

## Working Paper Series, 8



# Unfamiliar Objects in Familiar Spaces The Public Response to Art-in-Architecture

March 2, 1999

Steven J. Tepper\*

Working Paper # 8  
Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies

---

\*Please direct all correspondence to: Steven J. Tepper, Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Robertson Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544 ♦ Telephone (609)258-5662 ♦ Fax (609)258-1235 ♦ E-mail [sjtepper@princeton.edu](mailto:sjtepper@princeton.edu)

The author gratefully acknowledges the Henry Luce Foundation, Inc. and the Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies for their generous support of this research. Also, thanks are due to Paul DiMaggio and Gene Jesano and to the participants of the Center's January 1999 affiliates meeting, whose edits and comments on an earlier draft of this paper were extremely helpful. Finally, special thanks to Susan Harrison and the General Service Administration for their generous assistance with the Art-in-Architecture files.

## **Unfamiliar Objects in Familiar Spaces: The Public Response to Art-in-Architecture**

ABSTRACT: Over the last three decades the federal government, through its Art-in-Architecture program, has funded more than 200 permanent art installations in cities throughout America. This study examines the public response to a sample of 41 such public art projects and attempts to illuminate the factors that lead to official or organized conflict. Findings suggest that controversies are most likely to erupt over abstract art placed in relatively small cities and cities experiencing high rates of population growth. This is especially true when the community is not asked to participate in the project in any meaningful way. And although artistic freedom is the norm, in a few cases, community participation led to editing of provocative or challenging content from a proposed artwork.

## Unfamiliar Objects in Familiar Spaces: The Public Response to Art-in-Architecture

### Introduction

Public art has been an important part of America's experiment in democracy since its founding. From Horatio Greenough's half-naked sculpture of George Washington in a toga and sandals, intended for the new Capitol Rotunda, to Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial, public art in America has been celebrated, censored, deplored and debated. In the eighteenth century, a group of American citizens who disliked the design for the Washington Monument disrupted its installation by throwing stones, intended for its construction, into the Potomac River (Allen 1985; Savage 1992). In 1922, suffragists protested Frederick MacMonnies' sculpture, *Civic Virtue*, which they perceived to be misogynist because it featured the allegory of virtue (depicted as a man) trampling vice (depicted as two women) (Bogart 1992). More recently, Japanese Americans in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, protested a proposed mural by Barbara Kruger that featured words from the *Pledge of Allegiance*. The mural design purportedly evoked memories of American acts of cultural persecution in WWII internment camps (Doss 1994). *Why then does public art often serve as a lightning rod, attracting the heat of official censorship and provoking public debate and contention?*<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In this instance, "public art" refers to an expressive object – typically a painting, mural or sculpture – that is situated in a location broadly accessible to the general public – a public park, a public museum, main street, town hall, etc. However, the research presented in this paper is more limited and refers specifically to artworks installed in or around a federal building and paid for with federal funds through the Art-in-Architecture program.

Typically, scholars and public arts administrators have sought answers to this question by tracing the fascinating and colorful case histories of particularly thorny controversies. They explore, in detail, the participants, their claims, their actions against the contested artwork, the response of the artist and arts community and the motivations and interests of the various parties to the debate. Interpretations of conflict often focus on the unique and varied confluence of factors that come together, in a particular time and place, to create sparks, and sometimes full-blown fires, around the installation of public art. While suggestive of larger patterns of conflict, it is difficult to generalize from these individual stories. In 1981, John Beardsley, author of Art in Public Places, lamented what he believed to be the lack of systematic research in the field of public art. "There has been little written on current publicly-funded, publicly-accessible art; and that which has appeared has either been broadly dismissive or rather limited in focus [e.g. case studies]" (p. 13). In addition to a lack of comparative work, Malcolm Miles (1997) has raised concerns about the gap that has evolved between the practice of public art and the theoretical perspectives of other disciplines, such as urban sociology, geography and critical theory. With this in mind, this research project aims to go beyond case studies by examining a sample of forty-one public art projects funded by the General Service Administration (GSA) between 1972 and 1998, grounding its findings in relevant literature from the social sciences. The research question guiding the project is simple: *Why are some government-funded public art projects more controversial than others?*

### The Art-in-Architecture Program and the Percent-For-Art Model

The research presented here examines a sample of Art-in-Architecture (AiA) installations funded by the federal government's percent-for-art program. The percent-for-art model, always

controversial, was launched by the Treasury Department in 1934. By executive order, the Department reserved 1 percent of the construction budget of new federal buildings for “embellishments” or public art. Operating for nine years before being abandoned by the Treasury, both because of the costs and public criticism of installed works, the program sponsored more than 1,100 murals and 300 sculptures. In 1959, the City of Philadelphia resurrected the percent-for-art model; and the GSA, through its Art-in-Architecture program, followed suit four years later. The program’s mandate, as described in an ad hoc report submitted to President Kennedy concerning federal office space, is to “incorporate fine arts, where appropriate, into the designs of federal buildings with emphasis on the work of living American artists” (AiA Web site 1998). To this end, the GSA allocates up to 2 percent of the cost of new federal buildings for the commission of single and multiple art installations.

Since its inception, more than two hundred installations, by such artists as Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson and Isamu Noguchi, have been installed in and around federal buildings and courthouses from Honolulu, Hawaii to Bangor, Maine. With the AiA program as a model, the percent-for-art movement blossomed in the early 1980s, when dozens of states and municipalities adopted percent-for-art ordinances. Today there are more than 189 such programs throughout the United States (Atkins 1995). And *U.S. News and World Report* has labeled the percent-for-art program the largest public art movement since the Works Projects Administration in the 1930’s (Horn 1989). Although it is one of the most prevalent models for funding public art in this country, few studies have systematically investigated its impact and outcomes.

In this study, I analyzed a semi-random sample of forty-one cases chosen from the more than two hundred installations sponsored by the GSA over the last three decades.<sup>2</sup> For my purposes, a case included all the artworks installed in or around a single federal building as part of the AiA program. For each case, I collected information on the style, size and cost of the artwork; the nature and amount of pre-installation local press coverage; the extent of community participation in the selection and design phase of the project; and information concerning public reaction to the artworks. This information—including photographs, minutes from panel meetings, contracts, internal memoranda, and letters and clippings—was available in the AiA project archives at the GSA in Washington, D.C. For a list of projects included in the sample, see appendix 1.

Of those forty-one projects examined, costs per project ranged from \$5,000 to \$700,000; most projects (80 percent) included only one installation, but some included as many as five; projects took place in thirty-nine different cities, ranging in size from 5,000 persons to populations of over four million. Eleven projects included only representational artworks; twenty-seven included only abstract works; and three included both abstract and representational works.



In twenty-seven cases, artists and artworks were selected by a panel exclusively comprised of “arts experts” nominated by the National Endowment for the Arts; in six cases, community members served as official advisors to the panel of experts; and in eight cases, community

---

<sup>2</sup> I collected my sample by selecting every fifth file in the archives. The files were not organized at the GSA in any precise order (e.g. artist’s name, city, or date). Earlier installations tended to be filed near the beginning of the archives, and more recent ones near the back – however, there were many exceptions to this general rule. Because the GSA files are based on individual artworks, rather than projects (which include groups of artworks), my sampling method likely produced a disproportionate number of projects with more than one artwork. Otherwise, there is no evidence of any systematic sample selection bias.

members served as “official” voting members of the panel.<sup>3</sup> In addition to serving on the selection panel, community members could participate informally in projects by nominating artists, meeting with the architect or artist, and commenting on publicly displayed models or drawings of proposed artworks. In seventeen cases, community members participated through such informal means; in twenty-four cases, there was no informal community participation.

