research has shown that participation of young people in structured arts activities can significantly increase cognitive abilities, especially when the young people are from disadvantaged backgrounds. When teenagers from low socioeconomic backgrounds participate in structured arts programs, they improve their self-discipline, concentration, and motivation, and show better academic outcomes than other low socioeconomic status youths, resulting in higher rates of college enrollment (Ibid., 116). In this way, the arts contribute to the building of social equity, thus creating public value. But with cuts to arts education at the school level, arts become the privilege of select middle- and upper-class children whose parents enroll them in extra-curricular activities. This contributes to the growth of inequality, and should therefore be viewed as a public value failure or public value deficit. There is a place for art museums to intervene in this matter, only in part because most museum education departments have built relationships

with schools. The question remains as to what degree policy makers and the leaders of art museums are willing to commit to public value creation through greater investment in activities engaging underprivileged communities.

On Collections

Because the AHRC Cultural Value Project report is not focused on types of arts organizations but more generally on artistic practices, it does not deal with the subject of art museum collections. And although, as indicated in the Association of Art Museum Directors and Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization definitions (Chapter 2), an organization is not required to own a collection to be an art museum, most art museums possess collections. For this reason, I must address the question of public value and the permanent collections of art museums. At the same time, it is not possible to make but a few general observations.

Except with the very largest art museums, there is not a direct correlation between size of collection and size of operating budget (J. Mills and Falconer 2010). Public funding is usually awarded to art museums as an amount relative to the size of operating budget, which means that some museums have much less money to care for, research, and display collections on a per-work basis than others. At the same time, size of collection does not correlate to quality of collection. Professional standards require that museums employ a committee to evaluate all proposed donations; in reality, however, unless large sums of money are involved, many committees merely rubber-stamp the selections of curators, and in some cases there are no committees. Quality can be compromised in two primary ways: 1) through lack of adequate collection budgets, which leads to passive frameworks for collecting, or a reliance on donations by private collectors. (As one art museum employee told me, “Our collection is basically a bunch of bric-a-brac that trickled in over years. It’s not actually very useable.”); and 2) a focus on quantity over quality, where curators are particularly acquisitive. (An educator at a different organization complained: “Our curator has added 3,000 works of art to the gallery in just one year, nearly all donations. We’ve had to add a full-time position, just for the paperwork, and acquire extra offsite storage.”) Both passive collecting and binge collecting result in lower quality, imbalances of generational equity, lack of diversity, and non-responsiveness to audience needs. They can also lead to the underrepresentation of works that are not highly marketable,

which in Canada includes contemporary Indigenous art (Ibid.; also see L. A. Martin 1991 on the politics of Indigenous art in Canadian art museum collections).

Museum professionals often complain that they have neither the space nor the budgets to properly display their collections (Ibid.). At the same time, many curators and directors rely on temporary exhibitions of borrowed art works in the belief that the novelty will attract new visitors. Yet data since 2014 from six American museums suggests that an organization's permanent collection matters more than special exhibitions for overall organizational wellness and sustainability (Dilenschneider 2017d). Where museums charge for special exhibitions but offer free admission to the permanent collection 31.7 percent of audiences visit only the special exhibit, 33.4 percent visit only the permanent collection, 34.9 percent visit both. However, overall satisfaction is 1.18 percent higher for those who visit only the permanent collection, and intent to revisit for those who visited the permanent collection is on average 10 percent higher than indicated by those who visited only the special exhibition (Ibid.). Dilenschneider argues that a proven better method of attracting and retaining visitors is for museums to “invest in their frontline people and provide them with the tools to facilitate interactions that dramatically improve their visitor experience” (Dilenschneider 2017b). People who have better experiences—including positive interactions with staff members—are more likely to return sooner and share favourable messages about the organization by word of mouth, social media, and peer review sites (Ibid.).

Given the many variables related to permanent collections, it is difficult to make any pronouncements on their contributions to public value. Only the following is certain: where collections are of poor quality, or when they are rarely or never exhibited and/or researched, their contributions to public value are little to nil. For these reasons, policy makers and funding agencies must address their neglect of issues related to collections and consider ways to provide or incentivize larger acquisitions budgets, and more and better storage facilities and conservation staff. Policymakers and organizations must also revisit the often cumbersome rules around deaccessioning to help relieve art museums from their “bric-a-brac.” As Stephen E. Weil wrote in his introduction to *A Deaccession Reader*, “No museum can afford today to clog its scarce storage with unconsidered collections that have simply been allowed to accumulate and lie fallow” (Weil 1997, 1).

Public Value Creation and Potential

Table 6.1 summarizes material covered in the preceding section, where the art museum's current contributions to public value range from strong public value creation (+++) to deficit-creation (or public value failure) (-). Each column of the table is organized according to one of the broad categories examined in the AHRC Cultural Value Project, and I list these areas of public value creation in descending order of potential according to current art museum logic. The table necessarily generalizes about the sector, as not all art museums share the same priorities, and because each potential avenue or means of public value creation is limited or expanded by the quality of the museum's production and the attributes of the public(s) participating.²⁷ Note that this table is not prescriptive. Rather, I offer it as part of an exploratory framework for assessing public value creation by art museums, a framework that requires further research.

The analysis presented in this table is likely to make many art museum professionals uncomfortable, for it prioritizes aims very different from the museum's current mission to "acquire," "conserve," "research," "communicate," and "exhibit" art for the purposes of "study, education and enjoyment" (International Council of Museums 2007). The fact is that determining exactly how a museum ought to contribute to public value is virtually impossible, at least doing so in any precise, axiomatic, or deductive way. Yet this does not undermine the value of trying to map available evidence of art's public benefits against the public institution of the art museum. On the contrary, as the status quo is "imbecilic," a pragmatic approach to public value theory in relation to art, based on empiricism and deliberation, is necessary for the democratization of culture. We can no longer afford to ignore the evidence that the pursuits leading to public value creation are heavily weighted towards those traditionally undertaken by art museum educators and other non-curatorial programming staff who work in dialogue with individuals and groups from the broader public. Indeed, what distinguishes my case study organizations is their shifting of attention and resources away from collections and regular exhibitions (those showcasing "excellence") to many of the activities and interests found closer to the top of Table 6.1. The opinions and ideas of Canadian art educators, who are responsible for a great deal of this public

²⁷ For example, a compelling exhibition about climate change creates more public value when it reaches a large and diverse audience than when it reaches only a handful of elites. Similarly, as more students participate in a public program on Indigenous art, more public value is created. Furthermore, if the program is created in collaboration with Indigenous communities, it builds more public value than if it is created by a single art museum employee.

value-creating work, and yet whose perspectives are routinely discounted, form the basis of the following chapter.

Table 6.1 Art Museums and Potential for Public Value Creation (Data Drawn from AHRC Cultural Value Project)

Self and Other Reflection 1.	Civic Engagement 2.	Community Building 3.	The Economy 4.	Health, Aging Wellbeing 5.	Education 6.
<p>1A. Teaching openness, tolerance of ambiguity, ability to maintain productive thinking in uncertainty (+++)</p> <p>1B. Offering opportunities to reflect on the social – cathartic/healing perspectives (++)</p> <p>1C. Providing space for self-reflection (+)</p> <p>1D. Building empathy (-)</p>	<p>2A. Engaging disadvantaged youth & other marginalized groups (+++)</p> <p>2B. Challenging conservative histories (+++)</p> <p>2C. Working in collaboration with communities to present difficult histories (++)</p> <p>2D. Building bridges between communities post-conflict (+)</p> <p>2E. Engaging the public in social and political issues (e.g. climate change) (-)</p>	<p>3A. Creating participatory, collaborative cultural activities (++)</p> <p>3B. Contributing to municipal identity creation & urban cohesion (+)</p> <p>3C. Building social capital & reducing stress (small scale venues in less affluent areas) (-)</p> <p>3D. Contributing to cities through new museum constructions & expansions (-)</p>	<p>4A. Encouraging innovation in all areas (business) (++)</p> <p>4B. Generating tourism (Depends on gov't goals for economic redistribution or generation) (-)</p> <p>4C. Attracting labour (-)</p> <p>4D. Modeling new means of doing business (-)</p> <p>4E. Overall economic impact (-)</p>	<p>5A. Contributing to health and healing through art placements in healthcare settings (+)</p> <p>5B. Contributing to stress reduction through art therapy in health treatments (-)</p> <p>5C. Contributing to wellbeing through art therapy in nursing homes (-)</p> <p>5D. Directly innovating in design (industrial) (-)</p>	<p>6A. Building self-discipline, concentration, motivation in disadvantaged teens (++)</p> <p>6B. Contributing to education by providing a platform for all learning (-)</p>

CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC VALUE: THE VIEWS OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS

I began this research project asking whether museum educators are positioned to offer insight into ways the art museum can better engage publics and contribute to public value creation, informed as they are by their daily interactions with members of the general (non-art-specialist, non-elite) public. The question was posed as part of larger effort to understand how any actor(s) might change the institution if their actions, intentions, and rationality are conditioned by the institution itself, a problem Seo and Creed (2002) refer to as the “paradox of embedded agency.” Through my work as a museum curator, I have observed that, on the one hand, educators already contribute significantly to the art museum’s public value creation. One of the ways they do so is by “translating” and mediating often difficult exhibitions, exercising discretion in catering to the interests and capabilities of actual (not “ideal”) audiences, and reconciling the demands of curatorial staff with the museum’s educational function. To do this work well, they must listen to the public and, over time, develop a “feel” for the public’s multiple and often contradictory preferences, concerns, and capabilities. On the other hand, the educators’ ability to generate insights into public value creation could be restricted by several factors, including but not limited to: 1) the educators’ demographic backgrounds (including race, class, and education); 2) chronic underfunding of the museum’s education department, which prevents experimentation and opportunities to test and learn; 3) the museum’s strong central controls and sometimes hostile environment, wherein staff are not rewarded, and maybe even punished for asking questions or attempting innovation, leading to burnout and the departure of those educators most interested in public value creation.²⁸

Data I collected through the survey conducted with members of Canadian Art Gallery Educators (CAGE) as well as many interviews suggests that educators do offer excellent insights into public creation by art museums, but typically only under certain conditions. That is, where educators have been empowered—hired into leadership positions as directors or curators, or their status otherwise elevated in the organization—educators are taking lead roles in some of the

²⁸ More than one respondent to the CAGE survey reported facing negative consequences for attempting to centre the audience in decision-making processes or proposing new public programs. One educator called her workplace “toxic” and “bullying,” and reported being yelled at by the curator on a regular basis. Another stated “Here and in other organizations I’ve gotten to know, there are people working from within who are interested in creating more value. Those people tend to get trampled and exhausted.”

most interesting experiments with public engagement in Canadian art museums. On the other end of the spectrum, in organizations where their roles have been recently diminished, or where they feel their organization disregards the public interest, art museum educators express a strong desire for institutional transformation and offer ideas about how this could take place. However, most art museum educators I polled express relative satisfaction with the status quo. In the following pages, I summarize my findings about art museum educators' opinions on public value creation, as revealed through the CAGE survey.

First, having first read my definition of public value in the introduction to the CAGE survey (see Appendix A for the full survey), educators indicated that public value creation is a driving goal: 46 percent of educators who completed the CAGE survey consider public value creation “very important” to their work and 54 percent consider it “absolutely essential.” The educators' dedication likely also drives the members' mild tendency to illusory superiority, a cognitive bias whereby individuals overestimate their own qualities and abilities in relation to those of others. For example, when asked to rank the public value created by their own galleries compared to that created by other Canadian art museums, 12 percent rated their own as “excellent”; 35 percent rated theirs as “above average”; 47 percent rated theirs as “average”; and six percent rated theirs as “very poor” (none rated theirs as “somewhat poor”).

The following table shows how respondents rated the public value of a variety of activities, programs, or productions offered by their organization. Activities, programs, and productions are sorted in descending order of public value ratings, by percentage, first as rated “excellent,” then as “very good.”:

Table 7.1. Art Museum Educators’ Perceptions of Public Value Creation by Activity

Activity	Rating				
	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Somewhat Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)
School tours	67	22	5.5	5.5	0
Hands-on workshops/classes for children	59	29	12	0	0
Family or intergenerational classes & events	36	47	6	11	6
Tours by docents & educators	39	39	22	0	0
Exhibitions of contemporary art	28	44	27	0	0
Exhibitions by local artists	25	44	19	12	0
Education & public programs (general)	22	45	28	5	0
Lectures by artists and arts professionals	39	28	33	0	0
Permanent collection	26.5	40	13.5	13.5	6.5
Community exhibitions or workshops	23.5	41	29.5	6	0
Openings & receptions	28	33.5	11	22	5.5
Hands-on workshops/classes for adults	31	25	31	6	6
Offsite workshops/classes in schools & community settings	16.5	33.5	33.5	16.5	0
Multidisciplinary events (art+music+performances, etc.)	11	39	16.5	33.5	0
Self-directed hands on learning spaces	7	40	33	20	0
Catalogues & publications	16.5	28	39	11	5.5
Symposia & forums	0	41	29.5	29.5	0
Exhibitions (general)	11	28	50	11	0
Exhibitions of historical art	18	18	27	37	0
Exhibitions by members	0	20	20	30	30

To some degree, it is possible that the survey reveals the educators' biases towards activities in which educators have the most control, such as tours and workshops. However, consistent with the findings of the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project discussed in the preceding chapter, the activities educators view as offering the greatest public value are also the most "interactive" or "engaging" museum offerings, where members of the public can have direct exchange with arts professionals. For example, the highest rated activities include tours, hands-on workshops, lectures by artists, and intergenerational events. Activities that fewer than 50 percent of art museum educators rated highly include those contributing primarily to the private value of special interest groups and situations in which direct exchanges with visual arts professionals do not take place. These include exhibitions by members, artists' catalogues, and multidisciplinary events (music, etc.). Exhibitions of contemporary art fall in the top half of ranked activities, while exhibitions of historical art land closer to the bottom. This may be because contemporary exhibits present more obvious opportunities for engaging audiences in issues of concern to the public, whereas historical exhibitions tend to (unnecessarily) depoliticize art and present it in a deterministic manner, thereby pacifying the audience (Cotter 2016). It may be that staff simply perceive a greater need to interpret contemporary art and therefore create programs for these exhibitions, where their higher level of comfort and familiarity with historical work leads to complacency in programming. Alternately, it may be that the cultural references in much older artworks have lost currency among contemporary audiences (Cotter 2015).

Table 7.2 shows how art museum educators rate the public value created by more general attributes of their organizations. These are not specific programs or activities, but qualities, relationships, and aims. Attributes are sorted in descending order of public value, by percentage, first as rated "excellent," then by "very good."

Table 7.2. Educators’ perceptions of indirect public value creation by qualities

Activity	Rating				
	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Somewhat Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)
Providing education in visual literacy	44	28	28	0	0
Partnering with local elementary & secondary schools	39	28	33	0	0
Offering an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere	22	50	11	17	0
Promoting gender equity	22	33.5	33.5	11	0
Partnering with local university or college	17.5	41	23.5	11.5	6.5
Generating tourism	16.7	27.8	22	33.5	0
Collaborating with non-arts community groups	16.5	44.5	28	11	0
Making original contributions to critical discourse	12.5	37.5	31	19	0
Including Indigenous people & communities	12.5	35	35	17.5	0
Providing leadership on civic discussions of arts and culture	11	39	22	28	0
Forum for community debates	6.5	29	29	29	6.5
Supporting smaller arts organizations	6	29.5	53	11.5	0
Environmental impact	6	17.6	47.1	17.6	11.7
Including people with disabilities	5.5	33.5	39	16.5	5.5
Promoting social justice	5	39	33	11.5	11.5
Promoting class equity	5	28	33	28	6
Contributing to the local economy	0	41	41	18	0

The survey indicates there is some agreement among educators about what art museums are doing well. More than 50 percent of respondents, but fewer than 75 percent, rated as “excellent” or “very good” the performance of their organization’s creation of the following public value attributes: offering an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere, providing education in visual literacy, partnering with local elementary and secondary schools, collaborating with non-arts community groups and organizations, promoting gender equity, and partnering with a local university or college. On the opposite end, more than 25 percent of respondents rated as “very poor” or “somewhat poor” their organization’s public value creation in the areas of: promoting class equity, generating tourism, minimizing environmental impact, providing a forum for community debates, and—coming as somewhat of a surprise—providing leadership on civic discussions pertaining to arts and culture. Most of these perspectives fall in line with the general findings of the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Cultural Value project. This suggests that their experiences working directly with the public give educators insights that allow them to think critically about some of the common rhetoric in the field – for instance, boosterish promotion of art museum constructions on the promise of tourism, or the notion that museums are “accessible” on the basis of free nights or the absence of admission fees. As Dilenschneider notes, low-propensity visitors are only minimally motivated by free admission. Instead, barriers to visitation revolve around issues of relevant content (or preferred alternate activity), access challenges, and schedule (Dilenschneider 2017a).

A notable area in which educators’ perspectives do not align with available studies is in the provision of public value to people with disabilities and Indigenous people. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Statistics Canada data shows that art museums do a particularly poor job of serving Indigenous people and people with disabilities, serving them at one-third the rate of other populations (Hill Strategies Inc. 2010). Yet, respondents to the CAGE survey seem to largely disagree with this or they are unaware. 39 percent of survey respondents rated the public value generated by their museum’s inclusion of people with disabilities as “excellent” or “very good”, and only 22 percent rated it as “somewhat poor” or “very poor.” Those who rated as “somewhat poor” or “very poor” their museum’s inclusion of people with disabilities explained that, at their organizations, inclusion of people with disabilities “is not seen as an institutional priority – no staff member has taken a leadership position in this area,” and “we do not offer braille or ASL

tours or additional assistance” – observations that could be made of nearly all art museums in Canada. Similarly, 47.5 percent of respondents rated the public value generated by their museum’s inclusion of Indigenous people and communities as “excellent” or “very good”, and only 17.5 rated their performance in this area as “somewhat poor” (none selected “very poor”). The justifications for “somewhat poor” ratings in this category include: “very little representation in employees and collection,” “programs are ‘inclusive’ in theory but not in fact,” “while our exhibitions often include objects from indigenous cultures from around the world, we do not consult with members of the cultures being represented in advance of an exhibition opening,” and “attempts have been made, and exhibitions held, but more can and should be done.” Again, such observations can be made about most art museums in Canada, and yet most survey respondents express relative satisfaction with the status quo.

What accounts for the discrepancy between what we know about attendance demographics and the educators’ perceptions? Notably, not a single participant in the CAGE survey identified as a person with a disability or as an Indigenous person, or even as a member of a visible minority group. There may be covert able-bodied, cultural, and racial biases that prevent art museum educators from recognizing public value failure in relation to people with disabilities and Indigenous people. However, it is also worth noting that the educators who rated their organizations’ performances poorly in these areas were much more critical overall. Those who rated as “somewhat poor” their museum’s inclusion of Indigenous people were 8.3 times more likely to rate their organization’s overall public value creation as “very poor” compared to other Canadian art museums. They were 2.8 times more likely to think that their organization’s CEO valued public value creation less than they did; 1.42 times more likely to think their organization’s head curator valued public value creation less than they did; and 1.42 times more likely to think that their organization’s board valued public value creation less than they did. They were also 2.8 times more likely to believe that improvements to their organization’s public value creation could not happen “without a change in management and vision” (rather than “without a change in funding models” or “without significant additions to the museum’s financial resources”). Those who rated as “somewhat poor” or “very poor” their museum’s inclusion of people with disabilities were 3.3 times more likely to rate their organization’s overall public value creation as “very poor” compared to other Canadian art museums. They were 1.7 times more likely to think that their organization’s CEO valued public value creation

less than they did; 1.7 times more likely to think their organization's head curator valued public value creation less than they did; and 1.15 times more likely to think that their organization's board valued public value creation less than they did. And finally, they were 2.3 times more likely to believe that improvements to their organization's public value creation could not happen "without a change in management and vision." (See Appendix 4 for details.) In short, the educators who rated poorly their organization's public value creation in relation to serving people with disabilities and Indigenous people—and who, if Statistics Canada data is to be believed, thereby assessed them realistically—are significantly more likely to be critical of their museum's management and vision, and less likely to attribute institutional shortfalls in public value creation to external sources, such as lack of financial resources or funding parameters.

