Report #18

Visual Artists in Houston, Minneapolis, Washington, and San Francisco

Earnings and Exhibition Opportunities

National Endowment for the Arts

Research Division
October 1984

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National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

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PREFACE

This report examines the economic situation of visual artists living and working outside the three main American art centers of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. It is specially concerned with the processes for the selection of the art which is exhibited and sold in galleries, museums, and other exhibition spaces in four large cities considered as representative of the U.S. secondary art market. The nature of this study ruled out the use of such data bases as the Census of Population or the Current Population Survey utilized in the preparation of previous Research Division Reports that stressed comparison of artists with other occupations or artist employment trends over time. Since the focus of the report was on the access of artists to the art market, the artists studied were identified by exhibition history rather than by employment in arts occupations. The information gathered covered matters of attitude and opinion as well as demographics and economics.

The detailed work of this project was done by the Human Resources Research Organization located in Alexandria, Virginia. The principal investigators were Dr. Richard J. Orend and Dr. Batia Sharon. They were assisted in the preparation of the questionnaire by consultation with James Reinish, formerly associated with the Visual Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts and currently with the Zabriskie Gallery in New York City. Work in each of the four cities consisted of developing lists of exhibitors and meeting and working with them to determine which exhibitors showed or sold locally produced works of art in the 1976-78 period. These lists were used to develop the survey universes of artists in the four cities. The local project teams also assisted with arrangements for six to ten group discussions in each city. The persons responsible for these efforts were Mimi Webb-Miller and Jean Romeril in Houston; Lea Hagoel in Minneapolis; Charles Patrick and Mary Strobino in Washington; and Kathy Gurwell and Ricki Kimball in San Francisco. Over one thousand individuals assisted in the fieldwork by participating in the development of lists and group meetings or by completing and returning questionnaires. The research staff assisting with the data collection and processing included Ann Caggins, Mark Dearfield, Pat McGee, Patricia Orend, Eileen Sussman, Dolores Carson, Emma King, Linda Gorski, and Susan Blansfield. The Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts wishes to acknowledge with thanks the importance of the participation of the above persons and the many others who made this study possible.

Researchers who wish to look at the details of the study methods, a more complete set of data tables, and the questionnaires should obtain copies of the final report deposited into the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) sponsored by the National Institute of Education of the the U.S. Department of Education. Over six hundred United States institutions and sixty in other countries have complete microfiche collections of reports deposited into this system. They are also available through on-line computer access from several organizations that maintain the ERIC data base.

The identifying number of this report is ED # ED216990. Inquiries concerning the availability of a microfiche copy should be sent to: ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), Customer Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210 (telephone 703/841-1212). The full title of the report is: Orend, Richard J. and Sharon, Batia, "The Economic Conditions and Exhibition Processes of Artists in Four Cities: Final Report PO-81-1; prepared for the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington; Human Resources Research Organization, 300 Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, September 1981." The condensation for this Research Division Report was initially prepared for the Publishing Center for Cultural Resources by Rolfe Larson and subsequently revised and edited by the Research Division and the Publishing Center.

Research Division
National Endowment for the Arts
October 1984

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The cities of Houston, Minneapolis, Washington, and San Francisco have significant markets for locally produced art. In these cities, locally produced art is exhibited or sold by galleries, museums, and other spaces. In 1978 there were 83 exhibition spaces in Houston, 110 in Minneapolis, 122 in Washington, and 233 in San Francisco.

- The median professional art experience of practicing artists living and exhibiting in the four cities was twelve years.

- Very few artists in the four cities earned their livelihood from the sale of art; most held jobs or were supported by someone else. Artists' sales prospects seemed to be poorest in Washington and best in San Francisco.

- The median $718 earned from the sale of art by the artists in the four cities recouped half the median expense of $1,450 they incurred in the production of art.

- The number of hours spent by artists in the production of art was high compared with income they received from the sale of their art. Time spent on other work adversely affected the chance for a successful career as a practicing artist by reducing time for production, experimentation, and marketing efforts.

- Notwithstanding the large number of exhibition spaces found in the four cities, artists expressed dissatisfaction with exhibition opportunities and waiting time to obtain a show.

- Well-established artists may have had adequate exhibition opportunities through direct invitations from exhibitors; however, less well known and younger artists could only achieve significant exhibition and earnings through self-initiated efforts, determination, and a period of learning to work with the market system.

- Informal information networks were found to exist in each of the four cities. These networks supplied most artists with important information on such matters as which exhibitors to approach. However, about one-third of the artists did not seek out and take advantage of such information.

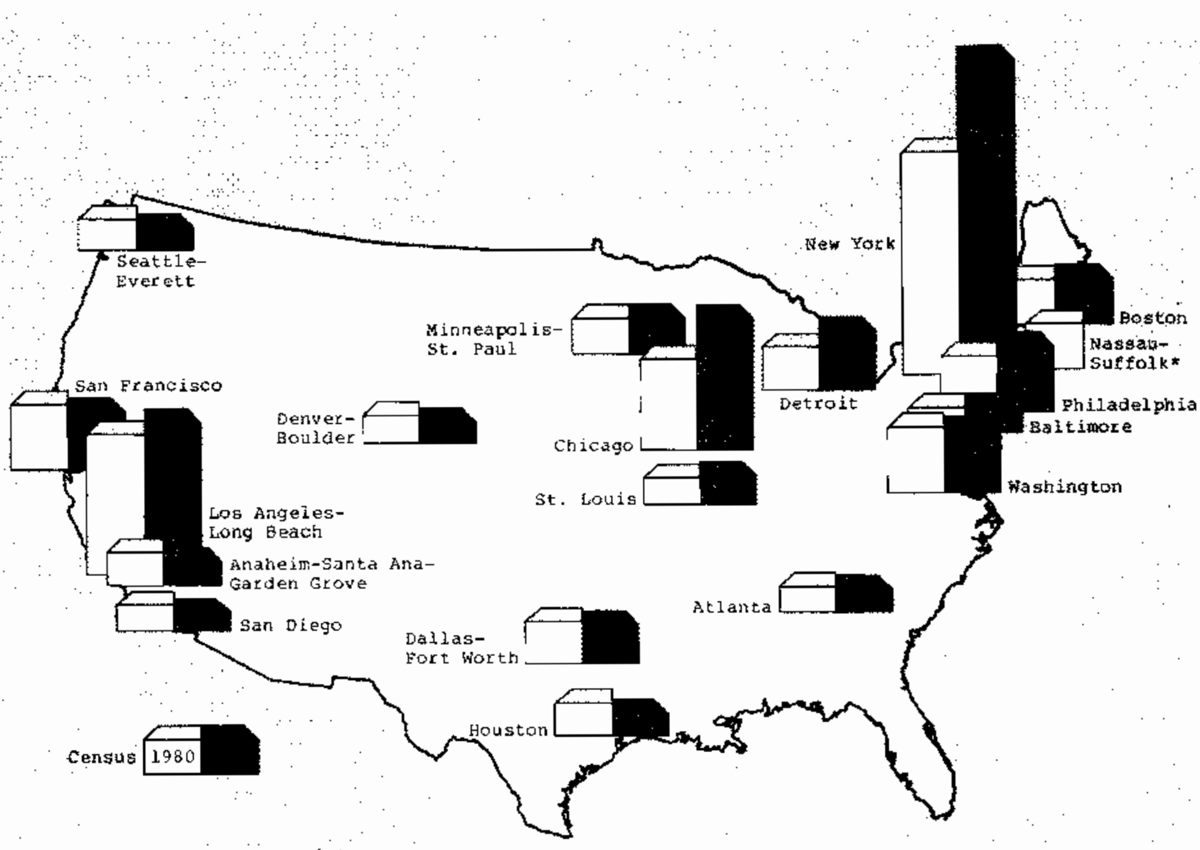
- Among the various methods used by artists to find information on exhibition opportunities, service organizations were the least used and personal contacts with other artists were the most used.

- Major differences were found in the perspectives of artists and exhibitors on the fairness of the exhibition selection process. Artists believed that selection was heavily weighted in favor of personal relationships and personal networks rather than being based on the merit of art. Exhibitors, on the other hand, viewed artists' expectations as unrealistic in terms of available space and sales. Exhibitors criticized artists because they seemed unconcerned about the special exhibition characteristics developed by particular spaces.

- Obtaining studio space was a major problem for artists in all four cities. Artists who did not have studio space continued to work despite high costs and regardless of other support. However, the lack of studio space reduced production time, and production time was related to art income. Artists and exhibitors advocated public acquisition of buildings to be rented as studio space.

- Cost of equipment and materials was a problem for artists in the four cities. Rent for studios in downtown areas was a problem in Minneapolis and Washington.

Cities with over 1 percent of U.S. visual artists



Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area	1980 Census	1970 Census
New York, NY-NJ	9.27%	13.12%
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	5.86%	6.34%
Chicago, IL	3.79%	5.49%
Washington, DC-VA-MD	2.75%	2.65%
San Francisco, CA	2.73%	2.45%
Philadelphia, PA-NJ	2.30%	2.76%
Boston, MA	1.86%	1.91%
Nassau-Suffolk, NY*	1.84%	N.A.
Detroit, MI	1.76%	2.59%
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	1.75%	1.65%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	1.45%	1.47%
Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, CA	1.35%	1.05%
Houston, TX	1.33%	.89%
Seattle-Everett, WA	1.30%	.95%
Denver-Boulder, CO	1.16%	.91%
St. Louis, MO-IL	1.12%	1.21%
San Diego, CA	1.08%	.77%
Atlanta, GA	1.07%	.96%
Baltimore, MD	1.05%	1.07%
Total	44.82%	48.24%

*Nassau-Suffolk was not a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area in 1970.

INTRODUCTION

New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago have long been regarded as the primary centers for the sale of works of art by contemporary American artists. In recent years, there has been growing recognition that many other cities have significant sales and exhibition opportunities for works of art produced by local artists, but there have been few studies that examine the newer centers in detail and compare their special characteristics.