### Orienting Questions

There was no single theoretical perspective guiding this research. Instead, I relied on several orienting approaches and questions. One approach to understanding why public art is controversial is to investigate the style and content of the artwork itself.<sup>4</sup> There is, for example, much debate about the relationship between modern art and its audience. Some argue that abstract art is a viable solution for visually enriching today’s public square (Bach 1994; Griswold 1992; Robinette 1976; Senie 1992; Thalacker 1981). As Doss (1994:46) writes, “Modern, abstract art was seen as a great unifying force because it was apolitical and rational. Nonfigurative art could not be used to prop up deviant political ideology.” Others, however, feel that abstract art becomes a “malignant object” when placed in the middle of a community where

---

<sup>3</sup> The selection process for choosing artworks and artists evolved through three phases since 1972. In the 1970s, the GSA convened a panel of nationally recognized art experts (nominated by the National Endowment for the Arts) to review and recommend possible artists for each project. The Administrator of the GSA would then select from among the recommendations and work with the chosen artist to come up with an acceptable design for the proposed site. In the mid 1980s, the General Service Administration began asking members of the community (non-art professionals) to informally advise the panel of experts (still chosen by the NEA). In addition, design proposals, submitted by the chosen artists, were now circulated to panel members for review and comment. Finally, by the 1990s, the GSA no longer relied on panel nominations from the Endowment; they also increased the size of the panels to include ten persons – five art professionals (many from the local region) and five citizens and community leaders. As in the second phase, panel members participated both in selecting the artist and reviewing their proposed artistic design.

<sup>4</sup> In [Arresting Images](#), Steven Dubin argues that controversies over public art depend, in part, on the extent to which the style and content of a work challenges established norms (see also, Bolton 1992; Carver 1994; Lowenthal 1986). In the spirit of Mary Douglas ([Purity and Danger](#), 1966), others have argued that when art mixes categories that are

it is likely to offend the majority of citizens, who are either humiliated because “they don’t get it” or angered because their aesthetic sensibilities are being challenged (Stalker and Glymour 1982). These critics feel that representational and figurative art is better suited to meet the needs and preferences of communities (Bell 1996; Glazer 1996; Levy 1997; Lyotard 1982; Miles 1997; Rosler 1987). Thus, as a first orienting question: *Are abstract or representational public artworks more likely to provoke negative public reaction?*

A second approach to explaining public art conflict focuses on characteristics of the community in which an artwork is situated, rather than on qualities of the art itself. Several theorists suggest that conflicts will arise when communities are faced with population and lifestyle changes and when individuals in established status groups feel threatened by individuals in new emerging groups (Beisel 1990; Coleman 1957; Dubin 1992; Gusfield 1963; Zurcher and Kirkpatrick 1976).

Others argue that conflict is related to the size of a community. According to Fischer (1976:103), there is evidence that as “community size increases so do political disagreements and divisiveness.” Alternatively, others argue that conflict can be more intense in small communities, where there is greater homogeneity, common kinship and group solidarity, than in larger, more diverse communities (Coleman 1957; Simmel 1971:90-91). These theoretical approaches suggest a second set of orienting questions: *Are controversies over public artworks more likely in large or small cities? And, are controversies more likely in places with slow or rapid population growth?*

A third approach examines the process by which public art projects are implemented, paying particular attention to the extent to which a community is involved in all stages of the project –

---

normally distinct (religion and sex, children and nudity, politics and race) it is more likely to provoke the ire of censors and critics. (Carmilly-Weinberger 1986; Dubin 1992; Heins 1993).



from selection to design and dedication. Scholars and public art administrators have long championed the role that public art and architecture can play in creating community identity and solidarity. As Zukin (1996:51) writes, “By the 1990s, it is understood that making a place for art in the city goes along with establishing a place identity for the city as a whole.” Thus, the built environment – consisting of artworks, buildings, signs, etc. -- helps people make sense of where they live, turning “spaces into places.” (Fleming and von Tshcharner 1987; Hayden 1995; Hough 1990; Jacobs 1963; Koshar 1994; Kunstler 1993; Lipske 1985). Public art and architecture can become symbols of civic pride and take on what sociologist Emile Durkheim calls totemic or “sacred” value – e.g. they come to embody the values and identity of the community in which they are situated. (Bellah 1973; Boettger 1982; Hubbard; 1984; Lyndon 1984; Swearington 1997). Some argue, however, that it is only through active community participation that public artworks can become objects of civic pride. As critic Arthur Danto (1985:288) writes, “One of the greatest failures in public art programs ... is that the public has been radically under-involved and all decisions have been left to a panel of authorities”. And, the argument goes, when citizens do get involved, it can lead to greater feelings of community ownership in the project. It may also help the artist become more familiar with the community, thereby enhancing the likelihood that the final installation will reflect its local character and preferences (Allen 1985; Balfe and Wyszomirski 1986; Doss 1992; Horn 1989; Miles 1997; Raven 1993).

However, early community participation may also lead to inflated public expectations that are difficult for the artist to meet. And some in the art world feel that community participation – especially during the design phase – compromises artistic freedom and leads to kitsch or lower

quality works. Successful outcomes, they argue, including ultimate community acceptance of an artwork, depend on the aesthetic quality of a work itself. And such quality requires that artists be free from social pressures and constraints (Carver 1994; Greenberg 1939; Kovel 1985; Serra 1985; Thalaker 1980). In fact, an internal government memorandum reveals that policy makers and program administrators involved in the early phases of the Art-in-Architecture program believed that only expert judges from the art world were fit to select public art that would “stand the test of time” (Joint GSA-NEA Task Force on the AiA Program 1980). Or as one commentator said in defense of Richard Serra’s embattled work *Tilted Arc*, “The selection process must be protected and insulated from the shifting winds of popular taste if government supported artworks are to avoid being conventional and uninspired” (Dorsen 1985:108). So as a third orienting question: *Does community involvement and participation in a public art project during its early stages lead to less conflict once the artwork is installed; or might it lead to unrealistic expectations and ultimately more conflict?*

Our fourth and final approach investigates the way in which citizens, officials and artists debate the merits of public art installations. How do people make sense of public art? In what ways do sculptures and murals conjure up civic metaphors or political ideologies through which individuals articulate ideas about community identity and values? Goffman’s (1974) and Snow et al.’s (1986) concept of “interpretive frames” serves as a useful model for describing public reaction to art and sculpture. Frames help people “locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and world at large” (Snow 1986:464). Thus, in an effort to understand public reaction to Art-in-Architecture installations, I will identify a range of different interpretive frames: *How do opponents and advocates of public art frame their arguments? And which frames are used most often?*

## Initial Findings

*The Extent of Conflict.* Books and articles about public art conflicts have become increasingly numerous (Bolton 1992; Doss 1994; Dubin 1992; Horn 1989; Levy 1997; Miles 1997; Peter and Crosie 1995; Raven 1993; Senie 1992; Stalker and Glymour 1982). Many observers and participants believe that public art is between “a rock and a hard place... attempting to function in a tenuous space between art and social service” (Wiens 1994:9). They argue that public art and conflict go hand in hand – the result of a nearly impossible match between the private, creative vision of an artist and the often competing needs and preferences of a diverse public. Others see public art as an easy target for latent political and economic hostilities or, as the wounded messenger, caught in the crossfire of the “Culture Wars.”<sup>5</sup> Either way, scholars and the media tend to focus on cases of conflict, paying less attention to the many quiet public art successes. So before we turn to our four orienting questions, let us examine the **extent** of conflict over AiA installations. Of the forty-one projects in our sample, how many were controversial?

- Twenty-two or 53.7 percent of the projects examined were not the least bit controversial.

---

<sup>5</sup> There is a large body of literature – much of it in the popular press – that views recent arts controversies as a symptom of a larger battle waged by conservative Republicans and fundamentalist Christians to control the shape and content of American culture. (Hunter 1991; see also Bolton 1992 and Peter and Crosier 1995). The “war” is often depicted in terms of an embattled conservative majority trying to reclaim American culture from a liberal elite establishment – or in the case of public art, the average citizen vs. the out-of-touch art world. As Doss (1994:67) states, “the neo-conservative battle for America’s cultural and moral future and the neo-populist revolt over public art is much the same phenomena.” And Senie (1992:233) writes, “Although Helms [the principal antagonist in the “culture wars”] and his supporters supposedly attacked obscenity in art, all art of an obscure and difficult nature became suspect.” If controversies over Art-in-Architecture installations are part and parcel of the larger, national fight over art and culture (i.e., debates over the works of Mapplethorpe, Serrano, Sprinke, etc.), then we would expect to see the percentage of AiA projects that were controversial peak in the late 1980s and 1990s when the Culture Wars were at their hottest. However, according to our data, the 1970s and early 80s were peak years for AiA controversies (47.6 percent of cases were controversial) with fewer conflicts in later years (9.1% between 1982

- Controversy over five of the projects was limited to one or more private or public letters of complaint.
- Controversy over another five projects went beyond letters and included official statements of protest from a government official or a newspaper editor.
- Controversy over three projects went beyond letters and official statements to include some form of public action -- organized letter writing campaign, petitions, street protests, or newspaper sponsored campaigns.
- And, finally, controversy over six projects reached the most extreme level of conflict -- vandalism and/or removal of the artwork.