At the same time, although 82.5 percent of respondents rated their organization's public value creation in relation to serving Indigenous individuals and communities as "excellent," "very good," or "good," in response to another question about professional development aims 56 percent of respondents said "gaining a deeper understanding of the Indigenous histories, cultures, and protocols of my region" would be "absolutely essential" for them to improve their ability to contribute to public value creation, and another 37.5 percent said it would be "very important." Overall, this was perceived to be the most urgently needed area of professional development for educators, followed in descending order by training in "cross-cultural communication" ("absolutely essential" = 50 percent, "very important" = 43.5 percent); "working with high-risk youth" ("absolutely essential" = 37.5 percent, "very important" = 37.5 percent); and "developing a better understanding of the causes and effects of poverty" ("absolutely essential" = 31.5 percent, "very important" = 50 percent). I do not know if the contradictory beliefs expressed in the survey about the art museum's service to Indigenous people and communities is a cause of cognitive dissonance for the educators, but it certainly indicates a dissonance on the level of the institution.

Fully 95 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that "based on the knowledge and experience you have gained from working with the public as an art museum educator or public programmer, you have special insight into how your organization could improve its public value." Despite this, 58 percent stated that they are never asked to provide feedback on proposed exhibitions before they are accepted or scheduled, 12 percent are asked rarely, and 24 percent are asked only sometimes. Only 6 percent are asked often about proposed exhibitions, and none are

always asked. Similarly, when management engages in strategic planning activities, only 17.5 percent of educators are always invited to participate, and another 17.5 are invited often. The remainder are invited to participate in strategic planning with management sometimes (23.75 percent), rarely (17.5 percent), or never (23.75 percent). No educators who responded to my survey are always asked to provide feedback on the museum’s main product—exhibitions—during or after their presentations, but 23.5 percent are asked often, and 29 percent are asked sometimes. Nearly half of art museum educators are asked for their opinions on present and past exhibitions rarely (23.5 percent) or never (also 23.5 percent).

In the absence of significant, formalized feedback or input from the museum’s front-line workers, the logical expectation would be that art museums are employing other evaluative methods in ongoing assessments of their public impact. Table 7.3 presents the feedback mechanisms used at Canadian art museums, as reported by respondents to the CAGE survey:

Table 7.3. Feedback mechanisms used at Canadian art museums

Feedback Method	Frequency Used				
	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Visitor/attendance counts	94	6	0	0	0
Comments book in exhibition area	53	23.5	17.5	6	0
Visitor feedback cards	23.5	0	35	17.5	23.5
Verbal visitor surveys (exhibitions)	17.5	23.5	35	11.75	11.75
Visitor observation in galleries	17.5	12	41	29	0
Reviews of exhibitions in local media	12	59	29	0	0
Verbal visitor surveys (events & workshops)	6	65	17	12	0
Reviews of exhibitions in national/international media	6	17.5	65	12	0
Computerized survey in building	6	6	29	12	47
Formal evaluations of exhibitions by staff	0	12	17.5	12	59
Barrier analysis	0	6	47	17.5	29

In line with Scott's (2010) research on Australian art museums, the CAGE survey reveals that the only systematic assessment tool used regularly by Canadian art museums is attendance. (While in-gallery comments books are always used by more than 50 percent of art museums, these are the least efficient and useful method for gathering analyzable, comparable, and presentable data). The over-reliance on attendance is ironic, as attendance measures are the bogeyman of many art professionals. The fear of attendance measurement was summed up nicely by *Canadian Art* magazine editor David Balzer, speaking to the CBC on the occasion of the opening of the Remai Modern in Saskatoon. Balzer warned that when museums focus on attendance targets they risk pandering to the masses, so that "the programming will become less challenging; the programming will make assumptions about what it thinks people want to see; the programming will become vulgarly populist and, in that sense, not really be about art all and, in addition to that, alienate local communities" (Balzer, quoted in Hamilton 2017a). While the elitism inherent in Balzer's concern bears questioning, he did get one thing right: attendance is a measurement, not a means of evaluation. Numbers are unable to explain why people come or do not come, what motivates repeat visitations, how people experience their visit, what the museum could do to improve the value the public receives from its services, and more.

So, how do art museums learn from the public's experience to improve their public value creation? The short answer is: most of them don't, and this holds true even when summative evaluations (those focused on program outcomes) have taken place. In a large study of summative evaluations and their impacts at British art museums, Davies and Heath (2013) found that "it is rare for a museum to act directly on the findings of summative evaluation by making changes to the gallery that was evaluated" (Ibid., 3). They also found that despite the substantial number of summative evaluation studies that have been undertaken in the UK in the last decade, "they have made a limited contribution to practice more generally and our overall understanding of visitor behaviour and experience" (Ibid., 4). Is this because evaluations are not useful? On the contrary, in the few examples of museums systematically using evidence and recommendations from a series of evaluations to more generally inform the development of their galleries and exhibitions, "museums evaluation has had a significant impact on practice" (Ibid.). Davis and Heath contend that, when done well and taken seriously, summative evaluations can increase understanding of visitor behaviour and engagement, provide information on the impact on individuals of engaging with an exhibition or project, identify improvements that can be made to

existing exhibitions or projects, inform the development of galleries to enhance public engagement, suggest areas of experimentation with approaches or techniques to improve public engagement, confirm or legitimize the views and experiences of front-line staff, reveal unexpected outcomes and impacts, stimulate reflection and learning by staff, and improve museum accountability and transparency (Ibid., 10). Most museums, however, largely ignore the findings of evaluations that have taken place.

Conceptual or methodological issues within summative evaluations play a small role in their “disappointing” lack of take-up and impact. More critical, however, are the organizational and institutional frameworks in which the evaluations take place. Specifically, Davis and Heath write, “the organisational and institutional framework undermines the possibility of preserving and transferring knowledge of good and poor practice across projects within institutions and sharing the findings of evaluations between organisations” (Ibid., 5). Institutional constraints include but are not limited to: the need to provide a largely positive assessment of project outcomes for superiors, funding bodies, and donors; the impracticality and expense of making remedial changes to projects already underway; the lack of mechanisms and opportunities for sharing information across and within organizations; limits placed on access to reports outside and within organizations; the detached or marginal institutional position of some of the individuals within the organization who undertake evaluation (i.e., educators); and, most significantly, the different, often conflicting purposes of the evaluations themselves, which can include project team, organizational, or sector-wide learning, monitoring and accountability (both internal and external), and advocacy (Ibid.). Davis and Heath’s findings concur with Moore’s observation that nonprofit and public sector organizations engage in processes of outcome-based performance evaluation and adjustment much less than do investor-owned firms (M. H. Moore 1995, 35; M. H. Moore and Ryan 2006). The complexities of measuring unclear or intangible outcomes are certainly dissuasive, but entrenched beliefs about the “rightness” of the organization’s public cause and the concomitant internal hierarchies that become established also deter organizations like art museums from conducting meaningful self-evaluations.

More than half (56.25 percent) of the CAGE survey respondents stated that, in their current organization, they have never “successfully asserted themselves in the face of resistance or opposition to create a project, program, or process (they) thought was necessary for public value creation.” The remainder (43.75 percent) had, at some point, been successful in pushing for

a change on at least one occasion. However, educators in the latter group qualified their instances of success with stories expressing weariness and resignation: “I am unsuccessful more times than not—carefully considered and worded recommendations fall on deaf ears”; “Sometimes I am able to slightly improve a project that will decrease our overall public value”; “I applied for and received funding for an artist/educator residency. It was an excellent program, with great feedback from all audiences. Unfortunately, in spite of public success, the gallery has not approved another one since”; and “Wrote detailed report on reasons why this particular project was necessary and important, who it would impact, and had many long discussions with the Director to convince her. Volunteered a lot of time towards its success. Had a successful run for a few years, but I eventually got burnt out due to a lack of support (both in people and in finances). We had to stop the program due to this lack of support.” One educator noted that her influence within the organization, where she has worked for close to 20 years, waxes and wanes with each new executive director or curator. “I remember a time when we were doing a much better job, several years ago,” she stated, “We had an exhibitions committee then. It included education and communications staff, and even some community members. The exhibition schedule was planned two years ahead, so we always had time to plan and prepare our programming. But our new curator! He is never here, always on the road researching or collecting, and he doesn’t care about us. I don’t even know what exhibitions we are going to have six months from now! We manage, we prepare our docents as best we can, but because of this, our programs are not as good as they should be. And we call ourselves ‘world class’!” Another educator with relatively new management reported, “Our organization is a case study of dysfunctionality and bullying. In this sort of atmosphere, asserting myself isn’t possible. The education department reacts and we try to survive, that is all.” Just one individual—one of the mere three educator respondents who participate on their organization’s management team—responded with unreserved enthusiasm for her successes in asserting herself to make changes at her museum.

In his influential study of public service front-line workers, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (1980), Michael Lipsky describes how complacency can become a necessary coping mechanism for workers powerless to initiate organizational or institutional change:

Some street-level bureaucrats drop out or burn out relatively early in their careers. Those who stay on, to be sure, often grow in the jobs and perfect treatment and client-processing techniques that provide an acceptable balance between public aspirations for the work and the coping requirements of the job. These adjustments of work habits and attitudes may reflect lower expectations for themselves, their clients, and the potential of public policy. Ultimately, these adjustments permit acceptance of the view that clients receive the best that can be provided under prevailing circumstances (Lipsky 1980: loc 315).

One seasoned art museum educator, who participated in the focus group I worked with to compose the CAGE survey, cautioned me about my high expectations for insights from educators. “Many are absolutely fine with the status quo,” she told me. “They’d burn out and quit if they didn’t like it for too long.” In art museums, being accepting of the status-quo does not mean necessarily framing one’s work in terms of satisficing, or meeting the first available acceptability threshold (H. A. Simon 1956). It can mean reframing one’s role to conform with the line of art-for-art’s-sake thinking that informs the “lofty” justifications for arts funding and upholds the supremacy of the curator. For instance, one survey respondent commented that she worried that my use of the word “value” in “public value” might be unavoidably inscribed within a neoliberal agenda. She explained, “Value wants to be quantified—something that is evident in your survey—but so much of what a museum is about falls outside of the quantifiable. I am concerned about the ‘value’ of my answers to your questionnaire ... Addressing the public value creation of art museums is a systemic problem. We live in a positivist, neo-liberal world wanting facts, so-called evidence of success. Of course, better relations/conversations/dialogues with all community members are important, but we can never know what all the effects of a museum can produce.” She described one project she undertook with “some members of an un-represented community.” Although her management resisted the project, she took this resistance “as positive – one needs to be challenged in one’s ideas and conversations are essential to hone in, complicate one’s thinking.” She continued, “The project did go ahead. Did my institution learn from it? I have no idea. But if even only one person had a rich experience, it was all worth it...” I have great sympathy for this educator’s fear of the impulse to quantify the value of art experiences. Yet her resistance to mapping and assessing the public value of art museums strikes me as a retreat from the hard work of evaluation that is necessary whenever public funds come

into play. Could better use be made of these funds to achieve artistic, cultural, and social goals? What change would be required, and is it possible?

If we return to the definition of governance I employed in Chapter 4: “the set of formal and informal arrangements by which power is allocated and exercised in any system with interdependent actors” (Atkinson and Fulton 2017; Fulton, Fairbairn, and Pohler 2017)—or, who gets to decide what (and how)—we can recognize governance as the most significant issue facing art museums. By this, of course, I do not mean that museums need to improve the processes of their existing governance systems, which may or may not be true. Rather, the governance structures need to be completely reconfigured in order to give the public a meaningful voice in the institution – or indeed, to give the public a reason to exercise voice. For, as Hirschman (1970) noted, without “voice,” a dissatisfied public has only one choice, that is to “exit.” To exit the art museum is a choice that most citizens have made already, and their ranks are growing, but the art museum continues on, unfettered and unbothered, without them. Those few who choose to exercise voice on the public’s behalf in the art museum today find their position weakened by the disinterest of most of the people for whom they presume to speak.

In *The Painted Word* (1975), a biting essay on the 1950’s and 1960’s art world, Tom Wolfe observed:

“This is not what is so often described as the lag between ‘the artist’s discoveries’ and ‘public acceptance.’ Public? The public plays no part in the process whatsoever. The public is not invited (it gets a print announcement later).

Le monde, the culturati, are no more a part of ‘the public,’ the mob, the middle classes, than the artists are.”

Wolfe was writing about the “success” of Abstract Expressionism as an art movement, but he could as easily have been talking about the art museum as a whole.

The New Profession of Public Engagement in Art Museums

When the governance structures of art museums are not reconfigured, public engagement is likely to be an add-on—something pursued separately from and in addition to the traditionally planned and executed exhibitions and programs. This auxiliary approach to engagement

manifests grandly in the Montreal Museum of Fine Art's Michel de la Chenelière International Atelier for Education and Art Therapy. In most cases, however, when art museums try to address "engagement," they do so by creating just one new position—often a "curator" of engagement. These professionals may not have education backgrounds, but training in art history, curatorial studies, or even communications. They do not tend to work as part of the museum's education departments, which remain devoted to traditional museum education tasks. At best, to paraphrase the former Hammer Museum Curator of Engagement, the work of "engagement" professionals in art museums involves a play between public programs, visitor services, and the artistic genre of institutional critique (Allison Agsten, Hammer Museum, November 5, 2015).²⁹ Since specialized engagement positions are relatively new to art museums (having begun in the last decade in North America, and somewhat earlier in the UK), and as they are far from universal (with many art museums still not having such positions), there are as yet few or no academic studies of the changes wrought by the profession's implementation. Thus, for my brief analysis, I rely on my own studies of the area, as detailed in my methodology section in Chapter 2, and on the informed reviews and critiques of other art museum professionals who have been observing "engagement" practices, and some of whom, like me, attended the Engage More Now! conference, the first international event dedicated to exploring this new museum practice (See: Ruud 2015; Fink 2015).

There is no consensus in the field on what constitutes "engagement" in art museums, but a consumption-based model, in line with what the corporate world calls the "experience economy" (Pine and Gilmore 1999), seems to dominate. Such projects include placing ping pong tables in museum foyers for visitors to play, collective rug-braiding on the gallery floor, or giving children the opportunity to paint "abstract expressionist" canvases by riding a stationary bike through trays of wet paint, splattering it. These projects do not necessarily attract new audiences but provide visitors who are already there with a "value added" experience. They fall in line with the dominant model of "socially-engaged art practices" or "participatory art" that have found their way into major museums over the last decade (Bishop 2012). Other engagement practices aim to construct "mutual commitments between institutions and the publics that intersect them" (Johanna Burton, at Hammer Museum, November 5, 2015). These projects

²⁹ At worst, one Australian critic wrote, it is "the bastard child of marketing, social media, and delusion" (Andrew MacKenzie, personal correspondence with the author, 2016).

further “engage” communities who are already very likely to be engaged, as in the New Museum’s digital archive project, *XFR STN*, where the museum worked with New York-area sound artists to transfer their work from analog to digital format. Yet another example of engagement presented at Engage More Now! is the Phoenix Art Museum (PAM) reprinting all its wall labels to include Spanish translations, which seems a rather common-sense courtesy to the region’s Hispanic residents, who constitute nearly 50 percent of the population. What makes PAM’s gesture noteworthy, however, is that PAM staff received death threats for having made their labels bilingual (Connie Butler, Hammer Museum, November 5, 2015), proof that some art museum visitors prefer the elitist status quo.

Very often, the work of engagement curators involves locating and contracting professional artists to “do” the museum’s engagement. Some engagement curators agreed that this can lead to tensions between the institutions’ and the artists’ goals (Sarah Jesse and Lucia Sanroman, Hammer Museum, November 5, 2015). Yet what seems to be missing from most discussions of this emerging profession is any discussion of the goals *of* or *for* the public. Only one art museum professional at the Engage More Now! conference, the Tlingit/Canadian curator and writer Candice Hopkins, asked: “Who is engaging whom, and why?”. She questioned whether art museums are prepared to engage in processes of “deep listening” to publics (Candice Hopkins, Hammer Museum, November 5, 2015). I am not sure if her question resonated for many present. However, one conference observer, a Colombian-American activist-artist, followed Hopkins’ train of thought and pointed to the hypocrisy of the conference itself: “If we are organizing panels about how and why to engage more now, shouldn’t we bring into those panels some of the targeted audiences and hear what they have to say? ... We need fewer experts and more neighbors to engage more now!” (Carolina Caycedo, quoted in Fink 2015).

Indeed, there were at least three important groups missing from the Engage More Now! conference. The panels included artists, curators, and “engagement curators”, but no members of the public, no educators, and no interpreters. I spoke with an interpreter from a major North American art museum. She described her job as “sitting with the curatorial team, playing the role of audience in the exhibition, and working with curators to see how their ideas might translate to audiences.” Her work includes “psychology, museum education, museum studies, visitor research, and evaluations, knowing what’s going on the world, what people are worried about ... being well-read, paying attention to the news and popular culture, and being open to using the art

to talk about things people are interested in.” Interpretive work is highly creative, but it is not celebrated like the work of engagement “curators” because it is not premised on individual acts of creative “genius.” Instead, interpreters draw their ideas from the interests and the needs of the public. The interpreter I spoke with described how her work frequently brings her into conflict with her organization’s curators: “A huge number of curators want to present the art only through an art historical lens. But we create much more interesting exhibitions for the public by connecting the shows to issues they care about. The minority of people who want the art history and theory have other ways of getting it – they can buy a catalogue, for instance.” Interpretation work, when successful, is a means of institutional change. There are few art museums with interpretation staff in Canada, although the field is growing in the US. At conferences (mostly in the US) interpretation staff share stories about the resistance they face not only from curators, but also from donors and sponsors. When, at one large museum, an exhibition of neo-Expressionist paintings was reframed to deal with the issues of Black Lives Matter, visitation by people under-40 soared, but no corporations were willing to sponsor the show. One informant described how it works in her organization: “Curators get offices with windows. Education and interpretation staff get cubicles in the basement ... There have been numerous instances of curators making unilateral decisions to remove our interpretive material from their exhibition spaces, simply for aesthetic reasons. I have found monitors with our videos of the artists talking about their work literally pushed into corners down the hall, outside of the gallery.”

Like Engage More Now! and the UBC course on public engagement at art museums (taught by former Hammer Curator of Engagement, Allison Atgen), most conversations about public engagement by art museums focus on the activities of large organizations located in major global art centres. At Engage More Now! we heard from the engagement professionals—all of whom, incidentally, were white women—employed by the Hammer Museum, LA; the New Museum, NY; the Tate Modern, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA; and the Dia Center, NY. But there is no reason that these high-profile organizations should be better able to build relationships with local communities than smaller, less well known organizations. Indeed, these very large, bureaucratic, and rather homogeneous museums have the effect of centralizing official culture in cities that are profoundly variegated, and this arguably makes it more difficult for the broad array of legitimate citizen and community interests in culture to find expression and exercise influence through them. Furthermore, the financial needs of these very large

organizations make them more reliant on corporate sponsorship and private patronage, the very interests that inhibit institutional change. It is for this reason that institutional change may not begin at the centre, or in the largest, best-resourced art museums. In the next chapter, I examine four art museums, all small and peripheral to major cities, which are creating public value in interesting, innovative, and context-specific ways.

CHAPTER 8: CREATING PUBLIC VALUE IN ART MUSEUMS

Returning to some of my initial research questions, outlined in my introduction, I asked: *Who do (art museums) think the public is? Who, within the organizations, is responsible for public engagement, and why? What institutional factors help and hinder their progress? When does public engagement become an imperative? Does the imperative transform the institution?* To answer these questions, I have thus far explored the narrow conception of “public” traditionally employed by art museums, a public that the art museum has also helped to create to serve the interests of the liberal democratic state. I have examined the ways that the restricted criteria for membership in the public impedes the work of public value creation and, indeed, can contribute to public value failure, particularly in this era of deepening inequality and democratic deficit. I have also demonstrated how the work of public engagement is typically the responsibility of (female) educational staff, who occupy marginalized positions in an institution that struggles to accommodate the labour of social reproduction, devoted as it is to celebrations of individualism and creative disruption. Across several chapters, I have explored some of the structural barriers to public engagement and public value creation, including the difficulty of modern and contemporary art theories and the sacramental, unforgiving space of the “white cube” gallery, along with the elite composition of boards, lack of diversity among staff (both at management levels and in education departments), and the self-selection or self-reproduction that occurs through peer-assessment reviews. And finally, I have addressed the phenomenon of the “public engagement curator” as an ancillary response to the growing democratic deficit and the imperative for art museums to create public value. In this case, however, it is the *appearance* of public engagement, rather than “deep listening” to the public, that seems to motivate the art museum, and so it remains at its core unchanged. It is an example of structural “decoupling” (Edelman 1992), wherein organizations adapt their formal structures to conform to public opinion, the demands of constituents, social norms, or the law, but in ways designed to minimize the impact of the adaptation on managerial functions.