The Visual Arts Program of the Arts Endowment requested a study for the purpose of answering several questions: How large are these art markets in terms of the number of exhibition spaces regularly used for works of art produced by local artists? What are the processes by which artists in these cities can use the local exhibition and sales spaces? What are the selection processes and do they differ from city to city? What are the economic conditions and difficulties for the artists producing art in these local art market situations?

Four cities were selected for study in an attempt to answer these questions. These cities, chosen for geographic diversity and significant art marketing, were Houston, Minneapolis, Washington, and San Francisco. The study identified 548 exhibition spaces that regularly exhibit and sell the work of artists who are local residents in these four cities--clear confirmation of the significance of secondary art market cities in the distribution of art.

The economic condition of artists in the selected cities was measured through their income from the sale of art and from other jobs, through costs of materials and studio space and through expenditures of time and effort to exhibit and sell art. The study also considered the ways artists support themselves and cover the cost of producing art, where they find affordable studio space, and how the effort of exhibiting and selling affects the time available for creating art. The study examined how art gets exhibited and the relationship between exhibition and economic success. Because of the limited accessibility to available space, the relationship between artists and exhibitors is a key to the artist's success in the market. Quality of work is not the only factor in being exhibited. Considerable disparity in the approaches taken by artists and exhibitors was discovered--leading to complaints by both sides. One of the

The Visual Arts Program was particularly interested in learning about the smaller art markets--rather than the three primary centers for the sale of works by contemporary American artists. Many of the smaller centers have grown substantially in recent years, and there is evidence of vigorous art sales and exhibition activities as well as large artist populations within them. While the three primary art centers are clearly dominant, the other sixteen cities with more than 1 percent of American visual artists are all believed to have substantial art markets. These secondary art market cities increased their proportion of American artists during the decade of the 1970s.

An indirect confirmation of the broadening of the American market for original art purchase is provided by another Research Division study now in progress. Preliminary data indicate that about 22 percent of the American adult population attend an art gallery or museum in a twelve-month period and that many have purchased an original work of art at some time in their lives and indicate that they are considering buying an original work of art in the forseeable future. These data support the assumption that a broad interest and market for art, including its purchase, have been evolving in the United States.

biggest problems perceived by artists is the need to create more and better opportunities to show work that because of its physical nature cannot be collected and that is otherwise regarded as not marketable. Overall, it is the dynamic interaction of artists and exhibitors, those creating and selling art, that concerns this report.

Development of buyer interest in the visual arts outside the traditional art centers of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago is believed to have led to expanded selling possibilities to support the increase in numbers of local artists. In the art markets of smaller cities, there appear to be many public and private exhibition spaces that accommodate local interest in purchasing works of art. Local art buyer demand is being satisfied by more exhibition spaces, and additional opportunities for artistic success have been created. Success at the local level may precede attempts to enter the New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago art markets by some visual artists. For others, some success at the national level may create opportunities to benefit from local exhibitions and sales.

The study confirmed that art market systems exist in each of the cities chosen for examination. Each had a variety of types of exhibition spaces and artists working in many art forms. The number and types of professionally run exhibition spaces regularly (but not exclusively) showing local artists are presented in Table 1.

For the purposes of the study, professional artists were defined as those whose work was displayed or sold at a locally recognized art exhibition space during 1976-78. Visual artists working in all media and styles were included in all stages of the study. Only artists living in the metropolitan areas were sampled.

Recognized art exhibition spaces encompassed private commercial galleries, public galleries and museums, artist-run cooperatives, public or private places that held regular professionally directed exhibitions, and alternative spaces continuously or occasionally showing art unlikely to be exhibited elsewhere.

Houston, the city with fewest spaces and only two cooperatives, had experienced a rash of gallery closings in the two years preceding the study period. The number of alternative spaces was small everywhere except in San Francisco, which has a tradition for this type of space; Houston and Minneapolis had no alternative spaces in regular operation.

Excluded were art fairs, art association shows, nonprofessional shows in places like banks or restaurants, and student exhibitions.

The study comprised several distinct stages:

Identification of appropriate exhibition spaces

Identification of artists

Group meetings of artists and exhibitors

Development of the survey questionnaire

Surveying the artists

Analysis and report

Local consultants and experts participated in the identification of spaces in each city. Lists initially developed from art and telephone directories were expanded by the local reviewers, and the final lists included only spaces that had shown or sold locally produced art during 1976-78. Some important galleries were excluded if they had not shown locally produced art.

About three-fourths of the contacted exhibitors cooperated by providing lists of local artists who had exhibited in their spaces during 1976-78. Because of the frequent multiple exhibitions of artists, lack of cooperation by a few exhibition spaces probably had little effect on the final list of artists. The type of space least likely to cooperate was the small, lesser-known private gallery, so lesser-known artists could have been underrepresented in the sample even though they account for a large portion of it. However, since much of the analysis was stratified by exhibition history, it is thought that the results reflect fair representation of lesser-known artists.

The lists accumulated the names of 459 artists in Houston, 693 in Minneapolis, 1,089 in Washington, and 2,200 in San Francisco. Some names were deleted because they failed to meet the criterion of local residence or because information was incomplete.

In each city there were between six and ten group meetings at which artists or exhibitors discussed issues and problems of accessibility to exhibition space and the interaction of artists and exhibitors. In addition, some individual interviews and informal discussions were held with local critics, art notables, and artists. These sessions provided practical perspectives on the four art markets and influenced development of the questionnaire.

The artists' discussion groups were roughly divided by medium (painters and sculptors, printmakers and photographers, and avant garde) and better-known artists were separated from those with less experience. Exhibitors were grouped by type of space (museums, private galleries, public spaces, cooperatives, alternative spaces, and other spaces) and sometimes by reputation. These divisions were made to form more homogeneous groups that would focus on issues of common concern. Attendance at artist sessions ranged from six to twenty and averaged fifteen participants. At exhibitor sessions, attendance depended on the number of spaces in each category; all types of galleries were represented in each city.

Table 1 **Exhibition spaces for locally produced art**

	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
Museums, universities, and art schools	10	27	17	13
Private galleries and continuously operative alternative spaces	71	78	99	205
Artist cooperatives	2	5	6	15
Total	83	110	122	233

The primary objectives of the survey questionnaire were to determine the economic conditions of artists and the processes by which they attempt to exhibit. Additional information was requested on art form and demographic characteristics to examine their relationship to the two primary objectives. Data on exhibition history were also collected. Guidance for the development of the questions came from the group discussions and from the staff of the Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The survey was conducted by mail, with an introductory letter sent to each artist. Questionnaires were mailed subsequently, and a reminder sent ten days later. After three weeks, registered letters containing new questionnaires were sent to all nonrespondents. Once the survey was completed, respondent identification was dissociated from the survey, making all results anonymous.

Questionnaire response is shown in Table 2. The overall return of 940 questionnaires produced a response rate of 47.4 percent, not counting undeliverable questionnaires. The response rate was lower than desired; however, the returned questionnaires represent virtually all art forms and all levels of artist exhibition experience.

The response rate of 47.4 percent indicates the need for caution in interpreting the results. The greatest problems exist in projecting results to a total population and in looking at very fine details for the individual cities. For these reasons, many of the tables in this report present only aggregate data for the four cities.

Table 2 **Survey response**

	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
Questionaires delivered	406	651	467	459
Questionaires completed and returned (percent of those delivered)	195 (48.0%)	293 (45.0%)	226 (48.4%)	226 (49.2%)

Both group discussions and data analysis call attention to economic conditions that affect the lives and professional practice of artists. Two conditions of the art market are fundamental to the issues raised: very few artists sell enough work to support themselves and much more art is created than can be exhibited or sold, causing competition for exhibition space. These conditions are at least indirectly related to all discussion of producing, exhibiting, and selling art in the secondary market.

Producing art and the support system

Most artists do not support themselves by selling their work. Median art income for the artists sampled was $718 in 1978. Median production costs were $1,450, approximately twice the median income. Not only do artists fail to make much money from their art, but they generally spend much more producing it than they make. Obtaining the necessary resources through other kinds of work can cut down time available for creating art, inhibiting the artist's chances for exhibition and economic success. These financial facts lead to consideration of the amount of support that artists should receive and from whom, the creation of art-related jobs to help ease financial problems, and the cost and availability of studio space.

Support for artists dominated the discussions, with attention focusing on how much and by whom provided. The intent of outside support is to relieve artists of some economic production difficulties so that they can be free to pursue their work. Most of the artists, many of them established, favored support for the visual arts, although the exact kind of support was open to a wide range of views. Most had never received any form of government support.

Competition for limited funds is great, not only among artists but between artists and institutions. One argument for institutional support is that many artists can benefit from a single award. Support for museum-level exhibitions, for example, could increase exposure for a number of artists. However, additional shows for successful national and foreign artists resulting from grants would not affect exposure or sales opportunities for local artists.

Most artists advocated individual support over institutional support. Larger individual grants would theoretically alleviate the economic plight that besets artists. There was general agreement that artists, being the best judges of one another's work, should have a greater role in awarding grants. Another aspect of the selection issue is local or regional control of selection. The San Francisco artists were especially vocal on this topic, feeling that decisions made in Washington were not appropriate for California artists and that local or regional committees would be more sensitive to local artists' achievements, trends, and styles.

One criticism of government support held that it distorted the relationship of the artist to society. On the other hand, supporters of subsidies, including most exhibitors, viewed government influence with little alarm. Discussions of federal support for art centered on the National Endowment for the Arts.

Some government programs mandate a percentage of building costs for the use of contemporary original art in public buildings. More widespread adoption of this policy was urged to create opportunities for selling art although questions of selection and local control were unresolved. Whether local or less prominent artists would benefit is an open question.

If artists are not selling their work, they must hold outside jobs or be supported by someone else. For many artists, outside jobs restrict their ability to produce art. Even part-time employment reduces working hours in the studio. The data in this report make clear that time spent producing art has a direct relationship to success at selling art.