For purposes of analysis, I combined the first and second categories into a single category representing “no official or organized conflict.” Categories 3, 4 and 5 were combined into the category “organized and/or official conflict.” Thus out of forty-one projects, twenty-seven (67 percent) were non-controversial. Contrary to much popular writing that focuses disproportionately on the conflicts, most government-funded public art installations meet with little resistance from their intended audiences.

*Style of Artwork.* To return to our first orienting question: ***which style, abstract or representational, is likely to produce more negative reaction and protest?*** Some scholars maintain that society has become too diverse and pluralistic for any single representational artwork to speak to or celebrate a common set of values and beliefs (Bach 1990; Beardsley 1981; Bogart 1992; Cambor 1999; Doss 1992; Glazer 1996). Gone are the days when equestrian

---

and 1989; 33.3 % between 1990 and 1998). Thus, the “Culture War” thesis can not adequately explain the conflicts found in our sample.

monuments commemorated common values of heroism and victory, or allegorical sculptures celebrated shared ideas of virtue, vice, justice or honor. Today, we face a swirl of identity politics, battles over culture and the loss of a common visual vocabulary. As Hayden (1995:6-7) argues, “Today, debates about the built environment and culture take place in a much more contested terrain of race, gender and class... the politics of identity are inescapable...” (see also Glazer 1996). Such an environment is hostile to representational public art because any enterprising group or individual can reinterpret the symbolic content of the work in a way that causes intolerable offense. Jerry Allen (1935:247) sums up the problem, “We live in a large, pluralistic society. We have no unifying religion; no great patriotic urges; no consensus about social, political or moral values. What type of art can express the great multiplicity of this culture?”

In searching for the answer to this question, many public officials and public arts advocates have settled on abstract art as the best alternative for today’s public spaces. Stripped of all recognizable symbols, it becomes immune to groups seeking visual cues for which they can take offense. Moreover, abstract art allows for a diversity of interpretations and meanings -- a perfect fit for a post-modern world. As R.H. Fuchs wrote “new icons must collect, rather than project, meaning” (Bach 1992: 161). In this respect, such public art projects as Maya Lin’s Vietnam Memorial, with its sunken stone structures and lack of explicit symbols, have met with ever-widening approval from public art critics and commentators (Beardsley 1981; Cambor 1999; Griswold 1992; Mitchell 1992; Nordlan 1983; Robinette 1976).

Others, however, disagree with this approach and might argue that rather than providing the opportunity for an infinite number of individual interpretations, abstract art leaves the average viewer with no interpretation at all (Doss 1994; Dubin 1992; Kaprow 1971; Levy 1997; Miles 1997). It is completely unfamiliar and meaningless. It is self-referential, autonomous and free from everyday life; and this yawning gap of sensibility between artist and general society renders clashes inevitable (Levy 1997:115). As Bell (1976:40) writes, “the legacy of modernism is that of the free, creative spirit at war with [bourgeois] society.” As a response, critics and commentators, including Stalker and Glymour (1982), call for a return to more figurative public art that clearly celebrates the identity and heritage of the sponsoring communities.

When I examined my sample, I found that abstract art provoked more controversy than representational art. Table 1 shows that only one of eleven representational works -- or 9.1 percent -- caused a controversy. In contrast, of those projects that included at least one abstract work of art, thirteen of thirty, or 43.3 percent were controversial. This difference is statistically significant. Initial evidence, therefore, supports the notion that abstract public art is less likely to be understood and accepted by a community than more traditional representational works.

---

TABLE 1  
Style of Artwork **BY** Outcome\*

	Conflict		% w/ Conflict	Total N
	No	Yes		
Style of Artworks				
• Representational	10	1	9.1	11
• Abstract	17	13	43.3	30
Total	27	14	34.1	41

Pearson Chi-Square = 4.2 which is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

\*No Conflict = no official or organized conflict; conflict did not go beyond a few unorganized letters to the GSA or to the local newspaper.

\*Yes Conflict = a government official or newspaper editor took a public stand against an art work; and/or members of the community participated in an organized protest (letter-writing campaign, petition, street protest, etc.).

*City Characteristics.* The second set of orienting questions deals with the relationship between characteristics of cities and the likelihood of conflict over a public art installation. As mentioned earlier, some maintain that conflicts over art will more likely occur in large cities where identity politics often foment and shape battles over culture. Moreover, according to the traditional “decline of community” thesis (Tönnies 1963), residents in large urban places share fewer common values and have less group solidarity, which may, in turn, lead to social conflict and disorder. On the other hand, as Simmel (1957) suggests, conflict may be more likely to occur in small cities where there is a stronger sense of shared identity and where any deviation from the norm is viewed with suspicion and/or hostility.

According to my sample of forty-one projects, I find that conflicts over public art installations occur more often in smaller cities than in larger cities. Table 2 shows that in cities with populations under 250,000 persons, 46 percent of the installations were controversial, whereas in

cities with populations greater than 250,000 persons, only 18.8 percent of the cases caused official or organized conflict. While not statistically significant, the difference is striking. Perhaps controversies erupt in smaller cities because these communities are more likely to share a stronger sense of identity (Simmel 1955) and to feel that public art -- especially modern art -- challenges this identity and violates some notion of sacred space. As Allen (1985:249) suggests, residents in smaller communities may feel a certain kind of ‘territoriality’ about the public spaces they inhabit. Public art, especially federally-sponsored art, might violate this local “turf,” thereby provoking public outcry. In contrast, in big cities there may be less shared identity; people are surrounded by an abundance of visual stimuli, making any one symbol less likely to stand out. Finally, residents of larger cities might be more familiar with modern art—and, therefore, less shocked or threatened when confronted by it in a public space.

TABLE 2  
Size of City **BY** Outcome

Size of City	Conflict		% w/ Conflict	Total N
	No	Yes		
• <250000	13	11	46.0	24
• >250000	13	3	18.8	16
Total	26	14	35.0	40

Pearson Chi-Square = 3.1 which is significant at the .1 level (2-tailed).

In addition to the total number of residents in a city, population shifts are thought to influence the nature and scope of public conflict. As Beisel (1990) points out, fights over art and pornography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were closely linked to the influx of immigrants to American cities. American elites sought to create boundaries between themselves and newcomers by attacking and



denigrating what they considered “foreign,” and hence harmful, culture. Moreover, Gusfield (1963) and Zurcher and Kirkpatrick (1976) argue that large population shifts disrupt established community hierarchies as people with high status feel increasingly threatened by low-status groups that are gaining both in size and political power. Symbolic crusades, including campaigns against art and culture, are seen as efforts by an elite to secure its position amidst shifting winds of change.

In this analysis, I use population change as a rough approximation of the degree to which a community is experiencing growth and instability. Population growth is likely to lead to changes in the demographic profile of a community, changes that might well stir up the political and cultural status quo. And, according to such theories, we might expect conflicts over the arts to be more prevalent in communities experiencing such rapid change. My data bear this out.

According to table 3, I find that only eight of thirty projects – or 26 percent -- were controversial in cities that experienced negative population growth or growth of less than 5 percent over the course of ten years.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, in cities with population growth above 5 percent, five of eight, or 62.5 percent of the cases were controversial. Thus there is initial evidence that controversies over public art are more likely to arise in cities that are experiencing large, positive population shifts.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Population growth was measured by the difference between each city’s current population and its population ten years previously. Where current data were not available, I used census data from the year closest to the installation of the artwork.

<sup>7</sup> The positive relationship between population change and the likelihood of conflict could be an artifact of city size (which is highly correlated with population change – smaller cities tend to have larger percentage population growth). However, a logistic regression model with both population change and city size included, reveals a strong, independent effect of population change. The effect of city size, on the other hand, while still negatively related to conflict (less conflict in larger cities) is not statistically significant in the model.