In this chapter, I aim to understand when public engagement becomes an organization-wide imperative, and if and how it transforms the institution. In doing so, I will advance further answers to the question of structural barriers to public value creation, as each of my four case

study museums have discovered different barriers by running up against them in their efforts to transform.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, my four case study organizations were identified through a poll of senior educators in my network of colleagues, and colleagues from various arts funding agencies. They were part of a small group of public and university art museums noted for being particularly “engaged with engagement.” I deliberately excluded university art galleries due to their specialized mandates. With these eliminated, there was a high degree of consensus among the individuals I polled. I reached out to five of the six recommended museums, and secured four as case studies for this research project. In May and June 2016, I visited the MacKenzie Art Gallery (Regina, SK), Nanaimo Art Gallery (Nanaimo, BC), Two Rivers Gallery (Prince George, BC), and Mississauga Art Gallery (Mississauga, ON), conducting semi-structured interviews with individual employees, and guiding group conversations with various ensembles of staff and management. I also collected budgets, grant applications, strategic plans, and other documents from the organizations.

First, what are the four case study museums in this research project doing that are different from other art museums? Why were they noted consistently by art museum professionals as doing better than others to create public value? What I discovered is that there is no unifying principle of institutional design or process. To build public value, each of the four case study organizations has responded in unique ways to its local environment and to the contradictory and conflicting demands placed upon it by stakeholders to address the two principles of democratic reform outlined by Bennett (1994), which I shared in Chapter 1: 1) that of public rights, stipulating that art museums should be equally open and accessible to all, and 2) that of representational adequacy, requiring museums to sufficiently represent the diversity of the public’s values and cultures. Each case study organization also remains self-consciously a “work in progress,” with management and staff aware that public value creation does not arise from the right “system” but from a network of relationships that require constant maintenance. What is common to all four organizations is that the public value-creating activities they have become known for are rooted in processes that prioritize the building of trust and legitimacy with non-elite publics, in line with Talbot’s Competing Public Values model (Figure 5.2). Furthermore, three of the four organizations share both a relative smallness of scale, and the elevation of the educator’s role and function within the organization.

The primary strengths of the MacKenzie Art Gallery are its centering of Indigenous art in its institutional vision, and its extensive provincial educational outreach program. The MacKenzie Art Gallery is the only “mainstream” Canadian art gallery to have consistently hired Indigenous curators into senior positions since the late 1990s.³⁰ At the time of my visit in May 2016, Michelle LaVallee had held a curatorial position for close to ten years, and she was preceded by Patricia Deadman and Lee-Ann Martin. (Also, Métis artist Bob Boyer was on staff as a Community Education Consultant in the 1970s, and occasionally did some curating during those years.) The regular presence of Indigenous curators has been a means of assuring and demonstrating accountability to Indigenous publics and enabling Indigenous consultation and participation in programming. It is also a primary source of innovation. In 2015, for a group exhibition about cultural assimilation and reconciliation, the MacKenzie Art Gallery hired three part-time Indigenous Story Keepers to replace the traditional gallery docents. The Story Keepers were not art historians, although they were all individuals who worked in the arts; their role was “to assist visitors in learning about the stories behind the art works, and to collect stories from visitors” and to pass on these stories to staff and other visitors (MacKenzie Art Gallery 2015). I visited the MacKenzie Art Gallery during this time, and interacted with a Story Keeper. The conversation was more informal and reciprocal than are interactions with a traditional docent, and it was also warmer and more personal. I learned from my discussion with the Story Keeper that Indigenous and non-Indigenous visitors had a wide range of reactions to and interpretations of art works in the exhibition, and I was given the opportunity to reflect on the deep emotions that the exhibition aroused for many residential school survivors and their descendants. That is, I gained a social understanding of the works in the show and a feeling for the pre-existing community that the exhibition spoke to and the new community it was creating, rather than a lesson on the works’ importance or an analysis of their place in art history. Since my visit, one of the Story Keepers, Janine Windolph, has been hired full-time as the museum’s Curator of Public Programs, and LaVallee has moved on to be Director at Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

³⁰ The MacKenzie Art Gallery’s commitment to Indigenous art is imperfect. Although it is part of a concerted effort to achieve equity for Indigenous art professionals, I heard from several employees that the employment of only one Indigenous senior staff places a rather heavy burden on that individual to represent Indigenous interests and concerns in staff discussions and decision-making processes, at times with little support or understanding from coworkers.

Art Centre. According to the gallery's Executive Director, Anthony Kiendl, both the Story Keepers program and the ongoing exhibitions of Indigenous art are extremely popular. "We can generally expect more school tours to see our exhibitions of Indigenous art than any other kind of show, and comparable or higher overall attendance," he said.

Each year, the Mackenzie Art Gallery's outreach program visits up to 30 Saskatchewan communities—primarily rural communities and First Nation reserves. Education staff work with gallery curators to prepare exhibitions that are then driven by truck to the communities, unloaded, installed, and facilitated by the museum's Coordinator of Learning Initiatives, Ken Ducek. Brochures are sent out each summer to schools and communities to inform them of the opportunity to host an exhibition and an education program and activities related to the show, and every year there is more demand than the Outreach program can accommodate. This program builds public value around Talbot's concept of "collectivity" by creating and maintaining partnerships, and building social capital and cohesion both within the communities served and between the communities and the museum. The longstanding consistency of the program, its reliable service standards, and its low cost and efficiency for participating communities also builds public value in the area Talbot refers to as "security," which entails reliability, equity, efficiency and due process in bureaucratic services. And finally, the program builds public value around personal or community utility, providing smaller and more isolated Saskatchewan populations with choice and flexibility in their access to programs. Ducek enjoys his visits to communities across the province. He stated, "Public art galleries can be an 'open forum,' where people from all walks of life get the opportunity to express their point of view and see and hear different perspectives. It's in building these interpersonal connections that we help build stronger communities. The added bonus is we have a great time making art together."

Yet there were palpable frustrations among MacKenzie Art Gallery staff, many of them resulting from the traditional and rather rigid hierarchies and silos organizing the employees' activities and reporting structures. These frustrations were undoubtedly heightened at the time of my visit, which coincided with a tense collective bargaining session with management over proposals to reduce severance pay, management's right to schedule employees' work hours, remove one position from the bargaining unit (Head Curator), and create three new management positions. An agreement was eventually reached, months after my visit; however, the confluence

of my research visit with the bargaining session gave me pause to reflect on the challenges unions can pose to organizational transformation.

The organizational structure of the MacKenzie Art Gallery is not the result of the staff's unionization – it simply follows museum tradition. Public art museums developed in tandem with industrialization, and adopted the industrial organization's hierarchical command-and-control structure and functional departmentalization. Unions have brought many benefits to art museum employees, including slightly higher salaries in a sector where, as a study by the Cultural Human Resource Council found, salaries “continue to lag behind the general not-for-profit sector and comparative industries in many areas of compensation and benefits” (Deloitte & Touche LLP and affiliated entities). Museum unions have also advanced on-the-job safety measures for work that regularly involves the handling of heavy objects, chemical exposure (in paints, solvents, and cleaning agents), and a variety of construction activities.³¹ In the neoliberal era, organizational restructuring has often involved downsizing, outsourcing, and other activities that diminish job security and narrow long-term employment opportunities for workers (Hirsch et al. 2006). Art museum employees have not been immune from these phenomena or from the double-speak that often accompanies them. For instance, in 2012 when the Art Gallery of Windsor laid off 12 of its 17 employees, the director did not speak in terms of a financial crisis, instead claiming, “I think what we need to understand here is that we are an organization in change” (Chen 2012). Similarly, her board chair refused to characterize the new model as downsizing, referring to it as a “‘focusing’ of the gallery’s purposes and resources” (Ibid.). It is thus understandable that initiatives to engage in processes of organizational transformation will make art museum employees nervous. In the absence of exceptional labour-management relationships, unionized employees may naturally seek to stall or hamper management-led improvements, referred to as the “monopoly face” of unions (Freeman and Medoff 1984). This is a complex problem for unionized arts organizations that are operating under ineffective or outdated models, and it deserves to be researched in-depth. While a focused study on the issue would be required to draw any definitive conclusions, I am concerned with the way that unions

³¹ In Canada, unionized staff in public art museums are found mainly where staff salaries are paid for by municipal, provincial, or federal governments (or universities). Most mid-sized to large art museums fall into this category, and some smaller art museums as well—for example, Burnaby Art Gallery, Richmond Art Gallery, and Surrey Art Gallery, all in the lower mainland of BC, are quite small but unionized. Of my CAGE survey participants, 36 percent of educators in non-management positions were unionized.

continue to reproduce command-and-control hierarchies and inflexible job descriptions, making it difficult to respond creatively to environmental changes—or to changes in perceptions or understandings of the environment. The hierarchies institutionalized in collective agreements can limit communication and reception of good ideas from those with lower status to those with decision-making power.

Some academic literature cites economic factors for lower levels of innovation in unionized settings, due to the assumed reduction of capital and R&D (research and development) investments to compensate for increased wages and benefits (Menezes-Filho and Reenen 2003). Other studies refute such a link, arguing that product innovation in densely unionized workplaces is equal to or greater than that of non-unionized firms, perhaps because the security of union membership inspires greater risk-taking or because of increased worker loyalty to the firm (Walsworth 2010). However, it is difficult to compare product innovation in for-profit unionized firms to the kinds of structural innovations required for public engagement and public value creation in art organizations, and I can find no academic studies of the latter subject. In the case of art museums, I believe what is most significant is the union's ongoing role in reproducing traditional museological staff positions and functions that are antithetical to organizational "deep listening." "We have to make it up as we go along," one director of a non-unionized case study organization said to me. I heard several versions of this from galleries actively seeking to build public value. "Our projects are context-responsive." "Our whole organization has to function like an artist, working with what's out there in the community." "We have to be flexible." "We have no rules." For some smaller organizations, flexibility also serves economic realities: "Every exhibition is being developed without knowing whether we can afford it." A small, ambitious organization needs to be capable of changing plans quickly and creatively, and the MacKenzie Art Gallery seemed to be less capable of doing this than the other museums I visited. It may be that the top-down industrial model of production is antithetical to public value creation in the culture sector.

Of course, what makes the other three case study organizations nimbler is not only the lack of unions, but precisely their smallness of scale. As is widely cited in academic literature on art museums, as a museum grows larger, it becomes responsible for a wider variety of often conflicting goals (Zolberg 1986; DiMaggio 1991). "Sometimes it feels like we are expected to be all things to all people," said Kiendl. The scale of the actual building is important too: the

MacKenzie Art Gallery's building is too large and, with current financial resources, it is a constant challenge to fill with rotating exhibitions. In a small space, the budgetary limitations of smaller organizations can provide a de facto focus, and smaller staff structures can be more easily transformed to engage the public and build public value. When I polled colleagues from across the country to find out which art museums they perceived as doing the most interesting work to build public value, three of the six recommended by all my contacts had budgets under \$1 million, one museum's budget hovered just above \$1 million, another's was \$2.5 million, and only one—the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA)—was a very large museum, with a budget of more than \$30 million. Recommendations for the latter, however, came with a caveat that only MMFA's education and art therapy initiative was considered innovative, while its exhibitions are considered conservative “blockbuster” events that focus on attendance over quality of engagement and contributions to public value.³²

As some of the hype around the Remai Modern has attested (see: Lederman 2017; Deibert 2018) there is a bias in our society that perceives “bigger” as “better,” and “prestigious” art museums as signs of superior political virtue or stronger civic identity (Duncan 1991). My study sample, by contrast, is biased toward small art museums located for the most part at good distances from major cities. While this means that I am unable to compare public value creation across organizations of very different scales, I believe that the size of my case study organizations could be a factor in their success: their smaller scales support the theory that organizations do not need extensive financial resource bases to be innovative (W. M. Cohen 1995), but can rely on their greater structural flexibility, in combination with intellectual and social capital (Subramaniam 2005).³³ The case studies also support the findings of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project that smaller, more human-scale organizations contribute more to community well-being than very large cultural facilities (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016).

Of course, there are many small, non-unionized art museums producing mediocre public value, as well as some larger non-unionized galleries stuck in the traditional art museum model.

³² It is for this reason that I declined to pursue MMFA as a case study, because I was looking for cases of organization-wide transformation, rather than auxiliary initiatives resulting from significant new inputs of capital. Nonetheless, there is a good deal to learn from the success of the MMFA's education and art therapy initiative.

³³ This also runs counter to the belief expressed by many of the CAGE survey respondents that their organizations would not be able to improve their public value creation without greater financial resources.

The presence and sound management of the right intellectual capital is another key to strong performance, as has been demonstrated in other studies of nonprofits and public sector agencies (Donato 2008; Fletcher et al. 2003; Habersam and Piber 2003). Intellectual capital can be loosely defined as an organizational resource comprising the talents and skills of individuals and groups in employment, along with intellectual property such as methods, procedures, and archives – in other words, knowledge that transforms materials to make them more valuable. Intellectual capital is a major subject of intangibles accounting, which Holden draws from for his cultural value theory. The components of intellectual capital have been established through a basic framework of human capital (know-how, competencies of performance, and the employees’ personal goals), structural capital (organizational structures and designs, processes, routines, technologies, tools, and physical layouts of workspace), and relational capital (all the relationships the organization has with other organizations and communities) (Mesa 2010; Subramaniam 2005). In cultural organizations, intellectual capital is widely known to be important, yet it is rarely measured. Rather, directors and other managers of art museums get a feel for their organizations’ intellectual capital through “antennae” (Donato 2017: 381), such as personal relationships with staff, weekly meetings, public debates, and other internal and external signals. This means it is very important that directors and other managers possess the “right” antennae, or the “right” cognitive view of their organization’s role and environment and the way events are likely to unfold (Fairbairn, Fulton, and Pohler 2015). Directors at the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Two Rivers Gallery, and Art Gallery of Mississauga have interpreted their cities’ needs and the roles of their museums in different ways, but in doing so, all have elevated the role of the educator and broadened the educational functions of their organizations. This was not a criterion I sought out when I looked for art museums producing excellent public value, but it confirmed, in a way I did not predict, my initial intuition that educators would have special insight into public value creation at art museums.

Nanaimo Art Gallery is the smallest of my case studies, with an annual budget of slightly more than half a million dollars. In 2012/13, under new leadership, it made the decision to improve its public value by downsizing from two spaces to one, closing its original gallery space on the Vancouver Island University campus and concentrating all activities downtown. The gallery has been recognized by its peers for the way its exhibitions explore local histories and

community groups, integrating education in the curatorial concepts, to attract a wide range of local visitors who normally don't visit art events.

To understand Nanaimo Art Gallery's success, it is important to note that the two top employees of the organization have backgrounds in education as well as curatorial studies. Julie Bevan, the Executive Director, trained in curatorial studies at UBC. However, prior to taking up the Nanaimo position, she worked as the Adult Education Coordinator at the Glenbow Museum and as Public Programs and Publicity Coordinator at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. Jesse Birch, who has studied both fine arts and curatorial studies, was pursuing a PhD in Art Education before joining the Nanaimo Art Gallery as the organization's Curator. One of the Nanaimo Art Gallery's best-known projects is a series of exhibitions that Birch calls the *Resource Trilogy*, which examine the city's history through the development of three natural resource industries: coal mining, forestry, and fisheries. The first of these exhibitions, *Black Diamond Dust*, used photography, video, site-specific installations, and poetry to consider the ramifications of coal mining, including "fragmented communities through economic development, racial segregation and labour inequity" (Nanaimo Art Gallery 2014). The museum arranged tours of a local coal mine site for visitors who registered for the tour at the gallery. As Birch stated, "There were people who had never set foot in the art gallery before, but they knew their ancestors worked in a coal mine, so that's what brought them in to see the show and join the tour. It was chance for them to think about what that work had been like for their family members, how it shaped this place we live in, and how it connects Nanaimo to the world." His goal, he explained, is to engage everyday audiences in the thematic questions of the exhibition by providing a "way in through the familiar," or accessible entry points. As a curator, Birch has better-than-average insight into the needs of Nanaimo residents, having been raised there during a time when there was very little opportunity to experience contemporary art few access points for people with an interest in contemporary cultural issues to explore them. "Sometimes I feel like I'm curating to myself 20 years ago," he told me. Entry points for other exhibitions include a walking tour of downtown Nanaimo to explore "the enduring relationship that civilizations have had with salt, from its importance in food preservation and healing to more aesthetic and philosophical implications," in conjunction with the exhibition *Gleaners* (2015) and four months of workshops with Vancouver artist Ron Tran, in which local artists, community members, and youth participating in the gallery's Saturday Art Labs assisted the artist in recreating art works

that had been made elsewhere over the course of Tran's career (Nanaimo Art Gallery 2016). Birch admitted that it is not always easy to gauge success. Tran's "impact on the community was huge," he explained, "but the entire scope of his activities here wasn't necessarily visible in the final exhibition."

Nanaimo Art Gallery's programming builds public value through its collective mode of exhibition production, employing strategic partnerships with artists, non-arts organizations, and community groups to co-produce programming with a focus on social capital and cohesion. The museum's well-considered provision of "accessible entry points" for non-elite publics builds equity and extends accountability to Nanaimo residents beyond mere financial transparency. While some local artists have expressed disappointment that Nanaimo Art Gallery's new management has shifted the gallery away from its earlier focus on exhibiting local artists, Bevan said it was important that the museum offer opportunities for Nanaimo residents to "stretch and grow." "There are very few other public spaces in Nanaimo, spaces that aren't commercial," she explained. "This is one of the few places where people can go a little deeper, to explore ideas and different perspectives, if they're so inclined." Referring to the gallery's employees, she said, "We are all educators, but we come at it from different perspectives, and our roles change with every exhibition."

Bevan recognized that the gallery's lack of Indigenous staff was a weak spot in the organization, as it inhibited their ability to serve the local Snuneymuxw community. While a nearby elementary school did a lot of cultural work with its Snuneymuxw students, a few members of the Nanaimo Art Gallery's team expressed the wish to "do more." During my group conversation with the staff and management, both budget limitations and a perceived absence of trained Indigenous art administrators were cited as reasons for the absence of Indigenous staff. Together, we brainstormed ways that cultural organizations in the city of Nanaimo could collaborate on paid internships for young Indigenous (specifically Snuneymuxw) culture workers. For example, a number of organizations could contribute small amounts to the full-time salary for one individual, whose work would be split between the contributing organizations. This would require all involved to demonstrate goodwill and trust, and to cooperate using a clear governance structure for the development, direction, and supervision of the intern. If such coordination proved to be too difficult, it could fall to municipal governments and arts funding

agencies to develop training and internship programs for Indigenous art educators and arts administrators (and not only Indigenous curators, as the Canada Council has done).³⁴

At Prince George's Two Rivers Gallery, the Managing Director, Carolyn Holmes, led the museum's education department for 17 years before assuming her current position in 2015. The museum's unique tripartite management structure, established by former Managing Director Peter Thompson in 2003, gives equal but different authority to the Artistic Director, Director of Public Programs (Holmes' previous position), and Managing Director. It was Thompson who introduced Holmes to Maker culture in 2010, a contemporary culture or subculture that represents a technology-based extension of "DIY" culture, intersects with hacker culture, and emphasizes learning-through-doing in a social environment, in line with the philosophy of John Dewey (Dougherty 2012). Today, Two Rivers Gallery is known across Canada for the high levels of participation by Prince George adults and youths in the informal, networked, peer-led, and shared learning workshops ("open Make nights") held weekly across the entire programming atrium. The museum provides all the tools for participation, including general purpose tools, silversmith tools, electronics kits, sewing machines, 3Doodlers, a Flex Shaft Rotary tool, printmaking presses, and more. "The MakerLab activities are not as scary to the general public as 'art'," explained Holmes. "This is a way to get local folks through the door of our building. Art galleries are seen as elitist. But people come here to learn something they can easily understand, taught by someone from the community—it could be haircutting, knife sharpening, fly-tying, turning wood bowls, or electronics repair!—and then they find themselves going to look at the art. Once they've attended some MakerLab programs, they feel like they belong here and they feel a sense of ownership of the Gallery." She was clear that the museum's purpose was not to educate people about art per se: "I used to have the idea that our main goal was to get

³⁴ Sometime after my visit, the Nanaimo Art Gallery secured BC Arts Council funding to hire an Indigenous Education Coordinator, who has become an integral part of the team and provides input on all programs. The position is being made permanent in 2018. The gallery has also added Indigenous reception signage and have trained all staff in short Hul'qumi'num phrases, which, Bevan reports, they try to use daily. Among other initiatives, they have established an Indigenous drum circle program, open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the public, and have increased the number of Indigenous instructors in their TD Artists in the Schools program from zero to five.

everyone to see the exhibitions. Now I see our role is to make Prince George a more creative community.”