The vast majority of artists work at outside jobs. Nearly 60 percent of the responding artists held art-related jobs but only about 25 percent worked full-time at these jobs. However, income earned from outside employment far exceeded income from art sales. One issue is whether more art-related jobs should be created to help artists earn their livelihoods in some sort of artistic capacity. Art-related jobs allow artists to use their talents more than other types of outside jobs. Currently over one-half of these jobs involve teaching and 60 percent are part-time. Some museums and other agencies reserve jobs for artists. One indirect advantage of art jobs is the development of personal relationships advantageous to the promoting of an art career. Increased income helps artists to cover costs of materials, but whether art-related employment contributes to producing art that will be exhibited is doubtful. For some artists, gainful employment is limited to the art field because they have no experience or skill to bring to other types of jobs.

Artists in all four cities complained about a lack of reasonably priced studio space. One proposed solution is government-subsidized or government-purchased buildings where rents could be stabilized. Many artists, especially young artists, cannot afford studio space, and adequate space is difficult to find. A majority of artists solve the problem by working at home. However, this solution presupposed the financial capacity to own or rent a house or other large space, and even among those who can own their homes, allocation of adequate space for studio use may not be feasible.

Exhibiting art

The study focused on artists who have achieved a showing in at least one exhibition space. This section discusses some of their frustrations and difficulties with access to exhibitions.

Obtaining the economic support necessary to create art is an immediate concern for artists, but in the long run, exhibiting is the most important factor in career progress, even if exhibiting does not initially lead to sales. Art exhibition is the dominant means of reaching the market, and exhibition can also contribute to other advancement in an artist's career. However, the current supply of exhibition space is sufficient for only small numbers of local artists. Even artists with fairly solid exhibition histories have difficulty advancing their careers through more prestigious spaces. The main problem in gaining access is quite simply intense competition. More interest is being shown in the work of artists in the secondary market, but the number of artists seeking exhibition opportunities exceeds the market's growth. For example, the number of active painters and sculptors rose 76 percent between 1970 and 1980, as reported in the 1980 Census of Population.

Other major factors discussed in the group meetings as determining access to exhibitions are work quality and style. This study did not address quality of work issues except to observe that artists and exhibitors frequently disagree on the quality of work chosen for exhibition. Other selection factors include artist preferences for certain exhibition spaces and the personal relationships between artists and exhibitors.

The debate over selection of art based on style and form is one of the murky areas of exhibition preferences. Exhibitor selections are made largely on the basis of marketability and the aesthetic criteria of the gallery operator. If exhibitors demonstrate preconceived notions of what styles of work they are willing to show, as most of them do, these commercial influences create pressures on artists to produce work acceptable to exhibitors. However, most artists who have been successful in galleries claim to feel no pressure. Many younger artists must develop their styles before achieving appreciable exhibition experience. At some point, an artist's style and an exhibitor's preference must come together.

There is a perception that galleries are unwilling to show such forms as video and conceptual and environmental art. Generally, the artists surveyed viewed galleries and museums as conservative in their choice of works. Only in San Francisco did the artists feel that significant attempts had been made to regularly exhibit such forms. Artists working in the more traditional forms of sculpture and photography indicated severe limitations on their opportunities to show work. The study confirmed that sculpture, photography, and drawings were shown less frequently and in fewer spaces than other traditional forms. Many artists look to museums, alternative spaces, and public spaces to fill this need.

The many problems arising from the issues of selection and exposure of art are rooted in the philosophical questions concerning the value of art and the role of the artist and, especially, in the postulate that art has an intrinsic value independent of its market value. It is obvious that the secondary art markets operate on premises other than the subjective judgment of quality. If in theory the artist's role is to create a work of aesthetic or intellectual quality, with sale a less important goal, the artist may frequently feel at odds with the economic system that influences the capacity to continue working. Both the exhibitors and artists complain about the exhibition process. The potential for disagreement, accusation, and misunderstanding is great in an area where personal relationships, judgments, and economic considerations play vital roles in the artistic output of professional artists.

To better understand where artists fit into the exhibition system, it is necessary to comprehend some of the problems perceived by exhibitors in conducting their business and their relationships with artists. Finding new artists whose work fits the criteria of the space is a crucial aspect of the exhibitor's job.

But if quality of work is an important variable in selections made by exhibitors, the quality of spaces in which to exhibit is important to artists. In developing their careers, artists seek to move upward in the quality of their shows. Those artists with greater experience dealing with exhibitors and an understanding of their perspectives have an advantage in coping with this situation.

To the extent that artists disregard personal relationships with exhibitors and other people capable of making referrals, they limit the potential marketability of their art. Some artists still attempt to rely on the strength of their work by entering open competitions (30 percent in the sample said they usually or always use this method), but unless their work attracts the attention of galleries, the possibilities for economic success are limited.

Artists most active in their attempts to show, including using the network of personal relationships, succeed more often than artists who limit their marketing activities. Opportunities to gain exposure only on the basis of quality are relatively few and most exhibitors do not use open competitions as a means of finding new artists. Some kind of intermediary is usually necessary for successfully bringing art to the attention of exhibitors. As a consequence, talented artists can be excluded from the market because of their marketing failure rather than the quality of their work. A concern of many artists is that the time spent on marketing is time they prefer to use to produce art.

A complaint against exhibitors is that they lack loyalty to local artists. Many exhibitors prefer to show artists from the primary markets. Presumably art produced in New York is more prestigious and salable. Some exhibitors consciously mix their exhibition schedules to include local artists, but very few concentrate exclusively on exhibition of local art.

The situation that is particularly galling to artists who work in the four cities that were studied occurs when artists from other places have success in gaining shows, especially in prestigious spaces, at similar stages in their careers. This phenomenon is attributed to the exotic reputation of outside artists. In the group meetings of the study some better-known artists said that they were not able to show locally until they had achieved success in New York.

Selling art

Gaining access to exhibition space is the first of a two-part problem for most young, less experienced artists; the second part is selling work once it has been exhibited.

Becoming associated with a gallery has three main advantages for selling art: an established marketplace, prestige, and a salesperson to act for artists who do not want direct involvement with the sale of their work. However, there are sometimes factors that weigh against the advantages of gallery association. Artists mentioned failure of galleries to pay on sales, discount pricing, lack of care in handling, overhead costs, and demands for exclusive selling rights as problems. High commissions are also a drawback, and many artists prefer to make their own sales to avoid paying them. This practice can bring artists and exhibitors into competition for sales. The discussions and the responses to the questionnaires indicated that this problem tended to be resolved by the more experienced artists by forming associations with galleries.

Setting prices can be difficult. Too frequently the market will not support prices high enough to cover costs of production. Even for experienced artists, particular works may not find a market. Cutting prices to solve short-term sales problems can have the effect of devaluing work over the long run. Because art has an investment value, artists and dealers are conscious of the lasting effects of each price decision. Resale of work is another issue related to price. Artists argue that they should receive some payment on resale of their work, especially when the price has increased from the original sale.

Many of the newest forms of art are inherently unsalable. These works are part of important new directions in contemporary art and exhibition, but artists cannot depend on commercial galleries, which depend on sales, to show unsalable art. They must search for alternative exhibition space because the opportunity to exhibit provides a powerful stimulus for continuing their work and the lack of it is a great source of discouragement.

Other issues

Artists view the open competitive juried exhibit as desirable and ask for more open shows. This idea correlates with the attitude that artists are the best judges of each other's work and that open shows resolve the question of exhibiting work on merit. The expansion of the local commercial gallery market combined with open juried shows is thought to have the potential for alleviating some of the sales and exhibition needs of local artists and also some of the selection biases in the current system.

Related to these other problems is the time needed to advance an art career. The vast majority of artists seem resigned to waiting for attention; the phrase, "wait their turn," was used by many successful artists when discussing the plight and anxiety of younger artists. However, the length of time spent building a career to the point where one gains prestige and greater economic rewards can be frustrating given the conditions brought forth in this study. Another aspect of this problem is waiting for exhibition space. Even quite deserving artists must sometimes wait years for space to become available.

Also brought up for discussion was the need for effective artist organizations. However, the individualistic nature of artists and the fragmented nature of market processes seem to inhibit the growth of such organizations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARTISTS

The demographic profile of exhibiting artists responding to the questionnaire included such characteristics as age, years as a professional, gender, race, marital status and dependents, education, and art form. The median age for the combined sample was thirty-eight years, and the median length of time as a professional was twelve years. The survey respondents were 51 percent women, but there were wide variations among the four cities. About 91 percent of the artists were white. Although 62 percent were married, only 53 percent said that they had dependents. About 64 percent of the artists had at least a bachelor's degree in art. Not surprisingly, 33 percent said that they were mainly painters; however, another 20 percent indicated that they worked in several art forms.

The reader will note that the total number of responses (N) varies in the following figures and tables. While total questionnaire response was 940, some respondents omitted answers to some questions. Because of rounding, table columns may not add to exactly 100 percent, as shown. Ethnic groups may be underrepresented in the sample because there was difficulty obtaining lists of artists from minority galleries in Houston and Washington.