TABLE 3  
City Population Growth **BY** Outcome

	Conflict		% w/ Conflict	Total N
	No	Yes		
Population Change*				
• ≤ 5%	22	8	26.0	30
• > 5%	3	5	62.5	8
Total	25	13	34.2	38

\*Population change includes both growth and decline. Twenty-three cities experienced negative population growth.

Pearson Chi-Square is 3.6, which is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

*Community Participation.* My third orienting question deals with the effect of local community participation on conflict. As mentioned above, reformers and innovators in the field have long heralded the positive benefits of involving the sponsoring community early in the design and implementation of public art projects (Balfe 1986; Doss 1994; Miles 1997). On the other hand, others argue that the more active a community becomes in the project, the greater its emotional investment and feelings of ownership -- factors that could backfire if the final project fails to meet expectations. Artist Robert Irwin describes the challenge of working with a very active group of volunteers who have high expectations and ambiguous preferences. He says, "So they (the volunteers) bring you into a room and offer you the project. You look at it and you know right up front that this is a very dangerous project. I mean very dangerous!" (Esterow 1986:241).

However, based on my sample, I find that in cases where members of the community participated in nominating the artist, reviewing the design, or meeting with the architect or artist,

only 23.5 percent of the projects were controversial.<sup>8</sup> (See table 4). In cases where there was no informal community input, 41.7 percent of the installations were controversial. From these very rough statistics, there appears to be some evidence for the position that community involvement is important to the success of public art projects.

TABLE 4  
Extra-panel Community Participation **BY** Outcome

	Conflict		% w/ Conflict	Total N
	No	Yes		
Informal Community Participation*				
• No	14	10	41.7	24
• Yes	13	4	23.5	17
Total	27	14	34.1	41

Pearson Chi-Square is not statistically significant

\*Non-panel members of the community participate in nominating artist, reviewing design, meeting with architect/artist, etc.?

*Community Participation and Artistic Freedom.* As mentioned above, some members of the art world have resisted attempts to involve community members in the design of an artwork, arguing that such participation could limit the autonomy of the artist and compromise the quality of the final work. Critics like Greenberg and Danto maintain that “art by democracy” is nothing more than a popularity contest with the final artistic product approaching kitsch. This raises two important issues. *First, is there evidence that community participation in AiA projects leads to*

<sup>8</sup> There are two ways in which community members can become involved in an AiA project. The first is through the formal panel structure where citizens participate either as informal advisers to, or as voting members of, the committee that nominates artists and reviews design proposals. Alternatively, or in addition to, participating on panels, citizens in a community are often involved in the process informally – either by participating in *ad hoc* discussions with the artist, architect or project manager, or by reviewing and commentating on a publicly-displayed model of the proposed artistic design. In this paper, I only present results that reflect the importance of informal community participation. However, there is also some evidence that citizen participation on the formal panel system leads to less controversy once the artwork is installed.

*active censorship or “editing” of artistic designs? And, if so, does such “editing” lead to more popular – i.e., less controversial -- works?*

From my sample, there is no overwhelming evidence that community participation limits artistic freedom. I found evidence in only four of forty-one cases that the artist modified the design of an artwork in response to concerns from the community or program staff. In addition, there is little evidence that fewer abstract artists were selected when citizens were involved in the process or that, once selected, artists exercised self-censorship in the presence of community participation. While Greenberg and Danto would have expected community participation to lead to more popular and less “avante garde” artworks, in my sample I find that abstract sculpture is just as likely to be commissioned by panels comprised of local citizens as by AiA panels made up entirely of art world professionals.

Thus, for the most part, even with active community participation, the AiA program has afforded its artists a free hand in creating works for federal buildings. In fact, in one of the few instances of official intervention, community participation actually helped preserve the original design of a sculpture commissioned from artist Maria Alquilar. Alquilar signed a contract with the GSA in 1984 to create an outdoor sculpture for the San Luis Federal Border Station in Arizona. A year later, she submitted a proposal for *Bien Venida Vaya Con Dios*<sup>9</sup> -- a round ceramic sculpture, fifteen feet in diameter, with mystical and surreal depictions of children, animals and angels. The sculpture also included a representation of a crucifix. The design was publicized in the local newspaper and displayed at a nearby community center. Public reaction to the piece was

---

<sup>9</sup> English translation is “Welcome... May You Go with God.”

unanimously positive. Nonetheless, the GSA was concerned about the religious overtones of the piece and asked Alquilar to re-design the sculpture without the crucifix. Alquilar refused, arguing that a crucifix need not be interpreted as a religious symbol – after all, she wrote, “the cross is also a ‘plus’ – we get an A+ in school for being good; ... a cross is also the difficulties we pass through in our lifetime (a cross to bear)...and, many Mexicans ‘cross’ over the border to a new life...” (Alquilar 1986). The GSA considered canceling the project, but ultimately resisted because of its widespread support in the community. Instead, as a compromise, they asked the artist to compile a list of her Jewish patrons, presumably as evidence that her work appealed to Jews and Christians alike. The sculpture was installed as originally designed and was received by the community without incident.

However, there were two cases in my sample where community participation led to explicit editing of an original artistic design. In *Justice and the Prairie* – a mural representing early settlement in Kansas – artist Richard Haas was asked by a group of Native Americans to re-design his depiction of early Indian residents, in particular, to change several figures from a kneeling posture to a more “dignified” and proud stance. In addition, others asked the artist to include more white European settlers (apparently the original design focused primarily on the history of African-American and Native-American residents). Haas agreed to both changes and the final mural was installed in Kansas City without controversy.

Similarly, there is evidence that a local judge pre-censored an installation by Jenny Holzer for a federal courthouse in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Holzer designed a series of fourteen granite benches incised with “truisms” that evoked competing sentiments and ideologies. In all, Holzer

submitted eighty truisms for approval by the GSA and the local review committee. Along with her “preferred” texts, she offered several dozen alternatives. An internal memorandum (GSA 1995) shows the edits of a resident federal judge who went through the proposal with a red pen and made wholesale substitutions for the preferred texts. In particular, he replaced most of the messages that evoked political themes (see column 1 below) with more benign phrases that were suggested as alternatives by the artist (see column 2). Below are a few examples:

---

<u>Preferred text (by the artist)</u>	<u>Judge’s replacement selection</u>
<i>1. Men don’t protect you anymore</i>	<i>1. Savor kindness because cruelty is always possible later</i>
<i>2. A man can’t know what it’s like to be a mother</i>	<i>2. A positive attitude makes all the difference in the world</i>
<i>3. In some instances its better to die then to continue</i>	<i>3. It’s better to be a good person than a famous person</i>
<i>4. Murder has a sexual side</i>	<i>4. Occasionally principles are more valuable than people</i>
<i>5. Slipping into madness is good for the sake of comparison</i>	<i>5. Solitude is enriching</i>
<i>6. Romantic love was invented to manipulate women</i>	<i>6. Routine is a link with the past</i>
<i>7. Fathers often use too much force</i>	<i>7. Fake or real, indifference is a powerful personal weapon</i>
<i>8. Change is valuable when the oppressed become tyrants</i>	<i>8. Being alone with yourself is increasingly unpopular</i>

As in the Kansas City design, the final artistic product, with the judge's edits, was installed without controversy. In both cases, local citizens or officials helped to remove potentially inflammable content (or add content deemed important) from a proposed artwork prior to its installation. So, although artistic freedom seems to be the norm for most AiA projects, there is evidence that, at least in some cases, community participation might reduce conflict by actively censoring or editing provocative or challenging content from an artwork.

*Debates Over Public Art: Useful Frames.* Finally, what is the nature of the debate over public art installations? Which arguments are mobilized by supporters and which by adversaries? Table 5 ranks the arguments used by advocates according to their frequency (e.g. the number of cases in which these arguments were employed). Supporters of a given installation were most likely to frame their argument in terms of "boosting city status." For example, in Alaska, one editorialist for the *Anchorage Daily News* argued that by commissioning world-renowned artists, Anchorage had made itself "less provincial and more modern" (Rubenstein 1980). And, in another opinion editorial, a writer remarked, "such major works will help elevate Anchorage to the level where it will have its own personality...and residents will then have much more to brag about" (Johnson 1980). In Detroit, a group of citizens came together to raise additional money for the AiA installation so that the city could afford "a major work -- one that would attract national attention and put Detroit on the cultural map..." (Thalacker 1979). The prevalence of this frame ("city status") is not surprising, given that political and religious elites have historically used works of art and architecture as markers of accomplishment and progress (Sennett 1994:94; Wallis 1991).