Two Rivers Gallery’s Artistic Director, George Harris, said one of the gallery’s roles is to serve as the “collective consciousness” of Prince George. While he curates exhibitions on a wide variety of themes, he regularly tries to “push people through painful stuff,” with shows on issues such as “what people don’t like about the city,” the human impact on climate change, or the effects of oil pipelines—not an easy subject in a region discussing whether it wanted to see Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline come to fruition. The museum made the hard decision not to approach Enbridge for sponsorship, so that it could pursue such thematic exhibitions without having to “bite the hand that feeds us.”³⁵ At the same time, it made sure to feature some pro-pipeline artworks in its group exhibition *Pipeline: A Land of Division* (2013), and to ensure that in discussions with school groups and other visitors that neither pro- nor anti-pipeline perspectives could remain unchallenged.

Harris said, “We are very aware of whom we program for, and that’s the local community.” Especially since 2011, the museum has made a concerted effort to work with First Nations communities. At the time of my visit, they had two Indigenous board members, and Elders are present to open every exhibition. Members of Lheidli T’enneh First Nation received free admission to the gallery,³⁶ and the education department works with local Aboriginal education programs and social services to involve Indigenous youth in after-school programs and workshops. Some young Indigenous people participated in camps and programs at the museum through the city’s Pay It Forward program. However, at the time of my visit, Two Rivers employed no full-time Indigenous staff (there have been up to three part-time staff self-identifying as Indigenous). “Maybe it will be one of our Indigenous students who becomes our first full-time Indigenous employee one day,” one staff member mused. “Our casual visitors tend not to be First Nations,” they told me, “But First Nations visitors are increasing with every exhibition.”

Two Rivers Gallery builds public value by focusing on social outcomes, such as conviviality, productive (if uncomfortable) debate, the production of social capital and cohesion,

³⁵ Enbridge, for example, has long supported the MacKenzie Art Gallery’s Enbridge Young Artists Project in seven Regina schools.

³⁶ As of January 2, 2018, all people self-identifying as Indigenous receive free admission to Two Rivers Gallery.

coproduction of programming with citizens, and partnerships with non-art organizations – all foci that fall under Talbot’s heading of “collectivity.” The MakerLab is a means of making the gallery accessible to members of the public who would otherwise feel alienated, and it offers a wide variety of entry points to the gallery, building public value in the area Talbot defines as “personal utility.” The MakerLab is also a significant innovation in the field of Canadian art museums and for the city of Prince George. The gallery’s conscientious approach to sponsorships demonstrates accountability as a public organization. Through these means, Two Rivers Gallery builds trust and legitimacy with local publics. Indeed, these values are built into the structure and practices of the organization. When I asked Holmes what made the gallery’s unique management structure work, she responded simply: “Trust.” The gallery builds trust among its staff in the same way it builds it with the public: in the spirit of the MakerLab, each week at a staff meeting, a different staff member is tasked with leading their colleagues through a new creative process. Together they have made blind contour drawings, conducted poetry walks, and learned belly dancing, among other activities. Participation as a learner and as a teacher is mandatory for all staff, from Directors to front desk staff to summer students. The process keeps all employees humble, as everyone has the chance to be both a teacher and a student on a regular basis. It also makes the team individually and collectively less risk-averse.

Unlike the MacKenzie Art Gallery, Nanaimo Art Gallery, and Two Rivers Gallery, which are all mid-sized or small operations serving mid-sized or small cities, the Art Gallery of Mississauga has the smallest square footage of programmable space of any Canadian public art museum, even as its mandate is to serve Mississauga, a city of more than 715,000 people. Mississauga, a densely-populated city, is the most culturally diverse and youngest region of the Greater Toronto Area, and is located next door to Toronto, which is home to numerous cultural organizations that serve as potential competition, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, one of Canada’s largest art museums. Racialized minorities constitute nearly 60 percent of Mississauga’s overall population. Nearly a quarter of Mississauga’s total population (23.2 percent) is South Asian, 7.6 percent are Chinese, 6.6 percent are Black, and Filipinos and Arabs each constitute 5.1 percent. There are a host of other visible minorities each representing less than three percent of the total population. Only 42.3 percent of Mississauga residents self-identify as white, and many of them are English-as-a-second-language immigrants from southern and eastern Europe (Statistics Canada 2017). The Art Gallery of Mississauga builds value in this

context in part by operating with a very diverse and multilingual staff, in effort to reflect, as best as possible, Mississauga's cultural make-up. Between the six³⁷ full-time staff members, the gallery speaks ten languages, including several South Asian languages—Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Tamil, and Malayalam—along with French, English, German, and Spanish. And, like the Nanaimo Art Gallery and Two Rivers Gallery, the educational function is distributed throughout the organization. “The traditional hierarchies don’t interest me,” explained the Director/Curator, Mandy Salter. “They only serve to keep certain information inaccessible. An inclusive approach results in a more relational exchange.” Salter’s own training is in Art and Art History, but as the daughter of Australian academics, she grew up in a variety of countries and in different cultural settings, and this understanding of diversity and context informs her work. The Art Gallery of Mississauga’s Curator of Contemporary Art, Kendra Ainsworth, holds an undergraduate degree in Cultural Anthropology, where she conducted a discourse analysis on the language used in exhibitions about non-Western cultures, and a Master’s degree in Museum Studies, where she focused on interpretative planning in contemporary art galleries and interned in the departments of Interpretation and Visitor Research at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The Business Operations Manager, Sadaf Zuberi, worked for close to 15 years developing and implementing educational programs for the deaf, other disadvantaged groups, and remote communities in her native Pakistan. She views education as the responsibility of all staff members, and so, at the time of my visit, kept her desk in the gallery’s studio so she could greet and start conversations with visitors. The museum’s Community Activator, Education and Programmes, Sharada Eswara, is a multi-lingual musician, performer, author, and storyteller who trained in her native West Bengal, and works mainly with community groups outside the gallery’s walls. At the time of my visit, all staff had participated in diversity training.

The Art Gallery of Mississauga’s transition from a rather conventional organization that served the city’s white cultural elites to a dynamic and inclusive organization reaching out to Mississauga’s broader population began in 2012, when Stuart Keeler, a curator with a background in socially-engaged art practices, was hired as Director. It continues with Salter, who was hired in 2015. Many of the six staff members employed at Art Gallery of Mississauga have been hired by Salter, who stressed in our interview how important it is to find and nurture the

³⁷ Art Gallery of Mississauga had six full-time employees at the time of my visit in 2016, and now has seven.

right mix of individuals in the organization. Shortly after Salter became Director, the Art Gallery of Mississauga participated a pilot study called Engaging Your Community, offered by the Ontario Museum Association (OMA). This program brought 70 members of the Mississauga public to evaluate the Art Gallery of Mississauga. The community feedback provided the Art Gallery of Mississauga with robust information, along with community connections, to put towards a new strategic plan. Increasing collaborations with other organizations became a key target (Ontario Museum Organization 2016). Later the same year, the Art Gallery of Mississauga presented *Be A Sport*, a group exhibition of contemporary art exploring the roles of gender, race, inequality, and conflict in sport, in an official community partnership with the Toronto Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

In only a few years, the Art Gallery of Mississauga has become known for its adventurous exhibitions that profile cultural diversity—such as *Change Makers*, a group exhibition featuring seven emerging Indigenous artists from across Canada and beyond, which earned the Art Gallery of Mississauga its first award from the Ontario Association of Art Galleries (Thematic Exhibition of the Year – budget under \$20,000), or the solo show of miniature dioramas by Curtis Santiago, a Trinidadian-Canadian artist based in Toronto, whose tiny sculptures pay homage to art history while referencing current events and popular culture. Ainsworth explained that while other art museums put interpretation in a “ghetto,” she puts curatorial work and interpretation under the same umbrella, trying to make space for visitors to connect to exhibitions through stories from their own lives. “I want to provide access points that don’t require people to know what postmodernism is,” she said. Like the staff at Two Rivers Gallery and Nanaimo Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Mississauga team believes it is their responsibility to provide an accountable space for civic conversations that may not always be comfortable. Salter stated: “We are an educational institution. As an educator, I feel a responsibility to seek answers and insights whenever possible, or at the very least to ask questions. Our job is to provide alternate conduits for people into ideas, using objects.” Curatorial and Collections Coordinator Laura Carusi, who was born and grew up in Mississauga, elaborated on the need for this in Mississauga: “There’s not much else to do here except go to the mall. Really, except for the central library, there’s no other place to go to have a deeper community conversation.”

The Art Gallery of Mississauga's Education Philosophy is among the most articulate I have seen:

“The AGM’s education and engagement projects and programming aim to contemplate, represent and interact with the vibrant and layered lived experiences of the city – its human geography. As the AGM presents high calibre exhibitions featuring local, national and international artists, it simultaneously recognizes a wide range in the public’s visual literacy and art viewing habits and is committed to facilitating equitable platforms that will allow for the full appreciation of contemporary artistic practice by all residents. The gallery encourages and values difference and the nuances of experience in the pursuit of learning, critical thinking and engagement.” (Art Gallery of Mississauga 2016)

The Art Gallery of Mississauga engages local, regional, and national artists in its Art Influx workshops; provides a resource room for visitors (Bridging Art); works with a TD-sponsored project with environmental artist Christopher McLeod and the 800 students and teachers at Cawthra Park Secondary School on an ongoing study of the centrality of water to environmental and sustainability issues and to the trade, travel, and survival of local Indigenous people; provides free workshops led by artists to local schools through its Roots and Branches program; offers free classes for small children in Tot Spot Classes; and has partnered with the City of Mississauga and other agencies on an art project engaging citizens through an open call for submissions for art on the subject of how public transit connects Mississauga (*Commute Commune*). The Art Gallery of Mississauga also offers a variety of professional development programs for local and regional artists. Curator Fridays provide a candid one-on-one portfolio review with a curator; grant-writing workshops are presented regularly in partnership with other organizations. The diversity and number of educational and outreach programs attest to the energy and commitment of the tiny staff. Nonetheless, Salter insisted that there is only one way to create institutional change to build public value: “Patiently, consistently, and peacefully – because the right thing is not always the easiest.”

The Art Gallery of Mississauga builds public value in the area Talbot refers to as “personal utility” by making their organization radically accessible through such features as its diversity of staff and languages and its commitment to education at all levels of the organization. By participating in activities in which they solicit community feedback, such as OMA’s

Engaging Your Community pilot project, they make themselves responsive and accountable to the public, building public value in the area Talbot calls “autonomy.” Such activities have encouraged the Art Gallery of Mississauga to seek out mutually strengthening partnerships with other organizations, including co-produced projects that focus on social outcomes (such as the public transportation project), thereby also building public value in the area Talbot calls “collectivity.”

Salter acknowledges that such openness comes with risks. “When you start to open the doors to dialogues about barriers to access, and you welcome diverse communities in through the doors, in being inclusive, you become vulnerable,” she said. Some “insiders” will respond with fear to such changes, and it can be uncomfortable to listen to criticism. One Art Gallery of Mississauga employee told me that she believed the organization’s changes had scared away a few former Art Gallery of Mississauga loyalists, including some from the “donor class.” Salter acknowledged that it was a challenge to make that donor class understand how it would share in the benefits of a more inclusive gallery, but, she said, “That’s what I need to do to ensure our organization is perceived by the community as relevant.” The Art Gallery of Mississauga faces other obstacles, including its location inside Mississauga’s City Hall. In the summer, a constant stream of civic activities in the adjoining Celebration Square could bring the Art Gallery of Mississauga a steady stream of visitors, but the gallery remains invisible indoors, especially in winter. It is difficult to shift the perception of City Hall from that of a place one is obliged to visit (to pay a fine or get a license) to that of a place one chooses to go for pleasure. And while the gallery’s tiny footprint limits the kinds of exhibitions the Art Gallery of Mississauga can produce, Salter is wary of any ambitions for a large, stand-alone gallery, preferring to move forward slowly with expansion plans, keeping sustainability and community interests as chief priorities.

What became clear to me from my visits to all four organizations is the importance of Talbot’s central qualities—trust and legitimacy—not simply as an aspect of the relationships between an organization and its external stakeholders, but as functions within the organizations themselves. The art museums with the highest levels of internal trust and legitimacy—the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Two Rivers Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Mississauga—also had better knowledge sharing, common frames of reference, and shared goals, lower “transaction costs” and a cooperative spirit, and greater coherence of action. In short, they worked better. As Cohen

and Prusak have noted, social capital *within* an organization is a key factor in its ability to produce value for external stakeholders (D. Cohen and Prusak 2001: 8).

Cohen and Prusak define social capital as “the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible” (Ibid., 3). They explain that the characteristic elements and indicators include: “high levels of trust, robust personal networks and vibrant communities, shared understandings, and a sense of equitable participation in a joint enterprise—all things that draw individuals together into a group” (Ibid.). For the purposes of this study of public value creation by art museums, the concepts of “shared values” and “shared understandings” interest me most. What the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Two Rivers Gallery, and Art Gallery of Mississauga have in common is an organization-wide understanding of their civic missions: to challenge and inspire the residents of their cities, to foster creativity among citizens, to build connections among people, and to create equity through targeted strategies of inclusion and the creation of multiple points of access. In these art museums, individuals with strong commitments to and training in education are found at every level of the organization, and not confined to education departments. These same values underlie the programs that MacKenzie Art Gallery is best known for, but do not yet permeate the organization.

Structural Barriers to Public Value Creation

The structural barriers to public value creation in public art museums—some of which I have identified and some that were identified by my informants—include but are not limited to:

- intimidating, “lofty,” “cool,” or otherwise unwelcoming entrances and overall atmospheres, which are a major deterrent to entry for most people;
- traditional museum hierarchies and organizational silos—that is, the supremacy of the traditional curatorial focus on art history and theory, rather than local audiences and education, and the lack of information- and strategy-sharing across departments;
- large scale organizations, which have a centralizing and homogenizing effect on culture, disperse the organization’s focus and “thin” its impact, weaken organizational responsiveness, and make transformation more difficult to manage;

- buildings that are too big, as they are a challenge to fill with rotating exhibitions, draw resources away from outreach and offsite activities, and keep organizations “stuck” to locations that are not always desirable or accessible;
- a reliance on corporate sponsorship, which can limit the full range of civic discussions offered by art museums (because organizations know better than “to bite the hand that feeds them”);
- a reliance on the “donor class,” who often exert a conservative pressure on organizations and inhibit civic inclusivity or the cultivation of social and cultural diversity;
- the absence of Indigenous staff, which limits a museum’s ability to respond to the needs of Indigenous communities and to uphold the responsibility of decolonization or reconciliation;
- the absence of culturally diverse and racialized staff, which limits an organization’s ability to build relationships with the full range of communities constituting North American publics and respond to their cultural needs and interests; and
- unions, which play an important role in safeguarding the salaries and benefits of staff, but may inhibit managers from creating and nurturing the “right” mix of intellectual capital, and may reinforce traditional hierarchies and silos. (This subject requires further research.)

It is important to be clear about what the art museum’s structural barriers are.

Understanding them can help us predict the efficacy of policy proposals aimed at increasing public engagement and public value. For example, the Canada Council has announced that at some point in the future, it will begin scrutinizing organizations for representational diversity in their artistic programming, administrations, and boards – if the organizations have revenues of \$2 million or more (Nestruck 2017). This will exempt most public art museums in Canada from having to reform, as there are at least 52 art museums with budgets under \$2 million (CADAC 2017).³⁸ Targeting policy solely at large organizations also reinforces biases about their significance in the lives of citizens. If we truly want to democratize cultural organizations—to

³⁸ Information on art museums that do not supply data to CADAC is unavailable.

subordinate art, as Berry wrote, to “concerns that are larger than its own” —I believe more radical policies are necessary.

Thus I return to questions I posed in the introduction: If art museums are imbecile institutions, what purpose does institutional imbecility serve within the liberal democracy? In this context, could the imperative of public engagement ever cease to be mere rhetoric? If not, what consequences might we face? I believe the answer to the first question is nearly as simple as Veblen put it. Where the art museum once served to attune a variegated, pre-modern citizenry to the values of liberalism and capitalism in the effort to generate growth and prosperity for an emerging middle class, today it serves to preserve the power and authority of elites while upholding the myths of progress and meritocracy. However, to do so as the middle class shrinks, it has had to accommodate changes in content, and specifically the entry of identity politics, which give hope for material progress for excluded or marginalized subjects. It is to this topic that I now turn, so that I may briefly explore an unintended negative consequence of the art museum’s incessant focus on content rather than institutional arrangements.

CHAPTER 9: THE SYMBOLIC ECONOMY OF AUTHENTICITY

In Chapter 2, I explained how the art museum functions as a part of the liberal state's exhibitionary complex, and the important role it has played in shaping modern subjectivity to accord with liberal democracy's socio-political and economic requirements. Duncan argues that art museums are also politically useful because they "make the state look good: progressive, concerned about the spiritual life of its citizens, a preserver of past achievements and a provider for the common good" (Duncan 1991, 93). Museums have the power to control the representation of a community and many of its values, and to confirm or deny the identities of citizens. For these reasons "museums and museum practices can become objects of fierce struggle and impassioned debate" (Ibid., 79). Since the 1990s, the dominant debate in art museums has been one of identity politics (it had been taking place outside of the museum for roughly 20 years prior). Saltz and Corbett cite the "infamous" 1993 Whitney Biennial—"the so-called multi-cultural, identity-politics, political, or just bad biennial"—as the show that "marked the effective end of visual culture's being mainly white, Western, straight, and male" (Saltz and Corbett 2016).³⁹ It sounds revolutionary, and yet, as I have demonstrated, this transformation of museum content has not been accompanied by a transformation in museum structure or function. Accordingly, this chapter is about one of the most significant consequences of the art museum's exclusive focus on content rather than structural change as a means of social adaptation: the development of what Schwarz (2016) calls a "symbolic economy of authenticity," which critics argue has fractured the Left (Lilla 2017; Luce 2017).

According to Bourdieu, domination always requires the complicity of the dominated, although it is never truly voluntary (nor is it as simple as Marx's "false consciousness"). Instead,

³⁹ The 1993 Whitney Biennial became "infamous" by offending many white male critics. Saltz and Corbett described it as "white male critics gone wild," elaborating:

The *Times*' Michael Kimmelman opined, "I hate the show," blasting the art as "grim," "political sloganeering and self-indulgent self-expression." Robert Hughes said the show was "a fiesta of whining" and "preachy and political." *Newsweek* detected the "aroma of cultural reparations." Jed Perl thought the show was calculated to get "white male critics into ... [a] sweat of guilt and remorse and accommodation." Hilton Kramer — referring to the biennial's one African-American curator, Thelma Golden — said there was an "awful logic in having Ms. Golden on the curatorial team." Even *The Village Voice* raged that the art was angry, portentous, condescending, groaningly didactic, hateful. (Saltz and Corbett 2016)

complicity is embodied, and affected by categories of perception, classification, and evaluation imposed on the dominated against their interests. Symbolic violence occurs in all mechanisms through which the dominated contribute to their own subjugation by “buying into” the arbitrary axiological standards under which they are deemed unworthy, and which manifest in desires, emotions, sentiments, bodily reactions, and judgements that work against their own self-worth and interest (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu 1990; Bourdieu 1996). Bourdieu’s observations help to explain the obstinacy of imbecile institutions, which, as I described in Chapter 1, disserve the public and yet seem to most people to be eternal, unchanging, inevitable, and right (Veblen [1914] 2011, 28)

As I explained in Chapter 2, in the pre-modern cosmology preceding the French Revolution, it was the prince’s authority that people viewed as natural, along with related intergroup social hierarchies. With modernity, however—and with the assistance of art museums—the bourgeoisie instituted allegedly universal and unbiased evaluation standards, along with the promises of social mobility and equal opportunity. Of course, the subjectivity idealized in modernity was not universal, but was biased towards the existing dominant class and to the requirements of social and economic liberalism. Following Bourdieu, Schwarz (2016) argues that the ideology of natural gifts and merit, necessary for capitalism, then encouraged members of the dominated groups to seek status in terms of the hegemonic evaluation standards. This same ideology aroused feelings of shame when those who failed to attain this status misrecognized the structural source of failure, and attributed it to their innate inadequacy as individuals. Schwarz describes this shift from pre-modern to modern cosmologies as a shift from simple to complex domination, and from honour to esteem (Ibid.).