Figure I Age of artists

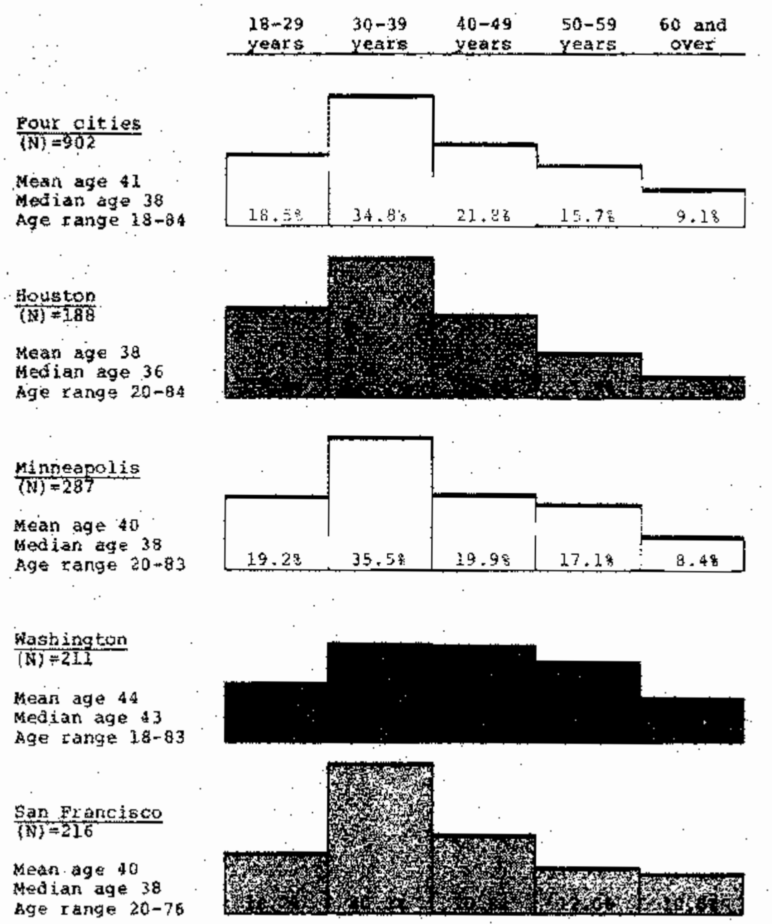


Figure II Professional art experience

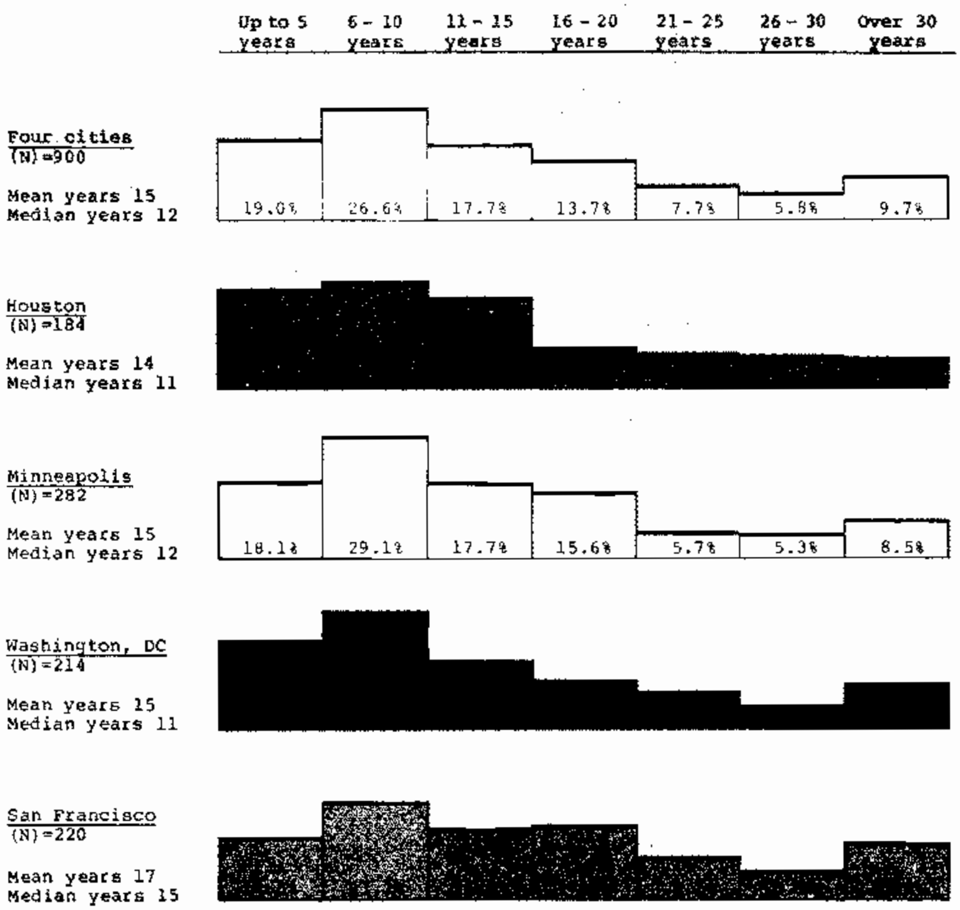


Table 3 **Ethnic and racial composition of artists**

	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
Black	3.1%	6.3%	0.7%	5.5%	1.3%
Hispanic	1.1%	2.1%	–	1.8%	0.9%
Native American	0.4%	–	0.7%	0.9%	–
Asian American	2.8%	1.6%	0.3%	1.4%	8.5%
White	91.1%	86.9%	98.3%	89.1%	87.5%
Other	1.4%	3.1%	–	1.4%	1.8%
Total (N)	100.0% (924)	100.0% (191)	100.0% (289)	100.0% (220)	100.0% (224)

The sample showed minority group concentrations--blacks in Washington and Houston, Hispanics in Houston, and Asian Americans in San Francisco.

Figure III **Sex of artists**

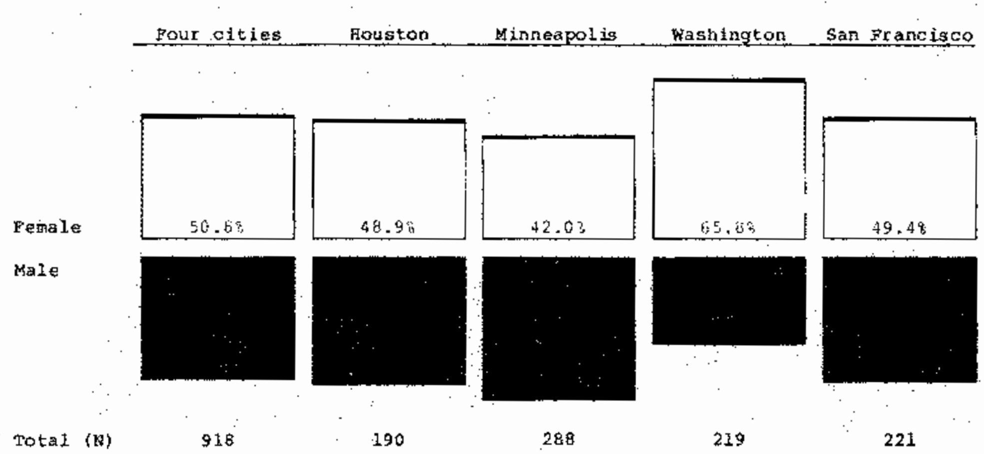


Table 4 Dependents of artists

Dependents	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
0	47.2%	49.2%	43.7%	45.1%	52.1%
1	19.4%	18.2%	20.4%	18.0%	20.7%
2	18.4%	19.3%	18.3%	23.8%	12.7%
3	8.9%	7.0%	9.8%	7.3%	10.8%
4	3.9%	4.8%	4.6%	2.9%	3.3%
5 or more	2.1%	1.6%	3.2%	2.9%	0.5%
Total (N)	100.0% (890)	100.0% (187)	100.0% (284)	100.0% (206)	100.0% (213)

The number of dependents tends to reflect the city differences as well as the proportion of married artists. Minneapolis, which had the largest proportion of male respondents and married respondents, also had the highest mean number of dependents. Only 62.4 percent of respondents were married (in contrast with the national average of 86 percent) and there was considerable difference from city to city (Houston, 57.6 percent married; Minneapolis, 69.9 percent; Washington, 71 percent; and San Francisco, 50.9 percent).

The division of male and female survey respondents was nearly equal in the combined sample, but there was considerable variation from city to city. In addition, comparison of respondents' gender with the identification of local artists by given name indicated that Washington women were more likely than men to respond to the questionnaire as well as being more numerous.

A great majority of the artists hold college degrees in art or art education, but there were significant differences in type and extent of formal training from city to city.

Figure IV **Education or training of artists**

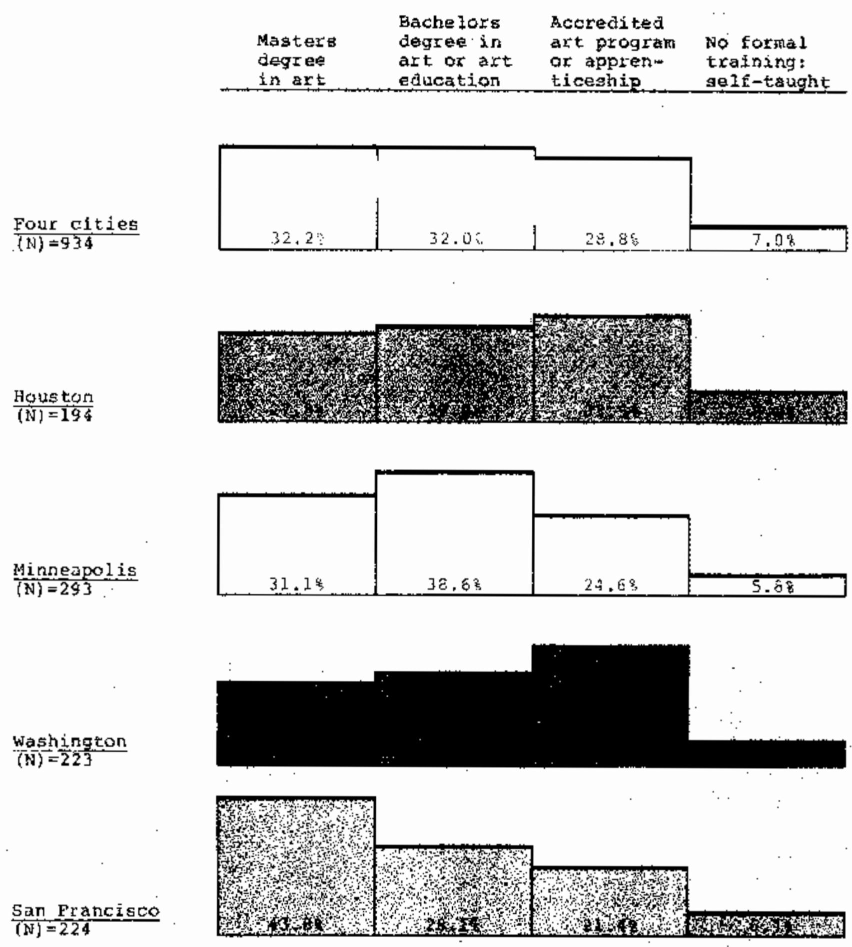


Table 5 Art forms

Art form	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
Painting	33.0%	30.7%	33.9%	33.3%	33.3%
Sculpture	13.5%	12.5%	17.5%	11.6%	12.4%
Printmaking	6.5%	3.6%	2.4%	12.0%	8.9%
Drawing	4.1%	5.7%	3.1%	4.4%	3.6%
Photography	10.0%	8.9%	9.9%	10.2%	10.7%
Video, conceptual, performance, environmental	3.1%	2.1%	4.1%	1.3%	4.4%
Crafts	6.4%	2.1%	10.6%	5.8%	5.3%
Two or more forms	20.9%	32.3%	15.1%	19.6%	20.0%
Other	2.2%	2.1%	3.4%	2.2%	0.9%
Total (N)	100.0% (934)	100.0% (192)	100.0% (292)	100.0% (225)	100.0% (225)