Also, supporters often defend a project by pointing out that the commissioned artist is respected and admired by professionals in the art world. One reviewer defended the work of William King in Akron, Ohio, by writing, "Regardless of what I may think about the sculpture, there are those in the world of art who regard King as an important contemporary American art figure..." (Cooper 1979). And Donald Thalacker, former director of the AiA program, often included in his standard letter to critics the fact that AiA artists are selected by a "national panel of art experts." Relying on language of "expertise" and "professionalism" is an important way to claim authority and legitimacy in the public sphere (Gerth 1991;

Starr 1982). In describing the professionalization of medicine, Starr (1982:4) writes, “the power of the professions primarily originates in their knowledge and competence....when professionals claim to be authoritative about the nature of reality, we generally defer to their judgement.” Thus, as in medicine, the opinion of the lay public is discounted by an art world that claims only “professionals” can judge what is good and bad art. As critic Arthur Danto (1985:289) states, “addressing the general will [on matters of art] is as inappropriate as consulting it on technologies of sanitation or traffic flow” (see also Carver 1994).

TABLE 5

Frequency of each frame used by advocates of an AiA installation\*

Frame Used	# of cases in which the frame was used
• The artwork helps to boost city status	11
• The artist or artwork is respected by professionals in the field	9
• Art is supposed to be controversial	9
• The project is a good investment (i.e., The art is worth more than we paid for it)	7
• Public art is good for democracy; it is a symbol of progress	6
• The art is beautiful; it improves the environment	3
• Opponents of the artwork are censors	2

\*Frequency is derived by examining the arguments used in all 41 cases, not just conflict cases, although frames were more likely invoked once an artwork became controversial.

Finally, advocates are likely to downplay negative reaction by claiming that it is the function of public art to provoke controversy and stimulate thought. One artist was quoted in the *Asheville Citizen Times* as saying “Artists are used to sparking debate.... Art has to be on the leading edge of society or it wouldn’t contribute anything” (Sandford 1995). On a lighter note, one citizen offered the following praise for James Surl’s *Sea Flower* in New Bedford, Massachusetts: “I think it’s just great...it is the burr in the pants of our city. Anything that gets as much reaction can’t be all bad” (*Standard-Times*1978). This notion of public art as *objet provocateur*,



however, contradicts the opinion of the majority of citizens who feel art is either supposed to be beautiful or the embodiment of a community's heritage and identity. Interestingly, advocates rarely (only three times) defend an installation by emphasizing the beauty or artistic quality of the art itself.

On the other hand, if we examine table 6, we find that opponents of artworks are most likely to poke fun at the art and coin some derisive comparison. For example, in Alaska, an abstract wood sculpture by Tom Doyle was deemed the "Tinker Toys"; and a large, yellow abstract sculpture by William Goodman in Las Cruces, New Mexico was referred to as the Jolly Green Giant's Urinal, and later re-named by the local press, the "Hemorrhoid." In Anchorage, Alaska, a local editor compared a large abstract canvas to "finger painting by four-year olds who were permitted to splash paint about randomly as long as their drippings fell on the cloth" (Hipple 1981). If abstract art is seen as a foreign object in a community, as argued previously, then the strategy of derision and name-calling begins to make sense. Name-calling reduces the object to familiar terms; it turns the sacred into the profane, thereby helping the viewer take control over an otherwise threatening work of art. According to Senie (1992), literal or derisive comparisons (e.g., "it looks like a baboon") help to create an accessible frame of reference. She writes, "These comparisons are attempts to understand and make sense of the visible world, to place strange objects that have invaded familiar spaces into a known context" (Senie 1992:243).

TABLE 6

Frequency of each frame used by opponents of an AiA installation\*

Frame Used	# of cases in which the frame was used
• Derision frame or making fun of the artwork	16
• The artwork is a waste of money	15
• The artist or artwork doesn't represent the identity of the community	10
• The artwork is a hoax played by the federal government at our expense	8
• The artwork is ugly	6
• The government has no right to put this art in our community (resistance to authority)	5
• The artwork is elitist	4
• The artwork is harmful to society	2

\*Frequency is derived by examining the arguments used in all 41 cases, not just conflict cases, although frames were more likely invoked once an artwork became controversial.

Critics are also likely to claim that the installation is a waste of taxpayer's money. Even in the case of the much admired Calder sculpture (*Flamingo*) in Chicago, one angry citizen wrote to the General Service Administration, "It is disgraceful that the government should spend so much on a sculpture" (Billings 1973). And in Anchorage, Alaska the art installations were referred to as a "wretched public waste" (Hipple 1981). In New Bedford, Massachusetts, a woman offered the familiar argument, "In a depressed area [like Bedford]... the money could have been better spent helping people in need" (Washburn 1978). Interestingly, although citizens often object to the cost of public art, there is a negative relationship between a project's actual cost and the amount of controversy it generates. In other words, 50 percent of the projects under \$50,000 were controversial; whereas only 24 percent of those exceeding \$50,000 were controversial.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps "wasting the taxpayer's money" is just a readily available and salient frame for opponents and does not necessarily reflect their careful assessment of the cost and value of a piece of public art.

<sup>10</sup> Results not presented, but available upon request.

Finally, I find that opponents often claim that the artwork does not fit the identity of their community or city. Again, in New Bedford, Massachusetts (Surl's *Seaflower*), one citizen complained in a letter to the GSA, "you commissioned an artist from the distant state of Texas and claim this conglomerate 'blends with New Bedford's historic past.' My city is a quaint, simple place...and it is obvious that the artist has no respect for our past..." (Taylor 1978). Another person wrote, "How much does a Texas resident really know about the temper of the New Bedford man?" (Varney 1978). As another example, in Asheville, North Carolina, one citizen complained about a large steel abstract sculpture by Albert Paley installed in front of the courthouse. She wrote, "Why didn't the artist try to capture our picturesque mountains or our pioneer spirit? This sculpture doesn't identify with most Asheville citizens. If they put a sculpture of Elvis beside it, they could have called it, 'Hunka, Hunka Burning Metal.' This we could have identified with" (*Asheville Citizen Times*, July 2, 1995). It is interesting to note that the "identity frame" is most often used by residents in smaller cities. Again, this suggests a relationship between art, public space and community identity. Where group solidarity and identity are stronger, as they often are in smaller cities, events that deviate from the norm will more likely be met with suspicion and hostility.

### Concluding Observations

On the basis of the analysis here, I can offer a tentative answer to the question, "What types of public art projects are most controversial?" *Controversies are most likely to erupt over abstract art placed in relatively small cities. This is especially true when the community is not asked to*

*participate in the project in any meaningful way and when the local population has experienced rapid growth in size*

Art historian, Gerald Nordlan (1983:6), has argued that “oftentimes an audience is predisposed against new forms of art just because they are new, and therefore surprising and unexpected.”

In large cities, the unexpected is expected. In such places, abstract public art just gets lost in the general kudzu of strangeness. In smaller cities, such art sticks out, in the words of one disgruntled citizen, “like a half-inch purple wart on the end of someone’s nose” (Perry 1975).

Without accompanying education and background material, modern art often remains an unfamiliar object on familiar turf. And in the spirit of John Ruskin, who publicly attacked the modern paintings of James Whistler in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the public reacts by accusing the artist, in Ruskin’s words, “of having flung a pot of paint in the public’s face” (Carver 1994).

On the other hand, there is little evidence that conflicts are the result of identity politics or explicit political maneuvering by certain groups in a community. In fact, in my sample there is not a single example of a group – e.g., a church, an interest group, an ethnic alliance or a chamber of commerce – initiating a protest over an artwork. Instead, conflicts originated with individual grievances (e.g., office workers from the building where the art was situated) or they were stoked by local newspaper crusades. This finding, however, might be an artifact of my sample—there were very few cases of representational artworks placed in large cities where interest group and identity politics are more prevalent. And it is precisely in these places that we would expect enterprising groups to use images from public art projects as an opportunity to vent

a grievance or advance a political agenda.<sup>11</sup> More examples of representational art placed in large cities are needed to test adequately this theory.