Modernity was symbolized and diffused in part through modern art. The unfolding of “progress” through art museum exhibitions was a process of attuning a variegated citizenry to the values of liberalism and capitalism until, at the height of Modernism, these values were finally naturalized and perceived as having a stable, objective existence. It was only at this point that “legitimate” culture could grant value “indiscriminately” to anyone who had properly acquired the modern values. And it was at this point—following the Pop Art movement, and during the foment of late 1960s and early 1970s counter-culture, which included protests against the elitism, racism, and sexism of museums by artists and cultural activists—that the art museum began to consider challenges to the standards of modernism. The struggle for social justice, waged in

terms of cultural politics and a social-deficit model of class, race, and gender, began to unfold in the museum as well as in academia and other institutions, such as the media.

As a result, the forms and subjects of contemporary art began to be profoundly reshaped by “the new cultural politics of difference,” as Cornell West named them in his epoch-making 1990 essay. In his paper—first published in the peer-reviewed academic journal, *October* (MIT Press), which specializes in politically engaged visual art theory and criticism—West identified a revolution in art-making and criticism:

Distinctive features of the new cultural politics of difference are to trash the monolith in the name of diversity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity; to reject the abstract, general, and universal in light of the concrete, specific, and particular; and to historicize, contextualize, and pluralize by highlighting the contingent, provisional, variable, tentative, shifting and changing. Needless to say, these gestures are not new in the history of criticism or art, yet what makes them novel—along with the cultural politics they produce—is how and what constitutes difference, the weight and gravity it is given in representation, and the way in which highlighting issues like exterminism, empire, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, nation, nature, and region at this historical moment acknowledges some discontinuity and disruption from previous forms of cultural critique. To put it bluntly, the new cultural politics of difference consists of creative responses to the precise circumstances of our present moment – especially those of marginalized First World agents who shun degraded self-representations, articulating instead their sense of the flow of history in light of the contemporary terrors, anxieties, and fears of highly commercialized North Atlantic capitalist cultures (with their escalating xenophobias against people of color, Jews, women, gays, lesbians, and the elderly). (West 1990, 93-4)

With its abstracted, depoliticizing interior spaces and its consumer model of culture (produced for the public within silos of near-Fordist hierarchies), the art museum became a perfect host for these cultural politics. It is important to note that the entry of identity-based art to the museum, which began with the rise of Neoliberalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, coincided with a larger shift that took place in democracies possessing large new immigrant populations, such as Canada. This was a shift away from the framework of multiculturalism as a key national narrative of coherence and unification, and toward the embrace of “diversity.” This shift was due in part to the phenomenon of economic globalization, which saw the expansion of economic activities across national boundaries and the transnational fragmentation of economic

activities (Campbell 2004), and required a strategic, outward-looking cosmopolitanism that supported the “meaner, harder logic of competition on a global scale” (K. Mitchell 2003). But it was also precipitated by the AIDS crisis, the right-wing policies of President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, rapid gentrification, and increasing urban crime, issues that artists felt strongly about and wanted to address, and did so by engaging with political debates around markers of cultural differentiation such as race, class, sexuality, and religion. Early practitioners in the US included Glenn Ligon, Lorna Simpson, Carrie Mae Weems, David Hammons, James Luna, Nan Goldin, and Jimmie Durham. In Canada, Paul Wong, Jamelie Hassan, Rebecca Belmore, and Edward Poitras are well-known early practitioners in this expansive field.

There is much to celebrate in the successful challenges to the art museum canon that this and following generations of artists have wrought. Artists’ struggles for recognition of underrepresented histories, cultures, and values contributed to the successful efforts of activists to expand human rights to groups and individuals who had long been previously denied, and helped to nourish and grow a tolerance for difference in North American society. Rorty acknowledged this accomplishment in his 1997 book, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*. He noted that scholars of cultural studies (whom he called the “Foucauldian Left” or the “academic Left”)—including Frederic Jameson, Terry Eagleton, and West himself—have produced “socially useful” work (Ibid., 46). Most importantly, the cultural Left was very successful in decreasing the amount of brutality or “sadism” in American society. Rorty wrote, “The adoption of attitudes which the Right sneers at as ‘politically correct’ has made America a far more civilized society than it was thirty years ago. Except for a few Supreme Court decisions, there has been little change for the better in our country’s laws since the Sixties. But the change in the way we treat one another is enormous” (Ibid., 81). He also lauded university campuses as centres of social protest, writing that if universities “ever cease to be such centers, they will lose both their self-respect and the respect of the learned world” (Ibid., 82).

Rorty cautioned, however, that the battles fought and won within the field of cultural politics, including the art museum, have come at a cost. That is, the Left’s focus on cultural politics since the late 1960s has detracted from traditional labour issues such as unions, minimum wage, and childcare for the working class – what he referred to as “real politics.” In so doing, the Left has become largely “spectatorial and retrospective,” and cynical about humanism

and the possibilities of incremental reform (Ibid., 14). Rorty noted that during the same period in which “socially accepted sadism has steadily diminished, economic inequality and economic insecurity has steadily increased” (Ibid., 83), and he particularly opposed the “cultural Left” referring to themselves as Marxists, arguing that most scholars from the cultural Left who refer to the current socio-economic system as “late capitalism” typically do not think much about “what the alternatives to a market economy might be, or about how to combine political freedom with centralized economic decision-making” (Ibid., 78-9). This has resulted in a “dark side” to the story of the successes of the post-Sixties cultural Left. He warned—in 1997!—that if the Left did not resume its *political* struggles, “the nonsuburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking around for a strongman to vote for – someone willing to assure them that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesman, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots” (Ibid., 90-91). Of course, we have now seen that strongman elected in Trump, and we are witnessing a return of what Rorty termed “sadism.”⁴⁰

As the Left’s preoccupation with cultural politics has continued, and the gains from capitalism have become even more unequally divided, the Left has not simply lost its “nonsuburban” adherents. Twenty years after Rorty published his book (and a decade after his death), members of the dominated classes within the Left now turn against one other with increasing frequency and hostility. According to Schwarz, we have entered a third distinct era of symbolic violence, a new symbolic-discursive structure that continues to prevent members of the dominated groups from attaining socially recognized value, while relying on their own, unwitting

⁴⁰ Rorty predicted that upon this strongman’s election, the following would take place:

One thing that is very likely to happen is that the gains made in the past forty years by black and brown Americans, and by homosexuals, will be wiped out. Jocular contempt for women will come back into fashion. The words ‘nigger’ and ‘kike’ will once again be heard in the workplace. All the sadism which the academic Left has tried to make unacceptable to its students will come flooding back. All the resentment which badly educated Americans feel about having their manners dictated to them by college graduates will find an outlet.

But such a renewal of sadism will not alter the effects of selfishness. For after my imagined strongman takes charge, he will quickly make his peace with the international super-rich, just as Hitler made his with the German industrialists. He will invoke the glorious memory of the Gulf War to provoke military adventures which will generate short-term prosperity. He will be a disaster for the country and the world. People will wonder why there was so little resistance to his inevitable rise. Where, they ask, was the American Left? Why was it only rightists like Buchanan who spoke to the workers about the consequences of globalization? Why could not the Left channel the mounting rage of the newly dispossessed?” (Rorty 1997, 90-91).

collaboration. This is the “symbolic economy of authenticity,” wherein individuals are granted or denied recognition as socially and morally worthy, depending on the perceived authenticity of their lifestyle and conduct (Schwarz 2016, 2).

Over the last 50 years, in tandem with the rise of individualism and the loss of connection to traditional cultures in liberal democracies, “authenticity” has become an increasingly significant source of dignity, social value, and moral orientation. Sociologists note the dubious ontic status of this ethic, which demands that individuals “find out their true nature, emotions, and beliefs and stick to them; act spontaneously and uncalculatedly; and remain true to themselves despite external pressures to conform to social norms and temptations to ‘sell out’, i.e. subordinate authenticity to instrumental rationality” (Ibid., 3). A major problem in the application of this principle is that not all lifestyles or forms of conduct are open to everyone. For example, when middle-class Blacks in the US or UK display middle-class preferences and tastes, they are often blamed for “acting white” or being inauthentic – even if their families have been middle class for two or three generations (Ibid.). Schwarz writes that “the authenticity ethic defends old ethnic divisions-of-labour and unequal distributions of styles and identities in those liberal societies that formally reject overt ethno-racial discrimination” (Ibid., 8). His point is that the symbolic economy of authenticity permits members of the dominant class to police ethnic aspirants to the middle class, oscillating between contradicting accusations against the dominated: “either they are being too authentic, or not authentic enough” (Ibid., italics removed). However, accusations are also leveled within and between the dominated groups.

We have seen this in recent events such as the 2016 Black Lives Matter (BLM)/Gay Pride conflict in Toronto, when two dozen BLM activists blocked the parade mid-event, demanding that Toronto Pride (the world’s largest Pride event) allocate more funding for organizations representing people of colour, hire more racialized staff, and ban police floats and information booths from future events (Bascaramurty and Andrew-Gee 2017). Later, at Pride’s annual general meeting, some Black Pride members tried to argue for the benefits of including Toronto Police representatives, but they were heckled by BLM supporters and not permitted to speak (Ibid.). BLM protesters and their allies have contended, quite correctly, that Pride has lost its origins as a protest movement, that the negative relationship between Black people and the police is clear, and that this impacts queer people of colour. They have also argued that if the queer community wants to welcome racialized LGBTQ people, it must reject the official

structure of the police (Ibid.). On the other side, some Black gay activists and gay police officers have countered, compellingly, that queer members of the police force continue to face stigma and ought to be welcomed and celebrated at the parade, and that collaboration and mutual understanding between Pride and the police should be encouraged. Orville Lloyd Douglass, a Black gay activist and poet, asked in a CBC opinion piece why BLM did not choose to target homophobia in the Black community, which, in his view, poses a greater threat to gay Black men than do the police (Douglas 2017). The problem with these arguments is not that debate and dissent should not take place within or between marginalized communities. Rather, it is that constructive dialogue about a collective future seems for the most part to have been replaced by questions of who has the “right” to an opinion on the issues and whether dissenters (such as Douglass) are “authentic” representatives of an identitarian perspective. Very few commentators have focused on the arguably larger issue of Pride’s commercialization and heavy reliance on corporate funding, which is possibly the greatest barrier to transformation by the grassroots (Tyszkiewicz 2017).

Within art museums, similar scenarios have unfolded. For example, in 2017 upon the opening of artist Jimmie Durham’s retrospective exhibition at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (a show whose tour schedule includes the Walker, the Whitney, and the Remai Modern), a small group of Cherokee visual arts professionals protested Durham’s right to self-identify as a person of Cherokee descent, based on his lack of enrollment in a federally recognized tribe (Ellegood 2017; Boucher 2017). The protesters claimed to have proven the artist’s ethnic fraud, presenting a genealogy to the exhibition curator, Anne Ellegood (Ellegood, Ibid.). Ellegood noted that the genealogy was incomplete, with several ancestors “unknown,” and that many of the family names in Durham’s family tree also appear in Cherokee registries (Ellegood, Ibid.). Later, it was revealed that the genealogy had been produced by Gene Norris, the senior genealogist at the Cherokee Heritage Center, who has since gone on record stating that he produced the document as a favour to a friend, spending only a “couple hours” of his personal time searching records on Ancestry.com. He said that to prove anything he would need considerably more time and would also have to be paid (Norris, quoted in Slenske 2017). Durham, who was born in 1940 and hails from Arkansas and Texas, began his art career long before there was possibility of strategic advantage in claiming an “Other” identity in the art world. Prior to working as an artist, he spent a decade advancing the cause of Indigenous people

through full-time work with the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC). He has long discussed his family's historic refusal to register in the Dawes' Roll, a decision that was not uncommon at the time (Ellegood 2017), and he has expressed his opposition to the Cherokee government (Durham 2005). Despite the well-known complexities of Cherokee identity,⁴¹ when the controversy broke in 2017, Indigenous artists on social media were very quick to pounce on the alleged ethnic fraud. Within a short period of time, even non-Indigenous commentators, some who admitted next to no prior knowledge of Durham's work or history, were publicly "mourning Jimmie Durham" (D'Souza 2017). The Comanche scholar and curator Paul Chaat Smith, who worked closely with Durham at AIM and the IITC, and who remains a staunch defender of his colleague, later remarked in a lecture at the Walker, "I'll say I have a new appreciation for that amusing line about moral outrage being the millennial's drug of choice. Wow, so much passion. So much certainty" (P. C. Smith 2017, pgh. 3). He continued, "Anyone who knows Eastern Oklahoma and Western Arkansas knows there are a great many people who consider themselves Cherokee—not Cherokee descendants, but Cherokee—who are not citizens" (Ibid., pgh. 10). He expressed confusion about the younger generation's rigid understanding of Indigenous identity, with its "lofty sentiments about stomp grounds and sovereignty" (Ibid., pgh. 14) and their vetting of research with tribal governments. "Call me old-school," he said, "but I believe artists and scholars should operate with a degree of skepticism toward state authority" (Ibid., pgh. 11). He went on to describe his own disinterest in Comanche politics, despite his status as an enrolled Comanche, arguing: "Identity is not knowledge" (Ibid., pgh. 12). And finally, he noted that current standards of identity policing ask "far too much" of art museum curators, who cannot possibly be expected to become "experts on the intricacies of tribal enrollment" (Ibid., pgh. 13).⁴²

⁴¹ Thomas King provides a detailed account of the complexities of Cherokee identity, and also explores Durham's relationship to Cherokee tribes, in *The Inconvenient Indian* (Toronto: Penguin Random House Doubleday Canada, 2012).

⁴² Durham, for his part, took the accusations in stride. Michael Slenske interviewed him a few months into the controversy:

"They want to disown me," says Durham with a laugh. "I have a good friend in Canada that says this is a plague that is happening among all Indian communities in Canada and the U.S. that has nothing to do with tradition or authenticity, but then calls down on tradition and authenticity as though it were the law. So we join in our own oppression because it feels good. It's a strange complicated setup where we participate in our own colonization as if it were freedom instead of colonization."

Related to the fixation on cultural authenticity is the question of cultural appropriation. Charges of appropriation are now leveled regularly at artists and art museums for producing and presenting works that do not authentically “belong” to them. For example, in 2017 the white artist Dana Schutz was accused of “transmut(ing) Black suffering into profit and fun” after the Whitney displayed her painting of a disfigured, dead victim of racist violence, Emmet Till, *Open Casket* (2106) (protestor Hannah Black quoted in Muñoz-Alonso 2017). In a less publicized case, protestors also tried to shut down a Boston Museum of Fine Arts exhibition in 2016, because it allowed visitors to try on a kimono – the museum was accused by a small group of students of “cultural appropriation” and “racist imperialism” (Young 2016). And in 2007, at St. Mary’s University Art Gallery, students protested the Acadian artist Léopold Foulem’s display of ceramic recreations of historic and popular mass produced ceramics, due to the inclusion of a “Black Santa Coffee Pot,” one of six ceramic Santa figures on display (another had Mickey Mouse ears, another resembled an Incan vessel, etc.). Protesters believed the coffee pot to be racist and threatening, in no small part because the artist presenting it was white. While they remained unwilling to interpret the piece differently, even in the context of the larger exhibition of Santa-themed vessels and conversations with the gallery’s director, they did not demand the exhibition be shut down (Flynn 2007). While some claims may have more validity than others, the general proliferation of such accusations demonstrates, on the part of the Left (at least, the “cultural Left”) a vexing conflation of political community with notions of defined identity. As Rorty and several more recent scholars have noted, this fundamental misrecognition now threatens to implode the Left – that is, if it hasn’t already (Worsham and Olson 1999; Mouffe 2013; Lilla 2017; Luce 2017).

Having come of age as an arts professional during the rise of cultural politics, and having studied under and worked for or with several of the artists and curators who contributed to the development of identitarian art,⁴³ I admit to being somewhat chastened by Rorty’s perspective on the “cultural Left” and by own complicity with the art museum sector in contributing to the crisis in democracy. I view the art museum’s role in this matter to be particularly “imbecilic” and

⁴³ As a student in New York City in the early 1990s, I worked for the independent curator Simon Watson, who represented Lorna Simpson, Gary Simmons, and Lyle Ashton Harris, as well as for painter Marlene McCarty, a member of the AIDS activist group Gran Fury. I have also maintained a close relationship with Jimmie Durham since the mid-1990s, and have curated several solo and group exhibitions dealing with identitarian politics in Canada, Australia, and Italy (Note: I am not the “friend in Canada” Durham refers to in the *Vulture* article, quoted in the footnote above).

depressing. As participants in the field of identitarian art, we thought we were contributing to democratic reform. However, our goal of social reform has not meaningfully transformed the institution—neither the boards and staff, nor the museum’s functions and priorities. Instead, our efforts now seem to have given way to utopic visions and the penalizing of nonconformists through acts of shaming and excommunication, resulting in incessant fracturing and grievance.

The art museum could have chosen to address inequality in other ways. In Chapters 6 and 7, I described existing and potential art museum programs that promote equity for disadvantaged communities and individuals. However, these programs are participatory, require sustained relationships, and typically are located within the communities being served, rather than inside the museum. In most cases, the art museum has left these activities to under-resourced education departments that do not have the means to conduct the significant outreach required. The art museum has not better equipped these departments because it is not in the interests of the art museum to transform. It is swayed very little by the “voice” or “exit” of would-be reformers or the public at large, as its financial success relies not on these supposed “customers” but on wealthy patrons seeking status and funding agencies devoted to standards of “excellence.” By focusing on content rather than structural reform, the museum has assisted the discourses and forms of art to change, along the way providing opportunities and benefits to a relatively small number of artists who would have been ignored a few decades ago. The art by these individuals does not serve the investment purposes of collectors as well as the works by many white male modern and contemporary artists,⁴⁴ but it serves them nonetheless. Along with the late Haitian-American artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose iconic 1982 *Untitled* painting sold for US\$110.5 million in October 2017 (Spellings 2017), and whose total auction volume sat US\$2.8 billion at that time, a handful of Black artists sell their work at very high prices, including Mark Bradford (auction volume US\$106.6 million in 2017); Glenn Ligon (auction volume US\$78.4 million in 2017); and Julie Mehretu (auction volume US\$74.4 million in 2017) (Bess 2017). These four artists were in the top 10 artists at auction by volume in 2016, and join seven other Black artists among the top 100: Kara Walker, Rashid Johnson, Ellen Gallagher, Kehinde Wiley, Mickalene Thomas, Theaster Gates, and Nick Cave (Boucher 2016). Yet the “revolution” in museum

⁴⁴ The top ten most expensive living American artists in 2017 included eight white men (Jeff Koons #1, Jasper Johns #2, Ed Ruscha #3, Christopher Wool #4, Robert Ryman #5, Frank Stella #6, Brice Marden #7, and Richard Prince #9), one Black man (David Hammons, #10) and one white woman (Cady Noland, #8) (Embuscado 2017). No Indigenous artists made any lists.

content has not transformed the museum; rather, it has masked business-as-usual in the museum boardrooms, the entrenchment of private power in decision-making processes, and the waning diversity of visitors. It has also substituted for and supplanted activities that could have helped redistribute actual power and resources among citizens and communities. On the creative side, these would include a greater focus on education, or collaborative artmaking projects that give voice to citizen concerns and interests, or artists-in-residence in communities. On the structural side, this would include shifting the terms of board membership to include a much wider variety of citizen representatives, hiring strategically so that staff better represent communities, and elevating the educational focus of the museum through a re-thinking of required staff skill-sets and promotion of educators.

I believe that if the museum were to transform, university training for museum workers would follow suit. Indeed, it is the museum's elevation of the curatorial function to that of *auteur*, on par with or exceeding the status of the artist, which has led to the proliferation of graduate programs in curating in North America over the last fifteen years (Moser 2008). These programs tend to focus heavily on art history, theory, and criticism, incorporating a history of exhibition-making. At one of North America's best-known curatorial schools, Bard College, students can also choose from a large selection of electives that include "Appropriation and its Discontents," "The Catalogue as Site," "Exhibiting Feminism: the 1970s," "Intellectual Property in an Open Source Culture," "Reconsidering Institutional Critique" and more (Bard College 2017). Courses on working with or for diverse audiences, the public role and educational function of the art museum, or the relationship between curators and educators do not exist. My argument is not that such topics should supplant existing studies, but that curatorial programs are inadequately preparing curators for the work of public value creation if they do not incorporate such topics.

My remaining questions are thus: Without significant institutional transformation, can the imperative of public engagement ever cease to be mere rhetoric? And if the answer is "no," what are the alternatives?