There were few differences in art form from city to city--except that 12 percent of Washington artists were printmakers compared with 2.4 percent of Minneapolis artists, and there was particularly strong participation in sculpture and crafts among Minneapolis artists. Since few artists work in new forms, they were combined into one category comprising 3.1 percent of the sample. These artists reported greatest difficulty in exhibiting. They were not included in the lists obtained from exhibitors and may be under-represented in the study.

Income

For calendar year 1978, median household income for the artists responding to the survey was slightly under $20,000. Within the total household income they reported, the artists themselves (including 12.5 percent with no earnings) accounted for a median contribution of $7,000.

The most important income factor investigated that affects the artist's activity is support from the household. In the study, income was divided into three categories: low ($10,000 or less), medium ($10,001-20,000), and high (more than $20,000). Predictably, support was highest at the high-income level and lowest at the low one. Women were more likely to receive high support in conjunction with medium and high household incomes, men less so. The proportions were more nearly even in the low-income group. High support was most common for those thirty to fifty-nine years of age. Nonwhites were likely to receive low support. Marriage partners are probably the greatest source of support and would explain the high percentages of women receiving high support.

Table 6 **Total income of artists' households**

Income	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
$0-2,999	1.8%	3.3%	1.4%	0.5%	2.3%
$3,000-4,999	5.5%	3.8%	5.4%	2.4%	9.9%
$5,000-6,999	6.4%	4.9%	7.5%	1.4%	10.8%
$7,000-9,999	7.8%	7.6%	7.1%	5.3%	10.8%
$10,000-12,999	8.8%	10.3%	10.0%	5.3%	8.9%
$13,000-15,999	9.2%	9.2%	10.0%	8.2%	8.5%
$16,000-19,999	11.6%	12.0%	11.4%	8.2%	14.1%
$20,000-29,999	20.7%	21.7%	25.0%	20.3%	13.6%
$30,000-49,999	19.8%	16.8%	16.4%	33.3%	13.6%
$50,000 up	8.4%	10.3%	4.6%	13.5%	6.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
(N)	(873)	(184)	(277)	(202)	(210)

Sixty-two percent of the artists in the combined sample from the four cities provided the main source of income for their households. The patterns differ for the individual cities, with 68 percent of San Francisco artists providing the main income compared with 49 percent of Washington artists.

Figure V **Total income of artists from all sources as a proportion of their total household income**

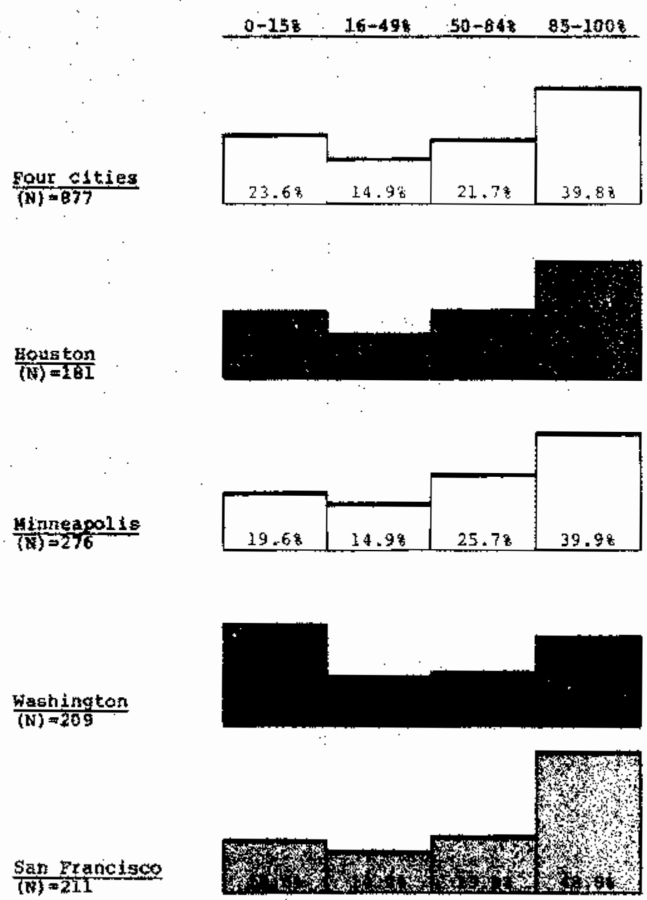


Table 7 Art income by art form

	Art form				
Art income	Painting	Sculpture	Printmaking	Drawing	Photography
$0	23.5%	33.9%	16.4%	32.7%	32.5%
$1-500	16.8%	10.2%	22.4%	33.0%	33.0%
$501-1,000	14.7%	13.7%	17.8%	19.2%	9.9%
$1,001-2,000	11.8%	11.4%	15.1%	4.7%	6.1%
$2,001-4,000	12.4%	17.4%	13.4%	7.4%	7.4%
$4,001-10,000	9.2%	9.7%	8.7%	3.1%	4.2%
$10,001 up	11.7%	3.7%	6.2%	0.0%	6.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Video, conceptual, performance, environmental	Crafts	Two or more forms	Other
30.1%	26.3%	21.1%	24.1%
25.2%	14.5%	13.1%	14.7%
20.1%	8.1%	14.3%	15.0%
11.7%	12.5%	26.3%	11.8%
7.2%	7.6%	11.2%	12.1%
2.9%	18.3%	10.0%	13.7%
2.9%	12.6%	4.0%	8.7%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are appreciable differences in art income of artists working in different art forms, with painters and craft artists alone reporting that over 10 percent of their number had art earnings over $10,000.

The data in this table, and in others following that combine the four cities, have been weighted to reflect differences in response rates. Details are given in the original research report.

The median of artists' income from art sales, commissions, and grants or awards was $718 in 1978, and only 8.5 percent reported over $10,000. Even though all the artists had exhibited in the three-year period covered by the income question, over one-fourth earned nothing at all from their art. While 68 percent of the San Francisco artists earned most of their household income, fewer than 15 percent of them earned over $10,000 through their art. The highest art incomes were found in Houston and San Francisco. By far the greatest part of such income came from sales. Commissions accounted for less than 10 percent of art income and grants and awards less than 5 percent.

Table 8 Art income of artists from sales, commissions, and grants or awards

Income	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
$0	26.1%	23.6%	25.9%	29.2%	25.7%
$1-500	18.0%	16.4%	19.8%	21.7%	14.1%
$501-1,000	14.3%	12.8%	14.7%	15.5%	14.1%
$1,001-2,000	11.6%	8.2%	12.6%	14.6%	11.5%
$2,001-4,000	11.9%	12.8%	13.7%	8.8%	11.9%
$4,001-10,000	9.9%	16.4%	8.3%	5.8%	8.0%
$10,001 up	8.5%	9.7%	4.4%	4.0%	14.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean art income	$3,139	$4,071	$2,366	$1,891	$4,227
Median art income	$ 718	$1,001	$ 750	$ 501	$ 901

Table 9 **Income of artists from art-related jobs**

Income	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
$1-2,999	39.4%	36.7%	37.1%	43.6%	41.2%
$3,000-4,999	10.6%	11.1%	8.4%	13.8%	10.7%
$5,000-6,999	7.1%	7.8%	6.0%	3.2%	10.7%
$7,000-9,999	8.7%	11.1%	8.4%	5.3%	9.9%
$10,000-12,999	7.3%	10.0%	7.8%	7.4%	4.6%
$13,000-15,999	6.8%	11.1%	7.8%	6.4%	3.1%
$16,000-19,999	8.7%	6.7%	11.4%	6.4%	8.4%
$20,000-29,999	10.2%	5.6%	12.0%	11.7%	9.9%
$30,000-50,000	1.2%	0.0%	1.2%	2.1%	1.5%
Total (N)	100.0% (482)	100.0% (90)	100.0% (167)	100.0% (94)	100.0% (131)
Mean art-related income	$7,898	$7,249	$8,698	$7,702	$7,461
Median art-related income	$5,000	$5,000	$5,565	$3,050	$4,000

Since artists in general do not earn enough to support themselves through art, they receive the rest of their incomes from other sources, either by holding other jobs or by support from their households. Sixty percent worked at paying art-related jobs, with median income from those jobs of approximately $5,000. Over 63 percent of art-related jobs were part-time, and teaching jobs accounted for 62 percent of them.