It is also important to note that AiA installations are public in a limited sense. While they are government-funded and publicly accessible, most of the projects are not “public” in the sense of serving an explicitly “civic” purpose. Historically, most of America’s public art comes in the form of monuments designed to unify a community and promote certain cherished civic virtues, such as bravery, fortitude or tolerance. In our modern, multicultural society, however, existing and newly proposed monuments are often targets of fractious debates, as citizens fight for control over these important public symbols (Cambor 1999).

In my sample, only two AiA projects explicitly aimed at providing an historical narrative about the sponsoring community -- Haas’ *Justice and the Prairie* and Adams’ *Tulsey Judicial Window*. Two other projects attempted to deal with broader civic themes – Alquilar’s *Bien Venido* and Moore’s *Justice*. (See appendix A). In contrast, the vast majority of projects were guided by artistic and aesthetic goals rather than civic ones. Thus by shifting emphasis away from the act of political commemoration (e.g., monuments), the GSA likely diminished the chances of public controversy.

---

<sup>11</sup> A good example of identity politics and cultural conflict in urban places can be found in the case of a percent-for-art project proposed for a newly constructed New York City public school. The local community--largely Dominican—rejected a proposed artwork by a Jewish artist. On the surface, the artwork seemed apolitical – it included a fiberglass horse standing on a small red chair. However, parents apparently objected because they felt the work celebrated the history of the Conquistadores and also encouraged their children to act like horses. At the root of the controversy was the fact that the initial proposal for the construction of the school was opposed by a nearby Yeshiva (Hartcollis 1994).

In this study, I also found modest support for the idea that community participation in the selection and design of art for public places helps to reduce conflict. And while in most instances such participation did not reduce an artist's creative autonomy, there were a few cases where community input led to important modifications in an original design. However, a more detailed review of the notes from AiA panel meetings, as well as interviews with artists, program administrators and community participants, would be necessary to understand more fully the influence of community participation on the final design of AiA installations. Do artists self-censor in an attempt to meet community preferences? Do community members get co-opted by arts professionals when serving on AiA selection panels? Or do these members assert independent opinions that help shape the dynamics and ultimate decisions of the panels?

Finally, by focusing on official and organized protest, this study ignores individual and private responses to AiA installations. Interviews with passersby would help illuminate the reactions, preferences and experiences of individual citizens confronted by such artworks in their communities.

By analyzing conflict over public art, I do not mean to imply that such conflict is bad. In fact, many scholars and cultural policy makers contend that it is precisely the function of public art to generate debate, discourse and democratic participation (Doss 1994; Miles 1997; Mitchell 1992; Raven 1993; Senie 1992; Thalacker 1980; Wiens 1994). However, my findings suggest that such debates are often superficial and rarely lead to productive dialogue. Citizens, often provoked by the press, make disparaging comments and resort to uncivil, albeit humorous, name-calling. The arts community, on the other hand, defends the work on philosophical, economical

or professional grounds, but rarely engages in a discussion about the artistic qualities of the work itself. As author Harriet Senie (1992:237) writes, “Time and time again well-meaning individuals involved with a public art commission are shocked that their carefully considered project is so glaringly misunderstood. Hands are wrung, wounds are licked, participants commiserate, the public laments, and yet another opportunity for dialogue and understanding is lost.”

In conclusion, this study has moved research and discussion about public art beyond single case studies. It has also provided some balance to the disproportionate attention paid to explicitly provocative art (Mapplethorpe, Serrano, Sprinkle). In our sample, conflicts arose over substantively neutral artworks – i.e., works that were not intended to be especially provocative. Nonetheless, controversies did erupt, although not in the majority of the cases. By examining a large sample of projects we begin to see patterns in the relationship between conflict and both the size and structure of a community and the style of an artwork. It is important to note, however, that these findings apply to federally-funded percent-for-art projects and can not necessarily be generalized to state and city level percent-for-art programs. For example, reactions to an abstract public sculpture might differ depending on whether the patron is the federal government or the local arts council.

Moreover, while this study sheds light on “why some *artworks* are more controversial than others,” it reveals less about “why some *communities* are more contentious than others.” To understand cultural conflict from this perspective, we need more in-depth comparisons of communities themselves. In other words, we need to go beyond single events (e.g., the

installation of a particular artwork in a particular place and time) and compare the total number of art conflicts experienced by different communities over an extended period of time. Such a study can offer additional insight into the relationship between culture, conflict and community.



## **Bibliography:**

- AiA Web site. December 1998. <http://W3.GSA.gov/web/p/intera:a.nsf>
- Allen, Jerry. 1985. "How Art Becomes Public" in Cruikshank, Jeffrey and Korza, Pam (ed.) *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places*. 1988. Amherst: Arts Extension Service. Pp244-251.
- Alquilar, Maria. 1986. Letter to the GSA, April 12, 1986. GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, DC.
- Asheville Citizen-Times*. 1995. "Art or Junk? Most Readers Say Sculpture Ugly Ripoff." *Citizen-Times*, Local:9A: Asheville, NC. July 2, 1995.
- Atkins, Robert. 1995. "When Art is Public, The Making Is, Too" *New York Times*, Sec. 2, July 23, 1995.
- Bach, Penny Balkin. 1992. *Public Art in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Balfe, Judith and Wyszomirski, Margaret. 1986. "Public Art and Public Policy." *The Journal of Arts Management and Law*, vol. 15, no. 4, Winter 1986.
- Beardsley, John. 1981. *Art in Public Places: a Survey of Community-sponsored Projects Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts*. Washington: Partners for Livable Places.
- Beisel, Nicola. 1990. "Class, Culture and Campaigns Against Vice in Three American Cities, 1872-1892." *American Sociological Review* 55: 44-62.
- Bell, Daniel. 1976. *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bellah, Robert. 1973. "Introduction and Postscript" in Emile Durkheim's *On Morality and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Billings, Violet. 1973. Letter to Congressman Jim Wright. GSA/AiA Archives, project #AA25, Washington, D.C.
- Boettger, Suzaan. 1982. "Scenes from a Marriage: Public Art and the Public." *Newsletter of the International Sculpture Center*: July/August.
- Bogart, Michele. 1992. "The Rise and Demise of Civic Virtue." In Senie and Webster (eds). *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Bolton, Richard (ed.). 1992. *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Arts*. New York: New Press.

- Cambor, Kate. (1999). "Recasting the Stones." *American Prospect* 43, March/April 1999: 75-81.
- Carver, Stuart. 1994. "Whistler vs. Ruskin: The Courts, the Public and Modern Art." In Richard Burt's (ed) *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism and the Public Sphere*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cooper, David B. 1979. "Good art need not be 'pretty.'" *Akron Beacon Journal*. October 15, 1979.
- Cruikshank, Jeffrey and Korza, Pam (ed.). 1988. *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places*. Amherst: Arts Extension Service.
- Danto, Arthur. 1985. "Public Art and the General Will," *Nation* 241 September 28, 1985: p288
- Dorsen, Harriette. 1985. "Statement Arguing in Support of Tilted Arc." Statement delivered on March 6, 1985 at a hearing held at the Court of International Trade. Published in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk's (eds) *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1991: p108.
- Doss, Erika. 1994. *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Baltimore: Penguin Books.
- Dubin, Steven. 1992. *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions*. New York: Routledge
- Esterow, Milton. 1986. "How Public Art Becomes a Political Hot Potato." *ARTnews*: January, 1986. In Cruikshank, Jeffrey and Korza, Pam (ed.) *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places*. Amherst: Arts Extension Service: 240-43
- Fischer, Claude. 1976. *The Urban Experience*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Fleming, Ronald Lee and von Tscharnner, Renata. 1981. *PlaceMakers: Creating Public Art That Tells You Where You Are*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- General Service Administration. 1995. Internal document, May 31, 1995. Edits by Judge Edward Cahn to "Proposed Texts-GSA-Allentown Benches." GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, DC.
- Gerth, H.H. and C. Wright Mills (translated and edited by). 1991. *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*. New York : Routledge.