I believe, as do others, that radical changes to art museum policy are required for the museum to transform – not to save the art museum from "ruin" or "collapse," as some critics have warned (Worts 2003; Janes 2009), nor to "preserve" it as a space for people to come to be "enlightened" (Robertson 1972), but to ensure that as a public institution, the art museum builds

public value and does not detract from it, all the while slowly reverting to its prior palatial function. As Mouffe explains, even if we are unable to improve upon our democracy, we must at least defend “this miserable part of democracy that we’ve got at the moment against the danger of the extreme right” (in Worsham and Olson 1999, 191-2). In Chapter 10, I discuss the role for policy in this endeavour.

CHAPTER 10: THE ROLE FOR POLICY

Robert R. Janes observes, “Institutional change in museums doesn’t start with a slow musing dissatisfaction. It typically starts with a shock, usually external, often involving money” (Janes 2013, xvi). These words are found in the preface to a major case study of organizational transformation, which, as CEO, Janes undertook at the Glenbow Museum, in Calgary, Alberta, from 1990 to 2000. In his detailed analysis, he advocates a horizontal and participatory type of organization, as I have in this dissertation, and he recognizes that “museum health does not mean growth” (Ibid., 318). He also notes the growing prominence of “plutocrats” in the funding and direction-setting of North American museums, and he warns against “government by the wealthy” (Ibid., 331). By contrast, I have argued that art museums have always had “government by the wealthy,” and that these governors have used the institution—often but not always wittingly—to generate value that accrues to them and to others like them more than to the broad and variegated citizenry they are supposed to serve. As such, the trustees, directors, and curators of art museums have contributed in small and big ways to the mounting democratic deficit now afflicting most liberal democratic nations. I have further argued that in the context of this democratic deficit, public art museums must aim at strengthening democracy through pragmatic structural transformations aimed at public value creation. This is not because the current decline in public engagement threatens the viability of art museums. In fact, given private and corporate interests in art collections as status symbols, as marketing machines, and as financial investments, the democratic deficit may not threaten art museums at all. As social inequalities deepen, the wealthy will sustain art museums as the preserve of elites. The question is rather how to put the art museum into the service of the public, or how to give it a robust democratic function. As is becoming increasingly apparent in the United States, the challenges facing democratic politics today are basic and bleak: to limit authoritarian order and even prevent civil war (Mouffe 2013). To do this, democratic nations must provide institutions that permit conflicts to take what Mouffe describes as an “agonistic” form, that is, where “opponents are not enemies but adversaries among whom exists a conflictual consensus (Ibid., xii). Because this is an urgent project, I argue that we cannot wait for art museums to experience external shocks before attempting to reform them on a case-by-case basis.

In her study of the history of the US's National Endowment for the Arts, Alice Goldfarb Marquis advocates a radical solution for the funding of all arts (not just art museums) (Marquis 1995). She suggests that the national funding body for American art be abolished and replaced with a new system that subsidizes the hiring of professional arts managers or "public impresarios" for every locality or neighbourhood in the United States. These impresarios would be responsible for keeping an inventory of all spaces in which exhibitions and other cultural events take place, including galleries, church halls, playgrounds, nightclubs, prisons, and more. The impresarios would book these spaces for anybody who wanted to use them, see to necessary security, insurance, and bookkeeping, and publicize all events. Admission fees to the art events would be set by the artists, and individuals would pay to attend. Schools, welfare centres, senior centres, and other venues would distribute vouchers to low-income clients who could use them to attend whatever selection of events they preferred, and artists paid in vouchers would return them to the funding agency for reimbursement.

Marquis believes her proposed system would depoliticize the funding of art and allow new artists and organizations a "chance to test their talents before a live audience, largely free from the tyranny of a few critics" (Ibid., 255). She argues that her restructuring "would cost no more than what public agencies are now spending on the minority of arts they support" (Ibid., 253-4) and that it would result in "the creative energies of literally thousands of talented artists [being] poured into entertaining, enlightening, and captivating men and women who previously had been cultural bystanders" (Ibid., 254). Existing organizations would have to adapt, or die. Her new system would be more "promiscuous" than the current cultural ecology, in which artistic disciplines are kept in silos, and where "cutting edge" art is typically "fashionable in an isolated academic milieu but often is too repellent, baffling, or boring to interest more than a handful of insiders" (Ibid., 252). Her plan, she says, would result in "vital crossovers between popular and elite, low and high, common and refined, commercial and nonprofit" (Ibid., 257).

Marquis's proposal presents obvious logistical and political complications: Who supervises the work of the impresarios to ensure that neighbourhoods are served well? How would existing arts organizations respond to total funding cuts? Such worries, however, are not sufficient cause to reject the proposal outright. It has an intuitive, populist appeal, and addresses some of the problems I have identified, such as elitism and insularity in the professional arts and the centralization of "official culture." However, I must reject Marquis's model on conceptual

grounds. First, the system is a consumer model that conflates aggregate private value with public value, as artists and artistic events are rewarded (with government assistance) based on popularity alone. Next, it neglects the question of power, as it relates to both artistic production and distribution, since it is predicated on the nation's neighborhoods having relatively equal resources, including facilities. Yet, as Murray (2012) demonstrates, North American neighbourhoods have never been more segregated or more unequal. While the system addresses "diversity," it does little or nothing to address how conflicts, such as differences in cultural values or artistic responses to current affairs, along with questions of "appropriateness" versus "censorship," would be mediated. And finally, it fails to address who would be seen to have the skills to be an impresario. Would it be the same people who currently lead art museums and other cultural institutions? How would impresarios be selected and trained with an eye to representational diversity and equity creation?

Finally, the reality of pluralism, which Marquis's proposal recognizes, does not inevitably lead to a democratic politics. It can just as easily result in political fragmentation, which itself can lead to an authoritarian politics. Hirschman noted that democratic institutions require the right balance of "signals" from the public, between "exit" (the first alert that something is failing, and the economic choice) and "voice" (the political choice, often protest, criticism, or dissent) (Hirschman 1970). Marquis' model offers a surfeit of exit potential; there are no incentives for people to come together as a public, to work across and through differences as citizens. Public funding strategies for the arts must recognize the existence of both pluralism and conflict, and ensure that we have institutions that accommodate both at the same time. There is no ideal balance; it is a matter of pragmatic idealism, effort, and vigilance. The dangerous utopian attitude that condemns individuals on the basis of single acts of dominance or aggression must also be abandoned, which requires that we remain loyal to the ideal of the public as something distinct from the aggregate of individuals. For the public to exist, human complexity and contradiction must be acknowledged – in fact, we must heed a lesson from the visual arts and learn to better tolerate ambiguity.

In a 1999 interview, Mouffe stated:

"If you want a pluralist society in which there is going to be the possibility for people to express a form of dissensus, then you need to create some kind of consensus on the value of pluralism, of pluralism as an axiological principle.

This means that certain people who want to establish a theocratic kind of society are not going to be able to; their voice is not going to be accepted. So in order to have a pluralist society, you cannot have total pluralism because total pluralism would mean that the enemies of pluralism are going to be able to destroy the basis of that society.” (Worsham and Olson 1999, 175)

Institutional stability always entails some sort of hegemony, but institutional stability is required for society to achieve many necessary things, including things that no one wants to pay for. In the field of economics, the necessities nobody wants to pay for are called “public goods” and are defined as being “non-excludable” and “non-rivalrous.” They are typically thought of as tangible things, such as fresh air, national security, lighthouses, and street lighting. But democracy requires the presence of other public goods as well, and these are the characteristics and values required to create public value, as I listed in Chapter 5. They include justice, fairness, trust, legitimacy, equity, ethos, and accountability. Always, but especially in this era of growing democratic deficit, public institutions, including the art museum, must be designed to instill these public values as the basis of our citizenship, while also leaving room for dissensus. In Mouffe’s agonistic approach, “the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted without any possibility of a final reconciliation” (Mouffe 2013, 92). This has important implications for artistic practices and for the operations of the art museum.

Mouffe states: “From the point of view of the theory of hegemony, artistic practices play a role in the constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order, or in its challenging, and this is why they necessarily have a political dimension. The political, for its part, concerns the symbolic ordering of social relations, and this is where its aesthetic dimension resides” (Ibid., 91). For her, the crucial question concerns the possible *forms* of critical art, which to me entails also the structures, practices, and processes by which citizens come to engage with artistic productions. To this end, Mouffe writes: “The way public spaces are envisaged has important consequences for artistic and cultural practices because those who foster the creation of agonistic public spaces will conceive critical art in a very different way than those whose aim is the creation of consensus” (Ibid., 92). The concept of artistic “excellence” aims to create consensus. The art museum must avoid this to remake itself as a public space, yet funding bodies for the arts—even those that have dropped the term “excellence” from their lexicon, such as the Canada Council—continue to prioritize this value above all others, both in their granting criteria and in their composition of peer assessment committees for adjudication purposes. In the two new

operational grants available to Canadian art museums, the subjective categories of “Artistic Merit” (Explore and Create grant, for museums with revenue under \$2 million) and “Artistic Leadership” (Engage and Sustain grant, for museums with revenues of over \$2 million) count for 50 percent of the assessments. Not only are these terms both “excellence” by other names, the delegation of “merit” to smaller organizations and “leadership” to larger organizations continues to promote a centralized, top-down, and elitist concept of culture. What’s more, a second category worth 30 percent of the total score is, for organizations with revenue under \$2 million, an inward focused “impact” from which the public is excluded: it is “the potential of proposed projects to: contribute to the organization’s development (and) advance artistic practice.” Only the largest organizations, those with revenue over \$2 million, are asked to demonstrate “engagement,” which is worth 30 percent of the total score and is defined as:

the impact of [the] organization’s programming and strategies for deepening relationships with a broad and diverse public; a commitment to reflecting— through artistic programming, organizational make-up and development of [the organization’s] publics – the diversity of [its] geographic community or region, particularly with regards to the inclusion and engagement of Aboriginal Peoples, culturally diverse groups, people who are Deaf or have disabilities, and official language minority communities; [and the organization’s] contribution to leadership in [its] artistic practice or the arts sector.⁴⁵

Given that this category is worth 30 percent of an organization’s overall assessment, it is possible that it will function as an incentive for larger organizations to make efforts to improve their public engagement. Whether it is probable is another question. So long as the balance of power is held by the same class of elites, “engagement” will likely continue to be interpreted primarily as the requirement to reflect diverse identities through programming – particularly in exhibitions. The continued underlining of difference and corrections to historical misrepresentations will not create the engaged public that democracy requires.

Speaking directly to the way that cultural politics have evolved in the Neoliberal era, Mouffe states that critical artistic practices should embrace the agonistic view and “not aspire to lift a supposedly false consciousness so as to reveal the ‘true reality’”. This would be completely

⁴⁵ Grant applications can be viewed on pages of the Canada Council website: [<http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/explore-and-create/research-and-creation>] and [<http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/engage-and-sustain>].

at odds with the anti-essentialist premises of the theory of hegemony, which rejects the very idea of a ‘true consciousness’” (Ibid., 93). The transformation of political identities to strengthen or preserve democracy cannot result from rationalist appeals. Instead, it will come about through institutional efforts, including critical art practices, that inscribe citizens in processes of imagining and bringing to existence alternatives to the current “post-political” order, creating in people the desire for change (Ibid., 92-3). She cites John Dewey, affirming that the role of art is to evoke emotions and imagination, to allow people to participate in new experiences, and to establish “forms of relationships that are different from the ones (they) are used to” (Ibid., 97). She argues specifically for a role for art museums in this project, which is to subvert the ideological framework of consumer society, that predicated on the isolated, atomistic individual. This will require a profound alteration of the museum’s function, and the “recovery,” as she puts it, of the art museum’s role as an educational institution and as a constituent part of the public sphere (Ibid., 100-2). Mouffe is echoed by Dewdney et. al, who, in their case study of the role of the public at London’s Tate Gallery, make a plea for the art museum “to recognize and work with a greater and more open sense of the paradoxical present” and argue that “the most obvious way for the art museum to relinquish the constraint of the historical system of representation is to relocate the development of the audiences at the centre of its practices and to work with it on a grand scale” (Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh 2013, 8).⁴⁶ Art museums can encourage contact between different social movements, support the multiplication of public spaces, underline social antagonisms rather than cover them up under an idealized premise of diversity, and focus radically on local and regional histories. Mouffe does not use the term “public value” in her writings, but insists on a project of “radical democracy.” However, I believe her interests and ideas fall in line with the theories of certain public value scholars, including Talbot, Benington, and Bozeman. The roles she cites for art museums also align with strategies I observed at my four case study museums, and with the evidence for cultural value creation gathered in the AHRC study.

Practically speaking, how could transformation of the art museum be enacted on institutional and field levels, rather than on an organizational case-by-case basis?

⁴⁶ While Bourdieu would likely not have disapproved of these recommendations, it is worth noting that Bourdieu was skeptical that changes to cultural policy, effected in isolation instead of in concert with broader changes to educational policy, could have any meaningful, democratizing effect, since in his assessment the education system in industrial societies also legitimizes class inequalities (Sullivan 2002).

First, policies pertaining to the art museum must be redesigned to prioritize the institution's educational function rather than its showcasing of "artistic excellence." Greater emphasis must be given to the quality of the museum's frontline services, to the number and quality of the museum's relationships with local communities and organizations, including schools, and to the ways that public voice is encouraged and permitted to shape organizational priorities. The policy redesign should take place in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including educators and representatives from marginalized communities.

Peer assessment committees, who assess organizations and make decisions on the allocation of funding, must be diversified to include educators, social activists, artists, and a range of community leaders. Indeed, the presence of traditional peer assessors—the curators/directors—may not be necessary or even desirable.

As Two Rivers Gallery has already recognized, the funding of art museums must become more public and less private in order to permit dissensus or genuine community debate. This means that the ability of organizations to self-generate revenue should not be encouraged or rewarded if it is achieved through compromising corporate sponsorships or through the domination of an individual private patron.

Boards and staff at art museums must also be diversified in ways that move beyond the goal of "proportional representation" of racialized people (which in any case most art museums have yet to achieve). The latter goal typically results in tokenism or in the isolation of the "representational" individuals. Instead, museums should heed Jane Jacob's warning that "(c)ultural xenophobia is a frequent sequel to a society's decline from cultural vigor" (Jacobs 2004, 17) and seek diversification not solely for the purposes of equity but to alter and reinvigorate the institution. The Art Gallery of Mississauga provides an excellent model for art museums seeking to harness the innovation and energy that comes from people and groups problem-solving across cultural differences.

Institutional hierarchies should be significantly flattened and silos of responsibility abolished to the greatest degree possible. At the same time, the educator's role should be elevated, by which I mean art museums must hire individuals with backgrounds in education and community development for the most senior, strategic positions. Funding bodies can encourage this process: assessment committees will want to scrutinize organizational charts and the CVs of

employees, along with the museums' statements of vision and values, as closely as they currently inspect exhibition programs.

As the number, kind, quality, and duration of partnerships and collaborations is given greater focus in processes of organizational evaluation, funding bodies should likewise increase the number of grants they provide to artists working "in communities." For a limited time, they should make such grants available to organizations receiving operational funding, eventually requiring all art museums to fund such programs as part of their regular operations.

Municipal governments also have a major role to play in policy development for art museums. Above all, cities need to be more realistic about the ability and desirability of art museums to function as economic drivers and tourist lures. Also, in most cases they should reject proposals to expand museums to meet the needs of growing populations, and aim instead to decentralize the museum's programming by developing satellite locations.

Universities and other training grounds for artists, curators, and arts administrators need to be enlisted in the transformation of art museums. Post-secondary fine arts curricula need to shift from the exclusive focus on studio practices to include mandatory studies in the politics and techniques of socially engaged art practices and public art commissions.⁴⁷ Curatorial training and museum studies programs should include introductory courses in the theories and practices of arts education, including Freirian praxis,⁴⁸ visitor studies, and interpretation, along with political theory and governance, cross-cultural communication, and urban planning.

More changes will be necessary, but the policy considerations listed above provide a sound starting point, and all are theoretically achievable. It is a question of will and incentive, which for over a hundred years have been in short supply.

⁴⁷ Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles provides a model for ways that BFA and MFA programs can be transformed, with its two-year MFA in Public Practice. See: [<https://www.otis.edu/social-practice-art>].

⁴⁸ In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire proposed a new relationship between teacher, student, and society, in which the learner is treated as a co-creator of knowledge. Praxis, as defined by Freire, is "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (Freire 1970, 126). Through praxis, oppressed people can acquire a critical understanding of their condition, and, with "teacher-students" and "students-teachers," work towards liberation.

The Imbecile Institution

As I indicated in Chapter 2, and illustrated in Figure 2.1, North American art museums have been criticized for their inadequate service to the public for more than a century. In his 1913 lecture entitled “The Gloom of the Museum,” which developed out of a newspaper editorial written in 1906, the librarian and art museum director John Cotton Dana derided the art museum’s tautological focus on objects and collections. He wrote:

“Today, museums of art are built to keep objects of art, and objects of art are bought to be kept in museums. As the objects seem to do their work if they are safely kept, and as museums seem to serve their purpose, the whole thing is as useful in the splendid isolation of a distant park as in the center of the life of the community which possesses it.” (Dana 1917, 44)

Dana was a social progressive and keen reader of Veblen, who was his exact contemporary.⁴⁹ He spent decades advocating for what he perceived as a necessary democratization of the art museum. In his view, this would entail the museum’s transformation into an “institute of visual education,” with a modernization of museum buildings, and a focus on hands-on learning, multi-ethnic, and local production.

Dana observed the connection between capitalism and the art museum. Borrowing explicitly from Veblen, Dana condemned the “character of the diversions and the conspicuous waste of the rich,” which inspired the new American “aristocracy” to invest heavily in works of art and antiques imported from Europe – especially the “peculiar sanctity of oil paint on canvas” (Ibid.). This resulted, he said, in a woeful under-investment in local cultural ecologies. “Were it to become the fashion to patronize American designers and craftsmen,” he wrote, “we would have a larger art demand in America; the supply would raise prices and wages; art study would be encouraged; more men [sic] of genius, skill, and training would come here from abroad; and we would begin our own renaissance” (Ibid., 46). Dana also denounced the power that elites and

⁴⁹ John Cotton Dana was born August 19, 1856 in Woodstock, Vermont, and died July 21, 1929 in Newark, New Jersey. He studied law at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, and passed the Colorado bar exam in 1883, before moving on to work as a director of libraries and museums. Thorstein Bunde Veblen was born July 30, 1857 in Cato, Wisconsin, and died on August 3, 1929 in Menlo Park, California. He studied economics and philosophy at Carleton College and John Hopkins University, and obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy at Yale University.

the small but lucrative art market had over an ostensibly public institution: “The kinds of objects . . . that the rich feel they must buy to give themselves a desired distinction are inevitably the kinds that they, as patrons and directors of museums, cause those museums to acquire” (Ibid., 47). He argued that art museums spent too much money on works of art that did little to either “entertain or instruct the community to an extent at all commensurate with (their) cost” (Ibid., 50). Instead, the works were primarily of academic and pecuniary interest, because they were “(1) old, (2) rare, (3) high in price, (4) a little different from all others, and (5) illustrate a change in method of work or in the fashion of their time” (Ibid., 56).

The architecture of American art museums, which followed the styles of European palaces and ancient temples, posed yet another problem. They were, Dana wrote, “the kind of museum building which now oppresses us” (Ibid., 49). Since these buildings required “open space about them to display their excellences,” the “donors, architects, trustees, and city fathers all agreed” to set them apart in distant parks with ample green space around them, rather than in city centres where the public could have conveniently visited. Many American art museums were built much larger than they needed to be, with the result that they were “so expensive to administer and to light and to heat that the managers can keep them open to the public only a small part of the hours when the public can best visit them” (Ibid. 51). All of this came as result of cities planning museums for “the advertising pamphlets of the board of trade” rather than the goal of meeting the broader community’s needs (Ibid., 50). Subsequently, art museums “are visited by a few” (Ibid., 51).

Dana made several explicit suggestions for art museum designers and planners of the future, about which he was rather optimistic. These were: 1) that art museums should be centrally located where the maximum number of people could reach them with a minimum expenditure of time and money, and also be open at convenient hours; 2) that the buildings should be large enough for their purposes, but no larger, constructed of materials best adapted to their forms, functions, and size; 3) that objects in museum collections should be easy to deaccession if, after a period of time, they “lose all effectiveness” or if the collections become unwieldy and unfocused; 4) that art museums should subordinate “oil paintings” to applied arts, that is, to the material adornments of everyday life which everyday people could afford or aspire to; 5) that art museums should classify and display their objects according to the knowledge and needs of their patrons, rather than their curators’; 6) that art museums should conceive of

themselves primarily as teaching institutions, with a focus on hands-on instruction or the visitor-as-maker; 7) that art museums form alliances with existing teaching agencies (public schools, colleges, universities, and art institutions of all kinds); 8) that a city's central art museum develop branch museums to meet the needs of expanding municipalities, rather than enlarging the central location; and 9) that museums make themselves more useful by partnering with non-museological organizations, lending works to universities and schools, and collaborating with them on lesson development (Ibid. 55-59).