Table 10 **Income of artists from nonart-related jobs**

Income	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
$1-2,999	35.2%	41.1%	31.0%	26.6%	43.7%
$3,000-4,999	13.3%	12.3%	13.8%	10.9%	15.5%
$5,000-6,999	10.8%	9.6%	13.8%	7.8%	9.9%
$7,000-9,999	11.4%	11.0%	8.6%	15.6%	12.7%
$10,000-12,999	9.9%	11.0%	10.3%	9.4%	8.5%
$13,000-15,999	4.9%	4.1%	4.3%	6.3%	5.6%
$16,000-19,999	3.7%	4.1%	3.4%	4.7%	2.8%
$20,000-29,999	7.1%	6.8%	8.6%	12.5%	0.0%
$30,000-49,999	3.4%	0.0%	5.2%	6.3%	1.4%
$50,000 up	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Total (N)	100.0% (324)	100.0% (73)	100.0% (116)	100.0% (64)	100.0% (71)
Mean nonart-related income	$7,883	$6,325	$9,162	$10,079	$5,417
Median nonart-related income	$4,900	$3,450	$4,900	$ 7,085	$3,200

Income from nonart-related jobs was reported by about 34 percent of artists responding to the survey, with the median nonart-related income of $4,900 being nearly the same as the median income from art-related jobs. Washington artists' high nonart-related income probably correlates with the relatively low art-related income they reported.

Expenditures

Production cost comprises materials and equipment, studio space, and exhibition expenses. Median expenditures for these items in 1978 were $1,450, approximately double the median art income. This 2:1 ratio appears to be fairly stable for the majority of artists, although the ratio varied from city to city. The lowest median production cost was found in Washington. In combination with the equally low Washington artists' art-related income, it suggests a lower activity level than in other cities. An important variant in the findings was the high proportion of San Francisco and Houston artists reporting art-related expenditures over $4,000.

Materials and equipment constituted the major portion of production costs.

Artists in all cities complained of lack of reasonably priced studio space. The median cost was $500 in San Francisco and $400 in Minneapolis and Houston. In Washington, where half the artists reported no studio costs, the median was much lower.

Exhibition expenses were about the same in all cities, with medians ranging from $150 to $250. San Francisco had the most artists with exhibition costs in excess of $1,000. In Houston a comparatively high 37 percent reported no exhibition expenses.

Total art-related expenses--including dealer commissions and educational and informational activities as well as production--were about $400 higher than production costs. Most of the additional sum went for commissions. While one-third of the artists reported paying no commissions in 1978, one in seven paid over $2,500.

Table 11 **Total art-related expenses**

Expenses	Four cities	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
$0	12.1%	10.8%	10.2%	16.4%	11.1%
$1-500	10.6%	8.2%	14.3%	14.6%	5.3%
$501-1,000	12.1%	7.7%	16.4%	14.1%	10.2%
$1,001-2,000	17.3%	15.9%	19.1%	20.4%	13.7%
$2,001-4,000	23.8%	24.6%	22.5%	18.6%	29.6%
$4,001-10,000	17.6%	25.1%	14.7%	13.3%	17.3%
$10,001 up	6.5%	7.7%	2.7%	2.6%	12.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mean art-related expenses	$3,488	$4,614	$2,517	$2,404	$4,415
Median art-related expenses	$1,890	$2,300	$1,400	$1,118	$2,401

Table 12 Art production costs by art form

	Art form				
Production costs	Painting	Sculpture	Printmaking	Drawing	Photography
$0	12.2%	13.6%	11.6%	5.7%	11.1%
$1-500	14.2%	14.6%	7.9%	35.4%	12.2%
$501-1,000	17.4%	10.9%	16.4%	20.4%	16.5%
$1,001-2,000	17.9%	24.1%	22.8%	18.2%	17.4%
$2,001-4,000	22.9%	19.7%	25.3%	11.5%	23.2%
$4,001-10,000	13.3%	13.7%	14.4%	6.1%	14.1%
$10,000 up	2.1%	3.4%	1.7%	2.7%	5.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Video, conceptual, performance, environmental	Crafts	Two or more forms	Other	All art forms
6.6%	22.4%	10.0%	17.7%	13.6%
20.4%	21.9%	9.2%	7.6%	13.6%
3.7%	9.4%	21.1%	10.0%	14.1%
28.6%	14.5%	25.5%	20.6%	19.9%
20.3%	13.7%	15.1%	17.5%	20.2%
17.5%	14.4%	4.0%	23.9%	15.5%
2.9%	3.7%	15.1%	2.6%	3.1%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Space

Studio space was a universal problem because of unavailability or expense. The majority of artists in all four cities solved this problem by working at home. The likelihood of having a studio at home increased with income, probably a reflection of greater ability to own a home. The number reporting no studio space ranged from 6.3 percent of Washington artists to a low 2.2 percent in San Francisco.

Time

A major factor affecting artists' work was the amount of time they were able to devote to art activities. Artists with full-time jobs had less time than part-time workers for art. Conversely those who earned less may not have adequate resources to draw on. Over half the artists dedicated at least twenty-one hours per week to art-related work: about 21 percent spent less than ten hours per week and nearly 18 percent spent over 40 hours. Washington and Minneapolis artists allotted less time than others to art-related activities; they also had lower art incomes and costs. In general, art income and costs increased with time spent producing art.

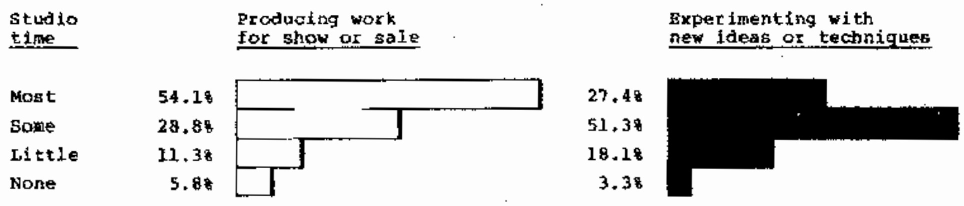
Artists were asked to estimate the time they spend actually producing art. The data demonstrate the correlation between time spent creating art and income produced by that art. On the other hand, a significant minority devoted substantial time to producing art but did not try to sell work or were unsuccessful selling it.

Women tended to spend less time in art production than men. In view of the studio time/income relationship, less time spent producing art explains some of the difference in earnings between men and women. No significant difference in studio time was reported by white and minority artists nor was any difference observed in their production time/income relationship. The relationship between production time and costs is very similar to that for production time and income.

Table 13 **Art income by production time**

	Art production work hours per week				
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41 up
All artists	28.1%	26.3%	18.9%	13.5%	13.4%
Art income					
$0	33.9%	27.9%	18.0%	14.8%	14.9%
$1-500	28.5%	18.7%	15.8%	11.8%	5.8%
$501-1,000	18.9%	14.7%	16.7%	9.4%	7.3%
$1,001-2,000	9.1%	12.1%	18.5%	11.8%	10.7%
$2,001-4,000	5.3%	13.1%	16.4%	13.7%	15.3%
$4,001-10,000	3.0%	8.4%	10.4%	16.5%	22.4%
$10,001 up	1.3%	5.1%	4.1%	22.0%	23.5%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure VI Distribution of production time



Artists were asked about relative amount of time spent producing work for sale or show as opposed to experimenting with new ideas or techniques. A majority devoted the "most" time to work that they show or sell. While over one-half spent "some" time on experimentation, only about one-fourth reported concentrating on it. These responses tend to confirm the problem of commercial demands limiting time available for personal development voiced in the group discussion meetings.

The data do not reveal what motivates artists in their allocation of time, but there is a predictable relationship between concentrating on production for sale or show and higher income. The relationship between experimental time and income is weaker but nevertheless significant. While artists who earn most do not spend "most" of their time experimenting, 60 percent in the top three income groups do spend "some" time experimenting. Costs of production for sale or show are about equal to expenditures for experimentation.

Table 14 Art income by experimental time

	Experimental time			
	Most	Some	Little	None
All artists	27.4%	51.3%	18.1%	3.2%
Art income				
$0	29.4%	23.3%	24.8%	40.6%
$1-500	20.1%	17.3%	17.9%	10.2%
$501-1,000	14.0%	14.4%	13.4%	30.8%
$1,001-2,000	14.1%	9.5%	14.2%	6.1%
$2,001-4,000	10.1%	14.1%	8.5%	12.3%
$4,001-10,000	8.1%	11.6%	9.6%	0.0%
$10,001 up	4.2%	9.8%	11.6%	0.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The study analyzed some basic patterns of exhibition and investigated how artists are selected for exhibition and how they sell their work.

Exhibition record

Bringing work to the attention of the public is a key step in an artist's career. Exhibitions leading directly or indirectly to sales constitute a major endeavor of the art market. The study examined relative success of artists by categorizing types of shows and spaces where artists had exhibited in the three-year period 1976-78. Shows were identified as one-person, small group (two or four artists), and large group. Spaces or locations were identified as museums, private (commercial) galleries, public spaces (including libraries with regular exhibition facilities), cooperative galleries, alternative spaces, and other spaces. Alternative spaces exhibit work not likely to be shown elsewhere and are supported by independent funding sources.

Table 15 shows percent of artists in each city reporting exhibition experience. The most common exhibition in all four cities was the large group show, and artists showed most frequently in private galleries and public spaces. The major difference from city to city was in location rather than type of show. Many artists reported several types and columns add to more than 100 percent.