- Glazer, Nathan. 1966. "Monuments in an Age without Heroes." *Public Interest*. Spring, 1996.
- Glueck, Grace. 1982. "Art in Public Places Stirs Widening Debate." *New York Times*. May 23, 1982.
- Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis*. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.
- Greenberg, Clement. 1939. "Avant Garde and Kitsch." *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5, Fall 1939. Also in John O'Brian's (ed) "Perceptions and Judgement, 1939-1944, vol.1 of *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Griswold, Charles. 1992. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography." In Senie and Webster (eds). *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Gusfield, Joseph. 1963. *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Hartocollis, Anemona. 1994. "The New WPA." *Newsday*. October 12, 1994.
- Hayden, Dolores. 1995. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hipple, Arthur. 1981. "Subsidy of Art: a Wretched Public Waste." *The Anchorage Times*. April 15, 1981.
- Horn, Miriam. 1989. "Of Rusted Walls and Flying Pigs." *U.S. News and World Report* vol. 106, no. 14, p57: April 10.
- Hough, Michael. 1990. *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hubbard, William. 1984. "A Meaning for Monuments." In Glazer and Lilla's (eds) *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces*. New York: The Free Press.
- Hunter, James Davidson. 1991. *Culture Wars*, New York: Basic Books.
- Jacobs, Jane. 1963. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Modern Library.
- Johnson, Maggie. 1980. "Federal Building Art Helps Give Anchorage Personality." *Anchorage Daily News*. September 5, 1980.
- Joint GSA-NEA Task Force. 1980. "Report of the Task Force on the AiA Program, January 22, 1980." GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, DC.
- Kaprow, Allan. 1971. "The Education of the Un-Artist." *ArtNews*, February 1971.

- Koshar, Rudy. 1994. "Building Pasts: Historic Preservation and Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany." In John R. Gillis (ed) *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kovel, Joel. 1985. "Statement Arguing in Support of Tilted Arc." Statement delivered on March 6, 1985 at a hearing held at the Court of International Trade. Published in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk's (eds) *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*. Cambridge: MIT Press: 1991.
- Kunstler, James Howard. 1993. *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of American-made Landscapes*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Levy, Howard Alan. 1997. *Government and the Arts: Debates over Federal Support of the Arts in America from George Washington to Jesse Helms*. New York: University Press of America.
- Lipske, Mike. 1985. *Places as Art*. New York: Publishing Center for Cultural Resources.
- Lyndon, Donlyn. 1984. "Public Buildings: Symbols Qualified by Experience." In Glazer and Lilla's (eds) *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces*. New York: The Free Press.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. 1982. "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime." *Artforum* 20 Apr. 1982: p67.
- Miles, Malcolm. 1997. *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*. New York: Routledge.
- Mills, Nicolaus. 1990. "The Culture of Triumph and the Spirit of the Times." In *Culture in an Age of Money: The Legacy of the 1980s in America*. (Ed) by Nicolaus Mills. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Mitchell, W.J.T (ed). 1992. *Art in the Public Sphere*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Nordland, Gerald. 1983. *Controversial Public Art: From Rodin to Di Suvero*. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum.
- Perry, Roy. 1975. Letter to President Gerald Ford. GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, D.C. Project # AA191. June 4, 1975.
- Peter, Jennifer and Louis Crosier (eds). 1995. *The Cultural Battlefield: Art Censorship and Public Funding*. New Hampshire: Avocus Publishing
- Raven, Arelen (ed). 1993. *Art in the Public Interest*. New York: Da Capo Press.

- Robinette, Margaret. 1976. *Outdoor Sculpture: Object and Environment*. New York: Whitney Library of Design.
- Rubenstein, Pam. 1980. "Art Lends Drama to Federal Building." *Anchorage Daily News*. August 1, 1980.
- Sandford, Jason. 1995. "Public Artwork Costs Taxpayers \$147,535." *Asheville Citizen Times*. June 27, 1995.
- Savage, Kirk. 1992. "The Self-made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial." In Senie and Webster (eds). *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Senie, Harriet and Webster, Sally (eds.). 1992. *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Senie, Harriet. 1992. "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception." In Senie and Webster (eds). *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Sennett, Richard. 1994. *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Serra, Richard. 1985. "Statement Arguing in Support of Tilted Arc." Statement delivered on March 6, 1985 at a hearing held at the Court of International Trade. Published in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk's (eds) *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1991.
- Simmel, Georg. 1955. *Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Snow, David, E. Burke Rochford, Steven Worden and Robert Benford. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Mobilization and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* 51: 464:81.
- Stalker, Douglas and Clark Glymour. 1982. "The Malignant Object: Thoughts on Public Sculpture." *Public Interest*, Winter, 1982.
- Standard-Times*. 1978. "Burr in City's Pants." Letter to the editor. New Bedford, MA. May 29, 1978.
- Starr, Paul. 1982. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Swearington, Scott. 1997. "Sacred Space in the City: Community Totems and Political Contests." *Research in Community Sociology*, v7.

- Taylor, Patricia. 1978. Letter to Donald Thalacker. GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, D.C. Project # AA174. April, 28, 1978.
- Tompkins, Calvin. 1985. "The Art World: Tilted Arc." *New Yorker*, May 20, 1985.
- Thalacker, Donald. 1979. "Fact Sheet: McNamara Federal Building." Internal Memorandum, November 15, 1979. GSA/AiA Archives, Washington, DC.
1980. *The Place of Art in the World of Architecture*. New York: Chelsea House Publisher.
- Varley, Don. 1978. "On \$9,000 trellis, it ought to look good." *The Standard-Times*. New Bedford: May 4, 1978.
- Wallis, Brian. 1991. "Selling Nations." *Art in America*, September 1994, pp85:90.
- Washburn, Mazelle. 1978. Letter to the editor. *The Standard-Times*. New Bedford: May, 4, 1978.
- Wiens, Ann. 1994. "Public? Art?" *The New Art Examiner*, January 1994: p9.
- Zukin, Sharon. 1996. "Space and Symbols in an Age of Decline" In *Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolis*. (ed) Anthony King. New York: NYU Press.
- Zurcher, Louis A. Jr. and George Kirkpatrick. 1976. *Citizens for Decency: Antipornography Crusades as Status Defense*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Appendix A  
Art-in-Architecture  
Summary of Cases

City of Installation	Artist	Date of Installation	Description of Art
Aberdeen, SD	Henslin, Stephen	9/23/81	“Model Lady” - an exterior abstract sculpture of cor-tel steel that is designed to provide a harmonious contrast to the geometry of the building and its environment.
Akron, OH	King, William	7/19/79	“Caring” – a large exterior aluminum sculpture depicting two figures: one standing and one kneeling. The figures are whimsical with flat and elongated arms and legs.
Allentown, PA	Holzer, Jenny	10/6/95	“Allentown Benches: Selections from Truism & Survival Series” - 14 interior benches of “prairie green” granite, each incised with texts from the artist’s 1977-79 “Truism” and “Survival Series.” The inscriptions offer a sampling of competing aphorisms and conflicting truths.
Anchorage, AK	1. Amason, Alvin Eli 2. Flavin, Dan 3. Francis, Sam 4. Hudson, Robert	11/1/79	1. “Chignik Rose” – oil painting with walrus tusks, paper mache, silk rose and a tree branch. 2. “Untitled” – sculpture consisting of two sets of wall-mounted fluorescent lights creating images of colored tubes that move across the lobby. 3. “Untitled” - floor to ceiling acrylic and oil canvas painting with splashes of color on a white background. 4. “Tiglet” – large painted aluminum sculpture featuring four suspended cubes. All four Anchorage installations are located indoors.
Asheville, NC	Paley, Albert	6/26/95	“Passage” – a 30’, jagged steel sculpture in the shape of an arch and located in the exterior plaza.
Baltimore, MD	1. Bladen, Ronald 2. Madsen, Loren 3. Witken Isaac	1. 5/8/81 2. 4/22/81 3. 7/2/81	1. “Host of the Eclipse” - an outdoor steel sculpture comprised of two black geometric shapes spanning a width of 63’ and height of 35’. 2. “Untitled” – sculpture of 72 suspended stones arranged in circle. 3. “Chorale” – indoor painted (blue) steel sculpture with simple geometric shapes and forms.
Bangor, ME	Jacquette, Yvonne	6/30/81	“Autumn Expansion” - three-panel mural of colorful autumn foliage installed in the interior lobby. The mural provides a bird’s-eye view of New England’s fall landscape.