In short, more than a century ago, Dana's observations about the art museum's structural barriers to public value creation were very much like those I have outlaid in this dissertation. He also anticipated most of the solutions that my case studies have explored. His criticisms and suggestions have been repeated and elaborated by many other notable critics since his day (including but not limited to: Hightower 1969; Wolfe 1975; Banfield 1984; Duncan 1995; Bourdieu 1984; Weil 2002b; Mouffe 2013; Janes 2013; and Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh 2013). Yet remarkably, save for a handful of organizations scattered across the continent, the problems of the art museum in 2017 remain the same as they were in 1906.

I have demonstrated in this dissertation the ways that the art museum's "imbecility" is tied up with the three main imbecile institutions identified by Veblen: 1) Patriarchy, which devalues the labour of social reproduction and glorifies acts of creative destruction; 2) neoclassical economics, which is built upon the concept of a world comprised of atomistic, selfish, and invidious individuals, and also made colonialism morally defensible; and 3) the university, which has produced generations of professionalized artists, complete with a highly specialized, theoretical language, whose work is severed from applied art, amateurism, cultural work, ornamentation, and other forms of art-making embedded in the everyday lives of regular people. Through the writings of O'Doherty and others, I have also explained how the isolation of the "white cube" gallery inside the art museum creates a space "where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values" (O'Doherty 1976, 14). The concept of a closed system is key to understanding the art museum's imbecility. Just as the collecting and preserving functions of the art museum results in a tautological measure of success, the white cube guarantees the success of the modern and contemporary art exhibited within it: "Not 'seeing is believing,' you ninny, 'but believing is seeing,'" (Wolfe 1974, 5). O'Doherty argued that the true meaning and function of modern art is its definition of the "space" of modernity, which is

realized most fully inside the white cube galleries of the art museum. This is a space of “undifferentiated potency” wherein contemporary society has cancelled its values “in name of an abstraction called ‘freedom’” (O’Doherty 1976, 38-39). It is the “empty place of power” (Lefort 1991; Mouffe 2000) where only certain types of individuals can find their place.

Finally, this “empty place” is why the art museum has not changed, because its alleged universality is a ruse. In fact, the art museum field is firmly controlled by elites who “believe” in art and its academic language, and who find themselves at ease within the empty space. University-trained artists, curators, and directors (most of whom are former curators or artists) both write the rules and vouchsafe for the rules’ legitimacy. The “closed system” is stable: its feedback mechanism is internal (Pierson 2004; Mahoney and Thelen 2010). For this reason, over the past century and a half, it has made only marginal adaptations to environmental changes without changing its core principles. Art museums imagine that their current remove from the political imperative to create public value is both a sign and a means of protecting their “neutrality,” but this largely means only their freedom to make expert declarations on excellence. Their neutrality is a sham. As Janes writes, most art museums “cannot risk doing anything that might alienate a private sector sponsor, real or potential” (Janes 2013, 349), and more – they do not want to offend the sensibilities of peers by straying too far from professional standards. Exogenous shocks—like a financial crisis—may at times force individual organizations to change. Likewise, the “opening” of the system, through the one-off hiring of an educator into the position of Executive Director, may also lead to organizational transformation. But because these organizations are part of, and dependent on, a much larger institutional framework, any “transformed” organization can easily “bounce back” into its prior conformism once the leaders of the transformation are removed – as happened at the Glenbow (Janes 2013). Many art museums across North America are weathering both the recession and declining visitation by amplifying their imbecilic qualities, catering to and drawing upon the wealth of private donors and corporations, focusing on globalized standards of “excellence” in their exhibitions, as adjudicated primarily by the art market and curators tied into this market. Most museums are incapable of doing this while simultaneously building and sustaining relationships with non-elite community partners and audiences, because the programs and activities required to create public value do not in any obvious way provide advantage to elites. It is in this way that the institution’s feedback mechanisms become even more regulated and exclusive. The most critical lesson for

policy-makers encouraging better public engagement is that their eminently reasonable request is in conflict with more powerful forces working to further disengage the institution from its public purpose. While public engagement and public value creation remain excellent ideals, they are both too large and too disruptive to be realized within the existing institutional structure. For institutional transformation to take place, we require more radical policy interventions that recognize the art museum's true role in public management.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

This dissertation commenced with a set of paradoxical assertions. First, the art museum has played an important role in the development of liberal democracy as part of the modern state's "exhibitionary complex." Second, the "public" served by art museums has always been a small, elite minority of white urban liberals, but now, as attendance drops in terms of real numbers, the art museum's audience is becoming even more exclusive. Lastly, that public subsidies for art museums, including support for new museum construction, has rarely been tethered to the museum's ability or willingness to serve a broader public. I have supported these assertions through a combination of historical and data analysis, tracing the art museum's development as a public institution in tandem with the development of modern democracy, and reviewing data from Canadian, American, and British government and scholarly sources on the art museum's audience, board, and staff demographics. To make sense of the paradoxes of the art museum as a public institution, I have proposed that 1) the space of the art museum is symbolic of the "empty place of power" that underwrites liberal democracy, and 2) it is what Thorstein Veblen referred to as an "imbecile" institution: an institution that, once entrenched, perpetuates its power so successfully that it seems eternal, unchanging, inevitable, and right, even to most of the people it disserves.

I introduced my research question about structural barriers to public value creation by noting the current rise in interest, in both the public and private sectors, in public engagement. I have explained how, in an era of democratic deficit, public engagement is being promoted as a solution to citizen disenchantment and a means of realigning governments with citizens in collaborative processes of problem-solving and policy design. Observing that "public engagement" has recently made its way into the lexicon of arts funding agencies, I have asked what effect this obligation might have on the art museum, which, firmly attached to a top-down model of production that privileges curatorial authority, has remained structurally unchanged by policy imperatives of the past. I have noted that responsibility for public engagement is unevenly divided in art museums; that the individuals most accountable for public value creation are art museum educators, who tend to be women occupying less valued institutional spaces, and who are rarely consulted—either internally or by policy-makers—in strategic planning processes. Finally, I have asked whether educators might be positioned to offer insight into the museum's

potential for public value creation, since their work, in theory, entails listening to the public and developing a “feel” for its multiple and often contradictory preferences, concerns, and capabilities, in order to mediate between the public and the museum’s curatorial staff.

My field work included an online survey with members of the Canadian Art Gallery Educators (CAGE), case studies at four Canadian art museums that have developed reputations for being particularly “engaged” with public value creation, and participation in a course and symposium on public engagement by art museums. My research has demonstrated that educators can be valuable sources of insight into public value creation, but only under certain circumstances, as their endurance within the institution can depend on their acquiescence to the existing order.

I triangulated information gathered in my field work with findings from the UK’s 2016 Arts and Humanities Research Council’s research report, *Understanding Cultural Value* (founded on Holden’s theory of cultural value) and Talbot’s competing values approach to public value theory (Figure 5.2). With this information, I have constructed a general—and necessarily provisional—set of principles for public value creation by art museums. In turn, by comparing these principles to the struggles and successes relayed to me by educators along with my case study museums, I have derived a working list of institutional barriers to public value creation. They include but are not limited to:

- intimidating, “lofty,” “cool,” or otherwise unwelcoming entrances and overall atmospheres, which are a major deterrent to entry for most people;
- traditional museum hierarchies and organizational silos—that is, the supremacy of the traditional curatorial focus on art history and theory, rather than local audiences and education, and the lack of information- and strategy-sharing across departments;
- large-scale organizations, which have a centralizing and homogenizing effect on culture, disperse the organization’s focus and “thin” its impact, weaken organizational responsiveness, and make transformation more difficult to manage;
- buildings that are too big, as they are a challenge to fill with rotating exhibitions, draw resources away from outreach and offsite activities, and keep organizations “stuck” to specific, not always desirable or accessible, locations;

- a reliance on corporate sponsorship, which can limit the full range of civic discussions offered by art museums (because organizations know better than “to bite the hand that feeds them”);
- a reliance on the “donor class,” who often exert a conservative pressure on organizations and inhibit civic inclusivity or the cultivation of social and cultural diversity;
- the absence of Indigenous staff, which limits a museum’s ability to respond to the needs of Indigenous communities and to uphold the responsibility of decolonization or reconciliation;
- the absence of culturally diverse and racialized staff, which limits an organization’s ability to build relationships with the full range of communities constituting North American publics and respond their cultural needs and interests; and
- unions, which play an important role in safeguarding the salaries and benefits of staff, but may inhibit managers from creating and nurturing the “right” mix of intellectual capital, and may reinforce traditional hierarchies and silos. (This subject requires further research.)

Yet, however useful this list of structural barriers to public value creation may be, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 10, the art museum is an imbecile institution. Critics such as John Cotton Dana have been pointing to the same basic structural barriers to the art museum’s public value creation—and to the same condition of “imbecility”—for over 100 years, and little or nothing has been done to remove these barriers.

My theoretical contribution is thus: Hegemony is a necessary condition of any social order, and the art museum is resistant to change precisely because its role in modern democracy is simultaneously to reinforce the domination of a certain class of citizen and to deny the possibility of hegemony under a mask of individualism, progress, and freedom of expression. This was an easier task to manage during the postwar economic boom (often referred to as the Golden Age of Capitalism), which was characterized by both greater class equality and sustained economic growth, as well as widespread tolerance of certain forms of sexual and racial oppression. As attitudes towards race and gender inequality began to shift in tandem with rising economic inequality in the 1970s, the art museum drew the wrath of critics and activists on account of its elitism and service to corporate interests. However, rather than restructuring to become less elite or disentangling itself from the influences of private capital, the art museum

“solved” the problem of structural inequality along neoliberal lines – by shifting the conversation to issues of “diversity” in a globalized marketplace. This contributed to greater tolerance and compassion in liberal democracies, and has allowed a small number of artists from formerly excluded communities to enter and profit from the museum system, but it has not resulted in greater inclusion or engagement of the public. Furthermore, the focus on cultural politics in art has contributed to the democratic deficit by distracting the Left—including “political” artists—from issues of structural inequality and policy reform.

I have derived two main policy implications of the art museum’s imbecility. First, the art museum is incapable of reforming itself, because it is a “closed” system (its feedback is internal). This means that more than mild encouragements are needed from external sources for any significant changes to occur. Policy makers at all levels need to create openings for feedback from the public in order to effect changes that will see the art museum become an “agonistic” institution. This includes but is not limited to adjusting relevant policy to enhance the art museum’s educational mission, reconfiguring the composition of assessment committees, discouraging the centralization of culture in very large organizations, and requiring much greater diversity (both cultural and professional) on boards and in management. Second, cultural policy is important, and reform of the art museum is urgently needed. Contrary to what some critics have predicted, I have argued that the decline in visitation rates to the art museum are not a sign of the art museum’s imminent “irrelevance” or demise, but rather marks the further entrenchment of the privilege of the few and the increasing privatization of a public institution. Even in the absence of government funding, donors from the so-called 1 percent (or .1 or .01 percent) will step in to fund to the art museum, but as their influence grows, the public value created by these organizations will continue to diminish or disappear. Without more radical policy interventions, the art museum will simply become more imbecilic, both reacting to and contributing to the growing democratic crisis.

I would like to stress, however, that one of the key takeaways of my research has been that there is no magic formula for public value creation. As my case studies have demonstrated, art museums can and must restructure in different ways in order to build value for their particular publics. Furthermore, there is no standard set of metrics for measuring public value creation by art museums and, given the necessary diversity entailed in creating public value in different community contexts, any efforts to create such metrics are rather fraught. That said, the metrics

used by the Canada Council all but ensure the status quo, prioritizing as they do “artistic merit” and “artistic leadership” (both code for “excellence”). Public value creation must be assessed as much by process as by outcomes, as many of the latter are ambiguous, multiple, and long-term. Processes are not determined but are powerfully shaped by structures, that is, by the nature of relationships that construct the institution. Public value creation is, ultimately, about how citizens relate to one another and how public institutions facilitate relations between citizens. Art museums can choose to continue treating citizens more like consumers, or they can begin to involve them, in a wide variety of ways, in processes of co-creation. It matters what they choose. As Berry warns: “Influence and consequence are inescapable. History continues” (Berry 2000, 127).

Limitations and Contributions

By necessity, this dissertation makes several generalizations about the institution of the art museum—including its processes, trustees, and staff—not all of which apply equally to every organization. As my case studies have demonstrated, there is variety among organizations, and it is doubtful whether a single model could capture them all. However, given that my case studies have all been very small to mid-sized organizations, readers must leave room for the possibility of different structural barriers and different modes of public value creation pertaining to large and very large organizations. Also, as much of my data on public value creation by Canadian art museums is self-reported by educators, public value failures by education departments may be understated. If possible, future research should explore differences in perception of public value creation by racialized and Indigenous art museum educators and educators with disabilities. In spite of these limitations, however, the degree of consensus between art museum educators, data from the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Cultural Value Project, and the cultural value and public value theories of Holden and Talbot point to the importance of trust and legitimacy in public value creation, and hence the requirement to invest differently in the art museum’s relationship with public.

My research makes contributions in several ways. This dissertation examines data specifically from art museums, which are under-studied in the cultural value and public value literature (in part because the art museum’s contributions to public value are more ambiguous than those of the “live arts”). It integrates theories of public value with the political theory and

discourse analysis of Chantal Mouffe to draw attention to the influence of power (rather than mere efficiencies) in maintaining and reforming organizations and institutions. The findings expand our understanding of the ways attempts at incremental reform can be ineffectual when efforts are focused on content (“product”) rather than structure and process. Finally, this research underlines the important role of culture and values in political systems and institutional development, and the limits of liberalism as a universal value system within a capitalist economy.

Implications for Future Research

As I have noted, there has been very little research conducted globally on public value creation specifically by art museums; this dissertation must be considered part of a beginning. My research has raised considerations for policy research related to board and staff diversity at art museums; about drawbacks to the peer review system and the potential effects of diversifying assessment committees for arts funding; and about the possible benefits of limiting corporate and private investments in art museums. As I have also noted that the centralization of culture in very large organizations is a barrier to public value creation, there are opportunities for researching the different strategies of very large art museums (typically found in big cities) in relation to public value creation, to understand whether and how very large organizations can decentralize their activities and if this improves public value.

The central claim of this dissertation has been that public value is built by organizations through processes in which trust and legitimacy are established. For this reason, it would be remiss not to note the need for Canadian art museums to respond to the Call to Action number 67 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC):

“We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2012)

This dissertation did not explore the possible implications of “decolonizing” the art museum, but it supports the claim and suggests that the art museum is a colonizing institution. Beyond the simple question of “equity” in staffing or board representation, there is research to be done on the meaning and implications of decolonizing the art museum, and how Indigenous systems of thought about interrelatedness could inform and transform museum functions.

POSTSCRIPT

In January 2018, the New York Times (NYT) published its annual “52 Places to Go” travel promotion feature, and Saskatoon not only made the list, but was also the only Canadian destination to do so. Saskatoon placed at number 18, tucked between the Ancient Silk Road in Gansu, China, and the city of Seville in Andalusia, Spain, whose Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (New York Times 2018). The image gracing Saskatoon’s entry was of the Rемаi Modern, and the accompanying text referred almost exclusively to the art museum:

Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and other heavyweight 20th-century artists now have a home in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, thanks to the new Rемаi Modern museum. A centerpiece of Saskatoon’s redeveloping riverfront, the museum sports world-class modernist architecture and an 8,000-work collection. Art fans coming by plane will arrive at the city’s recently expanded and refurbished (and award-winning) airport, and can soon stay in style near the museum at the 15-story Alt Hotel. (Ibid.)

As was to be expected, Saskatoon’s placement on the NYT list made headlines in the city’s local media. Readers’ comments in response to the Saskatoon Star Phoenix article were mostly hostile to the Rемаi Modern (see: Deibert 2018), but on social media sites including Twitter and Facebook, Saskatoon residents expressed a great deal of excitement about the international recognition.

For a few days, nobody asked publicly why international tourists would want to travel to Saskatoon just to visit a modern art museum with an 8,000-work collection. After all, the Museum of Modern Art in New York has nearly 200,000 works of art, of which more than 76,000 are available to view online, and the Tate Modern in London has access to 66,000 works in the National Collection of British Art – which, contrary to its title, also contains modern and contemporary artworks from Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia (Museum of Modern Art 2018; Tate Museum 2018). In the week the NYT list appeared, Saskatoon was experiencing its second polar vortex of the winter, with daytime temperatures of -30 Celsius and colder. (One StarPhoenix commentator quipped, “Come for the art gallery, stay because your rental car won’t start.”) But on January 13, Phil Tank of the StarPhoenix reported: “While many were shocked by the inclusion of Saskatoon on the New

York Times' list of top travel destinations, the Rемаi Modern art gallery's executive director expected such recognition" (Tank 2018). "Why does that happen?" Tank quoted Gregory Burke as asking, rhetorically, "It doesn't just fall out of the sky" (Ibid.). The Rемаi Modern's CEO and Executive Director admitted that he'd been "nagging" the NYT times "for years." He postulated that Saskatoon's arrival on the destination list had been the result of an hour-long conversation between himself and a NYT's arts writer in New York in 2017 (Ibid.). He also told Tank: "I don't want to sound arrogant or anything, but I always believed in the project" (Ibid.).

Burke's self-satisfaction would suggest that the Rемаi Modern's success is now a *fait accompli*, as evidenced by its mention in the NYT. This of course is not the case. It took a decade of "precarious" finances and warning signals, following its move into a 77,500 square-foot, purpose-built glass edifice, before the Art Gallery of Windsor was forced to lay off 12 of its 17 staff and sell its building to the municipality (Schmidt 2012). The Art Gallery of Alberta has been open for eight years in the \$88-million, 85,000-square-foot, five-level "Gehryesque" building that was supposed to create a "Bilbao effect" in Edmonton, just as the Rемаi Modern is hoping to create in Saskatoon (Osman 2015). Five years after the Art Gallery of Alberta opened, daily attendance was actually lower than it had been before the expansion, having dropped from 188 per day in 2004 to 97 per day in 2015 (Ibid.). Today, it is experimenting with free admission as a means of boosting attendance, but its financial viability remains uncertain.

Readers may argue that art museum "overbuilding" and the challenges facing art museums in public value creation are only tangentially related. Certainly, museums that are built too large or massively over-budget also result from factors influencing other kinds of large project failures, such as over-optimism and simplification (where costs and timelines are systematically underestimated and benefits systematically overestimated, often wittingly), poor execution (where managers of projects facing cost overruns start to cut corners to maintain cost assumptions), and weakness in organizational design and construction (where lines of communication and responsibility within the project team are confusing or inefficient) (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, and Rothengatter 2003). Yet prior to these phenomena, the reason why large art museums are initiated in communities that cannot sustain them is the failure of decision-makers to prioritize public value. When the goals for the art museum are established with minimal public input, when they are dominated by private interests (whether a single donor or lobbyists from the business community), and where there is only minimal public oversight of

process, cognitive biases such as over-optimism will be amplified and the temptation for decision-makers to proceed dishonestly will increase substantially. Public value creation is a factor in the art museum's success as a public institution at every stage of its planning and development, not only once the doors are opened.

Of course, the Rемаi Modern could succeed in transforming Saskatoon into an international tourist destination, but this would defy the odds. If it fails to secure its attendance targets (approximately 700 per day) or meet its self-generated revenue targets—currently projected at \$5.3 million per year, or “more than 10 times as much as the \$500,000 in non-city revenue the Mendel Art Gallery raised in its last full year of operation in 2014” (Tank 2017b)—Ellen Rемаi may be persuaded to dig deeper into her pockets in order to keep the museum operating at its current level. However, a museum sustained by a private donor and frequented by a handful of elite members is not a public organization – it is a private club, even if it operates with the assistance of public subsidies. It is my argument that for the Rемаi Modern to succeed as a public organization, it will need to radically refocus and reorganize in order to prioritize the building of relationships based on trust and legitimacy with the people and communities of Saskatoon. Should it fail to do so, and should the organization collapse much as the Art Gallery of Windsor did, I hope it may serve as a more prominent lesson for other municipalities and arts funding agencies, encouraging them to redesign their policies for art museums towards a primary goal of public value creation.