Table 15 Type of exhibition in various spaces

	Houston	Minneapolis	Washington	San Francisco
Museums				
One-person	14.3%	8.6%	8.5%	18.6%
Small group	7.9%	12.6%	5.4%	13.2%
Large group	40.2%	33.5%	25.9%	50.0%
Private galleries				
One-person	23.6%	29.1%	28.1%	33.6%
Small group	25.5%	17.6%	22.8%	22.7%
Large group	33.9%	29.1%	36.2%	38.6%
Public spaces				
One-person	24.3%	46.8%	23.7%	29.5%
Small group	25.4%	33.1%	17.4%	24.5%
Large group	63.5%	56.1%	54.9%	50.9%
Cooperative galleries				
One-person	4.2%	10.1%	12.9%	6.8%
Small group	5.3%	9.7%	15.2%	5.9%
Large group	13.2%	23.4%	46.9%	20.5%
Alternative spaces				
One-person	7.9%	4.7%	1.8%	9.1%
Small group	5.8%	1.8%	4.0%	5.5%
Large group	6.9%	5.0%	13.8%	9.5%
Other spaces				
One-person	13.2%	15.1%	12.9%	14.5%
Small group	4.2%	5.0%	5.3%	6.4%
Large group	15.9%	18.0%	15.2%	12.3%
Total number of artists who have exhibited	189	278	224	220

Table 16	Exhibition clusters	
Cluster	Exhibition characteristics	Percent of artists
1	Low number of exhibitions	35.1%
2	Moderate representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; above average one-person showings	12.6%
3	High representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; three times average one-person showings	5.7%
4	Moderate representation in large group exhibitions at cooperative galleries, and alternative spaces; above average one-person showings	5.7%
5	Some representation in public spaces	7.7%
6	Moderate representation in large group exhibitions and three times average one-person showings in "other" spaces; some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	3.3%
7	Some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	17.6%
8	Highest representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; some representation at cooperative galleries and alternative spaces; highest proportion of one-person showings	1.8%
9	Some representation in small group exhibitions and one-person showings at museums and private galleries	9.6%
10	Moderate representation in one-person showing at "other" spaces; some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	1.5%

Cluster analysis grouped artists with the same type of show in the same locations approximately the same number of times. Ten types of exhibition history were grouped as having distinct characteristics. In general, analysis of the clusters indicated that decreasing numbers of artists achieve progressively more prestigious exhibitions and that the most successful artists exhibit in many different types of space.

The study also measured exhibition experience by means of an index, assigning scores in three areas: type of show, type of space, and quality of space as a measure of prestige. Shows were assigned scores of 4 for one-person, 2 for small group, and 1 for large group. Similarly, museums and alternative spaces were given more weight than other locations because they were judged more prestigious and assigned scores of 10 and 7, respectively, in a range from 1 to 10. Records were weighted by multiplying show score by location score for each show reported. The resulting index numbers were categorized into five groups. About 25 percent of male artists had an index of 0-10, and 13 percent had an index higher than 40. For women, nearly 40 percent had an index of 0-10 and 9 percent had an index higher than 40.

The study found no relationship between cluster membership and age but did find that artists thirty to fifty-nine years old were likely to have the highest weighted exhibition index. As artists increased in experience, they would fall into clusters having more exhibitions in more traditional spaces. Less professional experience tended to be a characteristic of those artists with a low exhibition index.

Women were somewhat more likely than men to appear in the "low number of exhibitions" cluster 1. Men had a greater probability of exhibition in one-person and small group shows in the more prestigious spaces. Cluster 4 was the only one dominated by women. If the prestigious spaces are less likely to exhibit women artists, they may turn to cooperatives and alternate spaces to increase exhibition opportunities. In the group discussions, exhibitors claimed that no bias existed, but artists of both sexes disagreed.

Exhibition index and cluster membership results were generally the same for all races. However, shows in minority galleries could have played a role in augmenting the exhibition records of minority artists. Selection bias is a problem perceived by some minority artists, and there is some justification for the claim that their work is stylistically different from other artists and is mainly exhibited in galleries devoted to the work of minority artists. This point does not mean that minority artists are excluded from mainstream exhibition but that art produced in styles distinctive of these groups is generally not preferred by exhibitors. The exhibitors do not view this bias as active discrimination but as a preference for styles consistent with their tastes and prospective clientele. The net effect, however, would seem to be restriction of access to prestigious spaces.

Selection for exhibition

To extend the analysis of exhibition patterns, the study examined the mode of selection by which artists obtained their most recent shows. Three general modes were identified for making the analysis: artist-initiated, invitation, and gallery agreement.

Artist-initiated methods include entering competitions, joining a cooperative, arranging an exhibit in a place that does not usually or primarily exhibit art, initiating a show in a commercial gallery by contacting the exhibitor, and renting space. Showing by invitation is initiated by the exhibitor. Artists may also have exhibition agreements with galleries or dealers as part of a business relationship.

The cluster analysis showed relationships by type and location of show. For example, art in group shows in cooperatives and alternative spaces was selected on an artist-initiated basis. In museums and galleries group shows were available to artists by invitation.

The formation of cooperatives to get around resistance from established spaces is most effective for young inexperienced artists who want to make some career exhibition progress. It may provide an intermediate step before access to commercial spaces and more prestigious shows.

There were some interesting findings when art form was considered in connection with mode of selection. Not one of the artists working in new forms or in two or more forms had gallery agreements. Of those working in new forms, 70 percent showed by invitation. For those working in two or more forms, artist-initiated methods were used by 60 percent. Photographers showed by invitation in 60 percent of the reported cases. These results confirm earlier contentions that exhibitor preferences influence artists' ability to exhibit various art forms.

As one might expect, artists with a low exhibition index obtained their most recent shows through artist-initiated methods and artists who exhibited most frequently were proportionately more likely to exhibit by invitation. Agreements with galleries were least used in all four cities. Difficulties in forming associations with galleries and exhibitors, discussed in the group meetings, may explain this finding.

Table 17 **Mode of selection for exhibition by exhibition index**

	Exhibition index					
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41 up	All artists
Gallery agreement	6.3%	12.7%	11.6%	5.9%	15.2%	10.4%
Invitation	25.6%	43.0%	48.1%	55.6%	56.1%	43.5%
Artist-initiated	68.0%	44.3%	40.3%	38.5%	28.6%	46.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Sales methods

The study distinguished three basic methods for selling art: through galleries, dealers, or agents; through direct sales by artists; and other methods including by commission, through collectives, or through other intermediaries. Direct sales were most common among artists who sold fewer than ten works per year; for sales of more than ten works, dealers are of equal importance. Artists who sell through the other methods generally sell very little.

Because of its prominent place in the market, sale through dealers or agents is examined here in more detail than the other methods. Successful use of galleries, dealers, or agents is beneficial to artists in many ways. Buyers have access to the art; agents have greater expertise than artists in business dealings and relieve artists of spending time selling; and finally, the prestige of dealing through a recognized space enhances the artist's reputation.

Although dealing through agents can boost sales for artists, 36 percent of the artists with an exhibition index greater than 30 did not use agents. It was also determined that about half the artists need this method to be represented outside their local area.

As the level of exposure increased, artists earned more income. Although there was a positive correlation between income and exhibition, substantial percentages of artists with a high exhibition index appear in the low-income categories. Traditional spaces earned more for artists than alternative and cooperative spaces. Even large group shows at the traditional spaces produced more income than the more exclusive shows at other spaces.

Table 18 **Art income of artists by exhibition index**

	Exhibition index					
Art income	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41 up	All artists
None	43.0%	24.1%	19.3%	15.4%	13.2%	26.1%
$1-500	21.1%	22.3%	17.8%	9.6%	9.4%	18.0%
$501-1,000	12.4%	15.0%	15.5%	15.9%	13.1%	14.3%
$1,001-2,000	8.6%	14.2%	13.1%	12.7%	9.7%	11.7%
$2,001-4,000	6.0%	11.8%	12.1%	17.5%	19.7%	11.8%
$4,001-10,000	5.5%	7.7%	11.2%	14.0%	18.1%	9.8%
$10,001 up	3.4%	4.8%	11.0%	14.9%	16.9%	8.3%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Exhibition patterns and other conditions

The study gives insight into the relationship between exhibition and income and between use of studio time and exhibition.

Examination of the exhibition clusters reveals that artists in clusters characterized by low exhibition index numbers had low production costs and those with high index numbers of exhibitions had higher costs. But like the exhibition-income relationship, there is an intermediate group in which production costs were variable. Because one-person and small group shows often involve producing a number of new pieces, artists exhibiting in these shows probably reported higher expenditures than artists exhibiting in a similar number of large group shows.

Artists without studio space tended to have an exhibition index of 10 or less (68 percent of the sample) and artists with a high index tended to have studio space outside the home. Perhaps exhibition success makes outside studio space more affordable or more worthy of the expenditure.

The study showed that artists with exhibition success were most likely to devote time to selling their work. Those employed full-time in other work tended to have the lower exhibition index numbers. Artists holding art-related jobs had a slightly better exhibition index than others holding nonart-related jobs.

The tendency to spend most time preparing work for exhibition and some time experimenting that was observed among artists with high incomes was more dramatically reinforced when experimentation was analyzed in relation to exhibition. However, half the artists in cluster 8 (high number of exhibitions in all types of spaces) spent most of their studio time experimenting in contrast with the more predictable proportions reported in cluster 3 (high number of exhibitions in traditional spaces). Exhibitors expressed interest in seeing evolution in artists' work, and the more successful artists did spend some time experimenting to improve the quality of their work or advance in new directions.

Table 19 Experimental studio time by exhibition cluster

Cluster	Exhibition characteristics	Most time	Some time	Little time	No time	Total
1	Low number of exhibitions	28.1%	49.2%	15.4%	7.4%	100.0%
2	Moderate representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; above average one-person showings	30.7%	50.6%	18.7%	0.0%	100.0%
3	High representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; three times average one-person showings	15.7%	62.3%	19.7%	2.2%	100.0%
4	Moderate representation in large group exhibitions at cooperative galleries, and alternative spaces; above average one-person showings	26.7%	58.0%	13.3%	2.0%	100.0%
5	Some representation in public spaces	28.8%	48.9%	21.1%	1.2%	100.0%
6	Moderate representation in large group exhibitions and three times average one-person showings in "other" spaces; some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	26.1%	56.7%	13.6%	3.6%	100.0%
7	Some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	30.0%	46.5%	22.2%	1.3%	100.0%
8	Highest representation at museums, public spaces, and private galleries; some representation at cooperative galleries and alternative spaces; highest proportion of one-person showings	50.3%	42.9%	6.8%	0.0%	100.0%
9	Some representation in small group exhibitions and one-person showings at museums and private galleries	18.3%	59.8%	20.7%	1.2%	100.0%
10	Moderate representation in one-person showing at "other" spaces; some representation in large group exhibitions at museums, public spaces, and private galleries	30.2%	47.8%	22.0%	0.0%	100.0%
All clusters		27.3%	51.3%	18.0%	3.3%	100.0%

The effort that artists put into obtaining shows and the type of action they take should have a bearing on their relative success. The complexities of the exhibition process reach well beyond the quality of art exhibited. Well established artists may need little effort to exhibit, as the data on exhibition by invitation indicate. For other artists, particularly the young, determination and understanding of the market can influence success.