Bedford, MA	Surls, James	4/3/78	“Sea-Flower” – an exterior, rough-hewn, wood sculpture measuring 10’ by 25’ and consisting of dozens of wooden posts coming out radially from the center.
Birmingham, AL	Hadzi, Dimitri	11/24/91	“Red Mountain” – an exterior work consisting of a variety of colored granite stones in simple shapes and variegated surfaces. This art is horizontal and sits directly on the entrance plaza.
Boston, MA	Kaufman, Jane	10/15/86	“Crystal Hanging” – a sculpture composed of 8 different types of Austrian crystals and mirrored cubes suspended in a cone shape over the ceiling of the atrium.
Bridgeport, CT	Norvell, Patsy	5/17/85	“Untitled” – an exterior, white-painted metal sculpture consisting of seven hollow, marble-like pillars arranged in a circle along the outer edge of the plaza.
Chicago, IL	Calder, Alexander	10/14/74	“Flamingo” – large, outdoor, steel stabile, painted red, with intersecting arcs –measures 53’ high, 60’ long and 24’ wide.
Chicago, IL	Stella, Frank	9/15/93	“The Town-Ho’s Story” – an interior aluminum and steel sculpture approximately 18’ high. The work includes more than a dozen pieces of scrap metal that have been bent, twisted and hammered together.
Columbia, SC	Neijna, Barbara	7/15/79	“Right Turn on White” – a 26’ by 12’ by 12’ white aluminum sculpture in the exterior courtyard. This abstract piece consists of a solid wall with its top edge torn backwards like a ribbon.
Detroit, MI	Chamberlain, John	9/25/82	“Detroit Deliquescence” – exterior sculpture constructed from various pieces of automobile body sheet-metal forged together in a crumpled and random fashion to resemble a pyramid.
Fairbanks, AK	Doyle, Tom	7/20/80	“Map of Alaska” – a polyurethane-coated white pine sculpture that was assembled from specially-milled tapered beams. The work is composed of triangular fan-shaped constructions which together represent the shape of Alaska. In December of 1984 the sculpture collapsed from the weight of heavy snow and was put in storage.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Gelfman, Lynne	2/1/79	“Pink 3/79” - an acrylic abstract painting with pigments that bleed through the canvas to create translucent pale colors.

---



Grand Rapids, MI	DiSuervo, Mark	6/4/77	“Moto Viget” - large exterior sculpture featuring criss-crossing steel beams with a swinging tire hanging from their intersection.
Hawthorne, CA	Arneson, Robert	9/23/80	“Ikaros” – interior abstract, ceramic sculpture—a concentric formation of reptilian-like ceramic parts—depicting the 4000 year old myth of Ikaros.
Indianapolis, IN	Glaser, Milton	7/5/75	“Color Fuses” - acrylic on concrete, measuring 27’ by 672’, installed on the exterior of the building. This mural includes striated layers of red, yellow, blue and pink hues.
Iowa City, IA	Longo, Robert	4/18/95	“Sleep” - this exterior, metal-relief sculpture features a realistic representation of the heads and faces of 2 adults and 2 children. The sculpture was intended as a commentary on the Jonestown Massacre.
Jackson, MS	1. Christenberry, William 2. McGowen, Ed	1. 7/1/79 2. 7/16/79	1. “Southern Wall” - a seven-unit wall sculpture with white-washed lumber, weathered boards, tin siding, rural signs and photos of Mississippi. 2. “Mississippi Inscape” - an interior sculpture consisting of two pyramids of precast concrete covered with crushed obsidian. The sculpture includes an interior compartment of found objects visible through a window on the side of the piece.
Kansas City, KS	Haas, Richard	1/23/94	“Justice and the Prairie” - two curved murals, located on each side of the interior building lobby. One mural represents Kansas in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century during early settlement. The other depicts 20 <sup>th</sup> century Kansas City and includes a monumental figure of Justice.
Las Cruces, NM	Goodman, William	1/15/75	“Solirio” - a painted (bright yellow) steel stabile standing 18’ high. This outdoor sculpture resembles the tail of a diving whale.
Los Angeles, CA	1. Borofsky, Jonathan 2. Otterness, Tom 3. Shapiro, Joel	10/25/91	1. “Molecule Man” – exterior sculpture designed with four 32’ aluminum plates that have been cut in the silhouetted form of four athletes embracing. 2. “The New World” - a circular fountain and sculptural frieze unifying the exterior plaza. Nestled at the center of the fountain is a reclining bronze infant (naked), which appears to float on a cloud of mist. The frieze consists of naked, humanoid figures marching in a procession. 3. “Untitled” – an 11’-tall bronze sculpture of a cartwheeling figure. The figure is minimalist in form and constructed of stacked bronze elements.
Madison, WI	Sproat, Christopher	2/10/87	“Untitled” – exterior neon chandelier measuring 5’4” x 9”.

Memphis, TN	Shelton, Tom	5/1/80	“Where to Look for Birds” – an acrylic interior painting that employs symbols and images to identify different species of birds on a grid-like map of the U.S.
Miami, FL	Novros, David	5/1/84	“Frescoes in Courtyard” – abstract wall-length frescoes painted with reds, blues and purples.
New Haven, CT	Zucca, Edward	6/1/85	“Untitled” – two multi-toned interior wooden doors with inlaid geometric shapes.
New Orleans, LA	Samaras, Lucas Meadmore, Clement Kaplan, Annette Mitchell, Ann Weldon, Terry	7/26/76	1. “Silent Struggle” – large exterior abstract steel sculpture featuring a 6’ diameter circle balanced on inverted cone-like base. 2. “Out of There” – exterior, 16’ long, black steel sculpture that resembles an undulating ribbon. 3. “Journey Two” – an interior black and white wool tapestry of graphic design. 4. “Cumulus” – an interior abstract textile sculpture done in needle-weaving. 5. “Water Holes” – an interior sculptured cotton canvas perforated by semi-circular cuts depicting water holes.
Newark, NJ	Moore, Diana	6/30/94	“Justice” - an 11’ sculptured concrete head at the courtyard entrance featuring an androgynous-looking person – “Justice” – wearing a blindfold. The scale of the head was calculated so that its eyes are roughly level with those of the viewer
Philadelphia, PA	Nevelson, Louise	1/13/76	“Bicentennial Dawn” – a wooden sculpture consisting of 29 white multi-faceted, geometric columns arranged in three groupings in the interior lobby.
Portland, ME	Rockburne, Dorothea	2/1/96	“The Virtues of Good Government” - a 4.5’ by 105’ fresco along the top edge of the interior courtroom wall. The fresco is abstract and uses brightly colored geometric shapes to represent the virtues of hope, faith, prudence and magnanimity.
Portland, OR	Neri, Manuel	4/27/89	“Ventana al Pacifica” – an exterior marble-relief sculpture depicting 2 human figures on one side of the work and 1 figure on the obverse side.
Providence, RI	Willenbecher, John	8/24/82	“Untitled” – an 8’ by 7’ interior abstract relief sculpture featuring an archway comprised of a piece of garland hanging between 2 columns.

---

San Luis, AZ	Alquilar, Maria	11/13/87	“Bien Venida y Vaya Con Dios” (Welcome and Go With God) – exterior multi-tiered, ceramic sculpture. The sculpture depicts plants and animals in a mystical and surreal setting and evokes a spiritual theme related to immigrants and workers crossing the Mexican-American border.
Sandpoint, ID	Morrison, George	2/1/80	“Totem V” – a 16’ wood totem pole installed in the interior lobby.
Savannah, GA	Smyth, Ned	7/14/92	“Two Worlds Apart” – two glass and mosaic tiled columns of green and red placed in the front plaza. The columns have stylized capital – one a classical design and the other a palmetto motif.
St. Louis, MO	De Staebler, Stephen	7/12/87	“Birthplace” - a fossil-like, ceramic creation mounted on an interior lobby wall. The hue of the sculpture ranges from light gray to black and was created by baking pigments into the clay.
Syracuse, NY	Lewitt, Sol	11/12/79	“One, Two, Three” – an outdoor three-dimensional aluminum grid covered with white paint. This open cube is 15’ high, 15’ wide and 30’ long.
Tulsa, OK	Adams, Marrilynn	8/30/96	“Tulsey Judicial Window” – eight etched glass panels installed on an interior set of doors. The panels depict a person, place, law or event relevant to Oklahoma history.

---