The failure of art museums to build public value is not a problem that the private sector can solve. Only the public sector, including municipal and provincial governments, along with arts funding agencies at all levels of government, have both the ability and the motivation to help art museums reframe their functions from those of preserving and advancing art, to those of preserving and advancing public value through art. It is my hope that this research project may inspire and assist them in doing so.

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APPENDIX A: CAGE ONLINE SURVEY TEXT AND QUESTIONS (Administered through Fluid Survey)

Public Value in Art Museums Survey for Art Museum Educators and Public Programmers

Welcome to the 'Public Value in Art Museums' Survey for Art Museum Educators and Public Programmers!

Thank you for taking the time to participate.

This survey is part of a larger research study titled *Forget Excellence: Building Public Value in Public Art Museums*. The study is being conducted by PhD candidate Jen Budney, from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan.

The purpose of this research study is to assess the potential for understanding and building public value in art museums using the experiences, insights, and ideas of art museum educators and public programming staff. The survey begins with a description of the public value concept. It will then ask questions about how you think public value is understood and created at your place of work, your opinions on how your organization could build public value, your perceptions of the role and status of education and public programming at your organization, and other issues related to public value creation by art museums.

The survey contains approximately 35 questions and will take approximately **35 minutes** to complete. At any point during the survey, you may save your responses and continue the survey later.

By participating in this research study through your completion of the survey, you may be contributing to new understandings of the public value of art museums, to positive institutional change that results in art galleries and art museums becoming more meaningful and important to broader and more diverse Canadian publics, and to raising the status of educators and public programmers in art museums.

Click below to continue to the next page.

Confidentiality

All of your responses in this survey will remain strictly confidential. The researcher will not discuss or share in any form or format your responses to the survey, except as anonymized data in the final research publication(s). Furthermore, your identity or identifying information about the organization you work for will not be disclosed. The researcher believes that there are no known risks associated with this research study, although with any electronic communication, risks such as hacking or data destruction are always possible, if improbable.

This survey is hosted by FluidSurvey, a USA-owned company, which collects data over secured, encrypted SSL/TLS connections. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and Transport Layer Security (TLS) technology protect communications by using both server authentication and data encryption. This ensures that user data in transit is safe, secure, and available only to intended recipients. FluidSurvey's comprehensive Privacy Policy ensures that the data individuals collect is owned by them that respondents' email addresses are safeguarded, and that the data is held securely. The servers on which

FluidSurvey operate are located in Canada, so your information will be hosted in Canada. The researcher will further minimize any risks to confidentiality by storing her copy of the raw data on an external hard-drive in a locked filing cabinet for the requisite 5-year period before destroying it. No other individuals will have access to the raw data files.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

If you have questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher, Jen Budney, at (306) 850-0286 or jjb269@mail.usask.ca, or her supervisor, Dr. Murray Fulton, at (306) 966-8507 or murray.fulton@usask.ca. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Saskatchewan's Research Service and Ethics Office at: (306) 966-2875, or toll free at: 1-888-966-2975.

By clicking "I agree" below you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study.

I Agree

No - I Decline to Participate

What is Public Value?

Public value describes the value an organization contributes to society or the common good. Public value is not just economic and immediate value, but includes political, social, and moral value for present and future generations.

To create public value, organizations must facilitate and engage in dialogue and debate with current users, citizens, and communities, while also considering longer-term public interests and future generations of citizens yet unborn.

It has been argued that the primary goal of government and publicly funded organizations is to create public value using the particular resources they are entrusted with. Public value is difficult to measure, but its creation results in a rich mix of benefits that include stewardship of resources, enhanced trust in public institutions, equity and fairness, resilience in organizations and systems, value for money, wellbeing, prosperity, learning, and strengthened local communities.

Public value generated by arts organizations involves not just the aesthetic "excellence" of the work exhibited, but also the organization's stewardship, transparency, accessibility, environmental impact, and value for money, as well as the ways the organization contributes to the wellbeing, prosperity, learning, and resilience of the community or jurisdiction it is intended to serve.

Not all exhibitions, activities, or programs carried out by art museums contribute to public value creation -- like any organization, art museums may sometimes direct their resources towards special interest groups and elites in ways that deplete, rather than build, public trust, or they may operate in ways that work against public values such as civility, empathy, fairness, justice, tolerance, and respect for the other.

Public value is not an easy concept, so you may want to meditate on this page for a while. Keep in mind that public value is the value an organization contributes to the common good, and so it is much

broader and more complex than an aggregate of individual preferences.

Once again, the researcher expresses her gratitude for your willingness to work through these ideas with her.

If you're ready to take the survey, click "Next".

1. How important is public value creation to your work as an art museum educator or public programmer? *Even if you don't use the term "public value" to think about the issues involved in public value creation, your efforts may still be directed towards public value creation.* (Choices: Not Important At All/Of Little Importance/Of Average Importance/Very Important/Absolutely Essential)

2. How would you rate the public value generated by your organization's education and public programming activities? (Excellent/Very Good/Good/Somewhat Poor/Very Poor/Not Applicable)

3. How would you rate the public value generated by your organization's exhibitions? Consider here only the exhibitions themselves, not programming or tours related to the exhibitions. (Excellent/Very Good/Good/Somewhat Poor/Very Poor/Not Applicable)

4. Please rate the public value created by your organization through the following activities or programs. (Excellent/Very Good/Good/Somewhat Poor/Very Poor/Not Applicable)

Permanent collection
Exhibitions by members
Hands-on workshops/classes for children
School tours
Tours by docents or programming staff
Exhibitions by local artists
Exhibitions of historical art
Community exhibitions or workshops
Family or inter-generational classes and events
Openings and receptions
Exhibitions of contemporary art
Lectures by artists and art professionals
Symposiums and forums
Self-directed hands-on learning spaces
Multidisciplinary events (art + music + performance, etc.)
Catalogues and other art publications
Offsite workshops/classes at school/community settings

*Community exhibitions or workshops refer to exhibitions and workshops run in collaboration with one or more other organizations in your community.

5. Please rate the public value created by your organization in the following areas. (Excellent/Very Good/Good/Somewhat Poor/Very Poor/Not Applicable)

As a forum for community debates
Including people with disabilities

Environmental impact (e.g. carbon footprint)
Partnering with local elementary and secondary schools
Collaborating with non-arts community groups
Promoting gender equity
Supporting smaller local arts organizations
Providing leadership on civic discussions pertaining to art and culture
Providing education in visual literacy
Including indigenous people and communities
Making original contributions to critical discourse
Contribution to the local economy
Offering an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere
Promoting social justice
Partnering with local university or college
Promoting class equity
Generating tourism to your region

6. How would you rate the public value generated by your organization compared to other public art galleries and museums across the country? (Excellent/Above Average/Average/Below Average/Very Poor)

7. In your opinion, does your organization's CEO or Executive Director give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do? (More/Less/The Same)

8. In your opinion, does your organization's head curator give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do? (More/Less/The Same)

9. In your opinion, does your organization's Board of Directors give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do? (More/Less/The Same)

10. Choose the statement that you think is MOST TRUE for your organization.

- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without substantial professional development for staff.
- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without additional financial resources.
- Improving our public value creation would be very difficult without a change in funding arrangements, since our grants lock us in to certain ways of doing things.
- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without a change in management and vision.
- We are already maximizing our potential for public value creation.

11. Does your organization have any sort of public advisory committee (distinct from both the Board and the Collections committee) that gives input towards the planning of exhibitions or public programs? (Yes/No)

12. How often does your organization employ the following methods for gathering feedback on its exhibitions and programs? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always)

Comments in the exhibition area

Computerized survey in buildings
Visitor feedback cards
Visitor/attendance counts
Visitor observation in galleries
Barrier analysis (to discover why some people do NOT visit)
Formal evaluation of exhibitions by staff
Reviews of exhibitions in local media
Reviews of exhibitions in national/international media
Verbal visitor surveys (exhibitions)
Verbal or written participant surveys (events and workshops)

13. How often are you formally asked to provide feedback on exhibitions DURING or AFTER their presentation? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always)

14. How often are you formally asked to provide feedback on PROPOSED exhibitions BEFORE they are accepted or scheduled? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always)

15. When management engages in strategic planning, how often are you invited to participate? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always)

16. Who does the head of education/public programming report to at your organization? (Head of curatorial department/Executive director/Other, please specify...)

17. How would you describe the relationship between the head of the curatorial department and the head of education/public programming? (Hierarchical but friendly and respectful/Hierarchical and distant/Friendly and collaborative)

18. How would you describe the relationship between the executive director and the head of education/public programming? (Hierarchical but friendly and respectful/Hierarchical and distant/Friendly and collaborative)

19. Choose the description that best matches the legal status of your organization.
(Private, nonprofit organization, governed by an independent board of directors/
Non-profit organization operating at arm's length from the municipality; staff are city employees/Non-profit organization operating at arm's length from a university or college; staff are university or college employees/A direct branch of a municipality, university, or college/Other, please specify...)

20. What is the total annual budget of your organization?

21. What is the total annual budget of your education/public programming department?

21b. Does the number you provided above include costs of casual labour?

21c. Does the number you provided above include marketing costs?

22. What is your job title?

23. How long, in years, have you held your current position?

24. Including any previous jobs or positions at your current organization or elsewhere, how many years have you worked in the field of education/public programming in an art museum setting?

25. What is the status of your employment? (Management, full-time/Full-time employee, non-unionized/Full-time employee, unionized/Part-time employee, non-unionized/Part-time employee, unionized/Contract, occasional, or seasonal employee)

26. What is your annual salary? *Include only your income from your work as an art museum educator or public programmer.* (Under \$20,000/\$20,000-\$30,000/\$30,000-\$40,000/\$40,000-50,000/\$50,000-\$75,000/More than \$75,000)

27. What is your age?

28. Do you identify as male or female? (Male/Female/Other/Prefer not to say)

29. Do you self-identify as a person with a disability? (Yes/No)

30. Do you self-identify as a member of a First Nation, as an indigenous person, as Aboriginal, or as Metis? (Yes/No)

31. Do you self-identify as a member of a visible minority group? (Yes/No)

32. What degrees or level of school have you completed? *Check all that apply* (BFA/BA/BSc/Bed/MFA/MA/Med/PhD/Diploma/Other, please specify...)

33. Do you believe that, based on the knowledge and experience you have gained from working directly with the public as an art museum educator or public programmer, you have special insight into how your organization could improve its public value creation? (Yes/No)

33b. Imagine you are fully in charge of your organization. Your job is to improve the public value it creates.

Which activities or programs will require the most modification for public value to be improved? *Rank the items by dragging the texts and numbers together to fit like two pieces of a puzzle. The item you rank "1" requires the MOST modification for public value to be improved, and the item you rank "10" requires the LEAST modification.*

Marketing and Communications/Environmental Impact/Programming and Tours (adults and professionals)/Programming and tours (children and schools)/Contemporary exhibitions/Historical exhibitions/Overall atmosphere (welcoming/not welcoming)/Amenities (food/washrooms/gift store/cloak room, etc.)

34. How important would the following areas of professional development be for improving your personal ability to contribute to the public value created by your organization? (Not Important At All/Of Little Importance/Of Average Importance/Very Important/Absolutely Essential)

Early childhood education

Other art forms (e.g., music, theatre)

Project management
Working with high risk youth
Art therapy
Marketing/promotion
Cross-cultural communication
Health care delivery in your community
Managing people
An introduction to the indigenous history, culture, and protocols of my region
Evaluative methods
Adult and senior education
A deeper understanding of contemporary art
A deeper understanding of contemporary art
A deeper understanding of historical art
Anticipated demographic shifts in your community
Asking for money (fundraising)

35. In your current organization, have you ever successfully asserted yourself in the face of resistance or opposition to create a project, program, or process you thought was necessary for public value creation? (Yes/No)

35b. You said you HAVE successfully asserted yourself in the face of opposition create a project, program, or process you thought was necessary for public value creation. How did you do this? What were the results? Did your organization learn any lessons?

36. If you have any final comments, observations, or thoughts about public value creation by art museums and public galleries, please share them here.

The researcher may want to contact survey respondents with brief follow-up questions or requests for clarification. If you are willing to be contacted for these purposes, please provide your contact information.

Your participation in this survey has been important. Thank you for taking time to complete it!

**APPENDIX B: BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF MAJOR CANADIAN ART MUSEUMS,
JUNE 2017**

Table B1: Art Gallery of Ontario Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Maxine Granovsky Gluskin, President	white	F	finance
Tony Gagliano, Honourary Chair	white	M	business exec, philanthropist
Rupert J. Duchesne, Vice President	white	M	CEO
Bob Harding, Vice President	white	M	accountant, CEO
Rosamond Ivey, Vice President	white	F	investment banking
Jay Smith, Vice President	white	M	investment banking
Hussain Amarshi	non-white	M	film industry/artist
A. Charles Baillie	white	M	banker, CEO
Shelagh Barrington	white	F	philanthropist?
Avie Bennett	white	M	businessman, real estate
David Binet	white	M	CEO, holding company - media
Shary Boyle	white	F	artist
David Campbell	white	M	CEO, holding company
Camillo di Prata	white	M	CEO, finance
Ivan Fecan	white	M	CEO, media exec
Andrew Federer	white	M	banker, executive
James D. Fleck	white	M	CEO, media and tech
Allan Gotlieb	white	M	lawyer & public servant
Anthony R. Graham	white	M	CEO, investment banking
Michael Hasley	white	M	finance exec
Ydessa Hendeles	white	F	collector, dealer, artist
Councillor Michelle Holland	white	F	city councilor
Beth Horowitz	white	F	CEO, Amex
Michael M. Koerner	white	M	investment banking
Phil Lind	white	M	CEO, media
Liza Mauer (Honourary Trustee)	white	F	development exec
Shabin Mohamed	non-white	M	CEO, media
Kenneth Montague	non-white	M	dentist, collector
Rebecca Murray	white	F	fundraiser, Carleton
Gordon Nixon	white	M	CEO, banking
Gilles Ouellette	white	M	CEO, banking
Jonas Prince	white	M	lawyer
Carol Rapp	white	F	philanthropist
Jeffrey Remedios	non-white	M	CEO, music
Councillor Jaye Robinson	white	M	city councilor
Richard Rooney	white	M	CEO, investment banking
Samuel Sarick	white	M	CEO, real estate
Judy Schulich	white	F	CEO, foundation - philanthropist
Eleanor Shen	non-white	F	musician, cultural organizer
Hilary Weston	white	F	philanthropist, politician
Robin Young	white	F	actor

Table B2: Vancouver Art Gallery Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Michael Audain	white	M	CEO, real estate
George Killy	white	M	holdings and investment
David Calabrigo	white	M	lawyer, forestry executive
Jane Irwin	white	F	artist
Larry Lunn	white	M	investment banker
Hank Bull	white	M	artist
Christian Chan	non-white	M	real estate development * son of billionaire
Gulzar Cheema	non-white	M	physician and Liberal party politician
Leslie Diamond	white	F	professional philanthropist (inheritance)
Asaph Fipke	white	M	media producer and executive
Amelia Gao	non-white	F	businesswoman and fundraiser
Terry Hui	non-white	F	real estate fund manager
Sherry Killam	white	M	Philanthropist (inheritance)
Phil Lind	white	M	media CEO
Naudia Maché	white	F	wife of investment banker and horse racer
Councillor Geoff Meggs	white	M	city councilor
Tom Milroy	white	M	investment banker
Inna O'Brian	white	F	wife of investment banker
Esther Rausenberg	white	F	artist
Pamela Richardson	white	F	media person and wife of real estate developer
Mayor Gregor Robertson *	white	M	mayor and businessman
Lesley Stowe	white	F	CEO, food industry
Lisa Turner	white	F	CEO, furniture company
Bruce Munro Wright	white	M	lawyer
Cathy Zuo	non-white	F	investment banker

Table B3: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Helen Antoniou Molson	white	F	lawyer, executive, wife of Molson
Joe Battat	white	M	gallerist
Pierre Bourgie	white	M	CEO, funeral business
Alix d'Anglejan-Chatillon	white	F	investment banker
Michel de la Chenelière	white	M	publisher, philanthropist
Lise Croteau	white	F	CEO, Hydro Quebec
Jonathan Deitcher	white	M	investment banker
Roger Fournelle	white	M	lawyer
The Hon. Serge Joyal	white	M	lawyer and senator
François Lacoursière	white	M	CEO, marketing
G. Pierre Lapointe	white	M	investment banker
Sari Hornstein	white	F	writer, daughter of wealthy businessman and philanthropist
René Malo	white	M	film producer
Bruce McNiven	white	M	lawyer
Jacques Parisien	white	M	Media Exec, CEO
Julia Reitman	white	F	professional philanthropist, inheritance Reitman family
Martin Thibodeau	white	M	CEO, banking
M. Rémi Quirion	white	M	Chief Scientist, Quebec

APPENDIX C: BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF CASE STUDY ORGANIZATIONS, JUNE 2017

Table C1: MacKenzie Art Gallery Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Amanda Baker	white	F	Chamber of Commerce manager
Robert Byers	Indigenous	M	Namerind Housing CEO
Dr. Tom Chase	white	M	U of R Provost
Josh MacFadden	white	M	lawyer
Shanna McNair	white	F	accountant, business advisor, wife of CEO
Jacquie Messer-Lepage	ambiguous	F	Non-profit and university executive
Anne Parker	white	F	investment banking
Robert Perry	white	M	university professor
Johanna Salloum	white	F	investment banking
Nathan Schissel	white	M	lawyer
Gerri Ann Siwek	white	F	artist
Rae Staseson	white	F	artist/professor
Ben Tingley	white	M	media executive
Dr. Lynn Tomkins	white	F	doctor (and wife of U of R Chancellor)

Table C2: Nanaimo Art Gallery Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Deborah Giuno-Zorkin	white	F	real estate development and consultant
Brock Dykeman	white	M	chartered accountant and director of business school
Mark Ashby	white	M	architect
Cathy Dyck	white	F	marketing, Chamber of Commerce
Tony Martin	white	M	artist
Heather Pastro	white	F	art education professor
Cheryle Harrison	white	F	conservator
Ian Gove	white	M	lawyer

Table C3: Two Rivers Gallery Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Cori Ramsay	white	F	communications manager, credit union
Heather Oland	white	F	GM, hotel
Steve Reynolds	white	M	CFO, forestry
Jennifer Young	white	F	manager, UNBC
Yvonne Sawkins	white	F	accountant (retired)
Nigel Fox	white	M	artist and internet technology professional
Shirley Babcock	white	F	artist
Kimberly Pavao	white	F	lawyer
Kara Biles	white	F	workforce planning manager, forestry
Darren Ditto	white	M	regional manager, health care
Mick Harper	white	M	partner and creative director, communications firm
Keli Watson	Indigenous	F	archeologist

Table C4: Art Gallery of Mississauga Board of Trustees, June 2017

Name	Race	Gender	Profession
Stan Zigelstein	white	M	lawyer
Vandana Taxali	non-white	F	lawyer
Kris Noakes	Indigenous	F	community leader
Terry Jenkins-Bricel	white	F	communications CEO
Puneet Kohli	non-white	M	lawyer
Penelope Mathieson	white	F	development/fundraising
Mark Warrack	white	M	City liaison

APPENDIX D: PERCEPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND RANKING

Table D1: CAGE Survey Responses to Question: “How would you rate the public value generated by your organization compared to other public art galleries and museums across Canada?”

Excellent	12%
Above Average	35%
Average	47%
Very Poor	6%

Table D2: CAGE Survey Responses to Question: “In your opinion, does your organization's CEO or Executive Director give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do?”

More	17.5%
The same	47.5%
Less	35%

Table D3: CAGE Survey Responses to Question: “In your opinion, does your organization's head curator give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do?”

More	6%
The same	59%
Less	35%

Table D4: CAGE Survey Responses to Question: “In your opinion, does your organization's Board of Directors give MORE, LESS, or the SAME priority to public value creation as you do?”

More	0%
The same	65%
Less	35%

Table D5: CAGE Survey Responses to Question on Public Value Requirements

Question: “Choose the statement that you think is MOST TRUE for your organization.

- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without substantial professional development for staff.
- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without additional financial resources.
- Improving our public value creation would be very difficult without a change in funding arrangements, since our grants lock us in to certain ways of doing things.
- Improving our public value creation would be difficult without a change in management and vision.
- We are already maximizing our potential for public value creation.”

Professional Development	0%
Financial Resources	59%
Funding Arrangements	17.6%
Management & Vision	17.6%
Already Maximizing	5.8%