Artists must choose among the variety of exhibition spaces to approach. Information networks may supply them with descriptions that will help them determine the ones that are most suitable and what efforts to make. Art coverage in local publications may provide artists with facts about the art market that will aid in finding the way into the exhibition process.

Efforts to exhibit

Artists were asked about actions they took to achieve exhibition in 1978. Their responses relate to the selection modes already discussed (artist-initiated methods, invitation, and gallery agreement), and 42 percent said that invitation was usually or always used. The second most frequently used route to exhibition was open juried competitions. The least frequently used route involved artist-initiated visits to exhibitors. These findings are at odds with dealer complaints about artists seeking reviews of their work. However, the survey respondents included only artists who had exhibited, so the artist who seeks such reviews may not yet have an exhibition history. Artists who exhibit may have learned to stop this practice.

Table 20 **Efforts to obtain exhibition**

	Invitation	Gallery agreement	Artist-initiated		
Frequency			Going from space to space	Appointment with no previous introduction	Appointment with previous introduction
Never	17.3%	54.6%	68.8%	66.1%	52.3%
Sometimes	40.2%	25.3%	23.0%	25.9%	41.3%
Usually	28.7%	13.0%	6.2%	6.0%	4.5%
Always	13.3%	6.6%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Entered open juried competition	Personal relationship	Member of cooperative or gallery organization	Other effort
28.5%	36.4%	53.7%	75.6%
41.2%	42.7%	24.8%	12.8%
23.3%	16.1%	13.3%	4.0%
6.9%	4.3%	7.7%	7.0%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 21 **Exhibition effort clusters**

Cluster	Effort characteristics	Percent of artists
A	Little or no effort	8.9%
B	Juried competition, going from space to space, and appointment with no previous introduction	18.7%
C	Invitation, personal relationship, and all other efforts excepting membership	27.4%
D	Invitation only	8.7%
E	Invitation, juried competition, and membership; little use of other efforts	4.4%
F	Agreement, invitation, and personal relationship; active use of other methods	12.7%
G	Invitation, juried competition, and membership; active use of other methods	19.1%

Clusters were formed to draw conclusions about how artists are likely to approach getting exhibitions. Few artists rely on only one technique except those exhibiting almost exclusively by invitation (cluster D). Those in clusters C, F, and G (60 percent of respondents) use all of the techniques with greater than average frequency.

Some notable variation in effort was observed. Sculptors and new-form artists (about 14 percent each) showed lower levels of effort than other artists. The techniques used by most new-form artists suggests difficulty in finding effective ways to obtain exhibitions. Artists who make prints or drawings generally fell into clusters characterized by artist-initiated efforts. One-third of printmakers and 27 percent of those exhibiting drawings appeared in cluster G. In general, however, artists working in these two forms used less effective techniques and are concentrated in cluster B. In contrast, 39 percent of photographers depended on invitations and personal relationships, probably because of limitations in number and type of spaces showing photographs.

Men were more likely to favor invitations and gallery agreements (clusters C, D, and F). Women tended to use the artist-initiated cooperatives and juried competitions (clusters E and G).

There were some differences in exhibition efforts made by members of racial groups but these were small. Minority artists had higher percentages in low-effort clusters. However, clusters marked by high activity showed no difference by race.

Exhibition factors

Because of frequent discrepancies between exhibitor preference and the form or style of work offered by artists for exhibit, the study raised the question of what factors artists consider when approaching particular exhibition spaces.

Exhibitors claimed that artists all too frequently brought them work without considering its appropriateness for the criteria characteristic of the space. Questionnaire responses revealed that 17 percent of the artists never considered compatibility, about 12 percent never considered the quality of work exhibited, and 20 percent never thought about whether exhibitors understood the artist's ideas and objectives. While only a minority failed to consider such important factors, many of the artists seldom considered all important exhibition factors concerning individual spaces.

Almost half the artists had not considered whether galleries were taking on new artists. Many felt it was sufficient that in their judgment, their work was of higher quality than that being shown. About 81 percent of the artists said that they usually or always considered quality the key factor that should determine exhibition.

The discussion meetings made clear that artists and exhibitors approach the development of personal relationships from opposite directions. The survey showed that 82 percent of artists seldom or never consider personal relationships as an exhibition factor.

Table 22 Exhibition factor consideration clusters

Cluster	Consideration characteristics	Percent of artists
I	No factors considered	7.9%
II	Several factors may be considered, but infrequently and unsystematically	12.8%
III	All factors (especially quality of work shown, reputation of space and director or staff, and understanding of the artist's ideas) usually considered	21.2%
IV	Quality of work shown almost always considered. Reputation of space and compatibility given some consideration. Other factors ignored	6.7%
V	Understanding of artists's ideas, quality of work shown, reputation of space and director or staff, and compatibility main considerations. Other factors given some consideration	14.8%
VI	Most factors considered sometimes, but none given special emphasis	12.0%
VII	Quality of work shown the primary concern. All factors considered more frequently than cluster 6, but less frequently than cluster 3	24.6%

A cluster analysis based on the artists' consideration of various factors as they approached exhibitors was related to demographic characteristics.

Art form generally had little impact on cluster membership, but new-form artists did tend to gravitate toward cluster V, which focused on exhibitor understanding of ideals. Women were somewhat more likely than men to consider all exhibition factors (clusters III and VII). They were less likely to be represented in cluster II, giving little consideration to factors. Women more than men tended to give consideration to quality of work, but the reverse held true for considering reputation of space. No significant differences were found based on race. Artists with higher levels of art education paid more attention to a broad range of factors and were less likely to focus mainly on quality of work.

Information networks

To gain further insight into how artists go about exhibiting, the study sought to discover what sources of information they drew on. Theoretically, the well-informed artist can make more effective and efficient efforts to exhibit; but about 32 percent of the artists did not consider exhibition factors in the first place or did not seek any outside information. The most-used information source is other artists; 66 percent cited this source. Almost 65 percent said that they relied on personal knowledge as a primary source of information of exhibition prospects. One-third named the intended exhibitor as a source. The least-used source was art service organizations (7 percent). The data indicate limited contact and communication between artists and others in the art market. Differences in approaches between artists and exhibitors are often not bridged effectively through existing information networks.

The questionnaire sent to artists concluded its examination of the exhibition process by attempting to find what art topics interested artists most and how well they attempted to keep abreast of developments at local and national levels. The exhibition system iteself received least attention, only 45 percent claiming that they sometimes or always kept up with this topic. Local ideas and developments, the local art scene, and shows in important local spaces received the most attention, with over 80 percent sometimes or always following these subjects. In the group discussions it was suggested that occasional workshops or seminars would help artists to gain current information on exhibition opportunities.

Exhibition success

From analysis of the exhibition process it is possible to make some generalizations about exhibition success.

The most successful artists had high-quality shows, high income, and commercial gallery orientation and gave moderate amounts of effort to exhibition and exhibition factors.

A second, moderately successful group worked hard at obtaining exhibits, considered most of the exhibition factors when attempting to get a show, used a variety of information sources, and showed interest in many art-related topics. These artists seemed to make a substantial effort to market their work.

A third group had had some success but probably had less experience than the first two. The approach to exhibition usually involved some self-initiated method rather than invitation or personal relationships. Other artists were the main source of information.

Finally, there was a group of artists who were not successful or were not interested in marketing their art. Some of these artists were older people with less professional experience and non-exhibiting artists who worked mainly for their own satisfaction.

APPENDIX

Approaches to the definition of visual artist

In Research Division Report #5, Where Artists Live: 1970, estimates were provided for the population of artists in thirty-two cities including Houston, Minneapolis, Washington, and San Francisco. The figures were based on data obtained in the 1970 Census of Population. The Research Division is now preparing similar estimates with data from the 1980 Census of Population.

The survey of Houston, Minneapolis, Washington, and San Francisco artists that developed the data for this report utilized definitions of artists and techniques for locating them that are different from those used for the census and the resulting universe of artists is not directly comparable with that described in Research Report #5. There is probably substantial overlap in these universes, but the extent of overlap and difference cannot be precisely determined.

The definition of visual artists used in the study underlying this report reflects the artists' exhibition history during the three years 1976-78. The artists in the study universe were obtained by requesting lists from recognized local art exhibitors. Those included were identified by an exhibitor as having had their work shown or sold at least once in the three-year period. The exhibition or sale had to be local and the artist had to live in the city or its immediate vicinity. About 75 percent of exhibitors in the four cities cooperated by providing this information.

In comparison to this approach and definition, the census occupational classifications are based on work activity in a very short and immediate reference period. The census month is April and the reference period is the last week of March, so persons are enumerated in the census as artists if in the last week of March they worked for pay or (intended) profit in their artist occupation for most of the hours that they worked during the reference week. The census locates artists through a general population survey rather than through such informed sources as exhibitors.

It is useful to have these two perspectives on the artist population with different but often complementary information. The data obtained from the census yield national estimates of basic characteristics of artists that can be directly compared with persons in other occupations, and the regular periodic collection of census data makes it possible to analyze trends. On the other hand, such studies as the one described in this report make it possible to examine such details and characteristics as artists' income from sale of their art and both art-related and nonart-related jobs and their relative satisfaction with conditions in local art markets--information that is not available through the census.

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