MAKING SENSE OF CULTURAL EQUITY

Ian David Moss and Justin Laing | October 17, 2017
The most important issues in the arts...and what we can do about them

Announcing the Winner of the 2016 Createquity Arts Research Prize

Mirae Kim’s research explores what characteristics separate nonprofits that work to benefit their community from the ones that chase revenue.
A HEALTHY ARTS ECOSYSTEM
MAKING SENSE OF CULTURAL EQUITY

When visions of a better future diverge, how do we choose a path forward?
FOUR VISIONS FOR CULTURAL EQUITY

Diversity
“Mainstream” institutions become more diverse and reflective of their communities.

Prosperity
Large-budget organizations focused on artists of color present work to a broad audience.

Redistribution
Funders provide more resources to organizations rooted in communities of color.

Self-Determination
People of color have ownership over shaping cultural life in their communities.
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Fault lines

• The Role of Race
• Value + Cost of Integration
• Centrality of Institutions (vs. Individuals)
• Cultural Norms
• The Role of $$$
Recommended for further research

- Valuable Cultural Experiences
- Benefits and Costs of Scale
- Arts and Social Change
ALL CULTURAL EQUITY IS NOT EQUAL

WHAT ARE OUR VARIED INTERESTS IN CULTURAL EQUITY?
All visions of cultural equity are not equal and all have ethnic dimensions.

**Four Visions for Cultural Equity**

- **Diversity**: Mainstream institutions become more diverse and reflective of their communities.
- **Prosperity**: Large-budget organizations focused on artists of color present work to a broad audience.
- **Redistribution**: Funders provide more resources to organizations rooted in communities of color.
- **Self-Determination**: People of color have ownership over shaping cultural life in their communities.
IT REALLY ISN’T JUST MONEY. IT’S LIVES. IT’S OUR FUTURE.

Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy

Research by Helicon Collaborative with support from the Surdna Foundation
THE 90%

Funding Distribution by Budget Size

- **Budget > $5 M**: 2% (58% share)
- **Budget $1–5 M**: 8% (21% share)
- **Budget < $1 M**: 90% (21% share)

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistical Index
THE 37%
THIS DID NOT JUST START YESTERDAY
“How can one find even a hint of beauty in their figures, when all or almost all of the originals on which they were based had the form of the Africans? That is they had, like them, pouting lips, receding and small chins, sunken and flattened profiles. And not only like the African but also like the Ethiopian, they often had flattened noses and a dark cast of skin…Thus all of the figures painted on the mummies had dark brown faces.”

—Johann Winckelmann on the Kemetians or Egyptians
“LOOK FOR ME IN THE WHIRLWIND”
–MARCUS GARVEY
VISION ONE AS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EUROPEAN DESCENDENT LED

It appears that my worst fears have been realised: we have made progress in everything yet nothing has changed.

— Derrick Bell —
There's a "lack of adequate institutions, activities and literature which preserve, teach and promote Black creative work. We need Black Libraries of the greats and students; institutes to teach different classical and modern schools of Black art, music, dance, etc. We need a body of Black creative works. We need regular observances, exhibitions, concerns, etc. to keep the aesthetic aspect of our life and culture alive and expanding."

-Dr. Maulana Karenga Notes on the Kawaida Theory
NON-REFORMIST REFORMS? NON-REFORMIST EXPERIMENTS

• A reformist reform subordinates its objective to rationality. Rejects ideas incompatible with maintaining current system.

• Non-reformist reform set criteria not in terms of what is possible, but is needed and puts power in the hands of ALAANA artists. Foreshadows future we want.
REFORM REFORMS? NON-REFORMIST REFORMS?
WE DECIDE.
QUESTIONS

• What work, projects and ideas are in Dallas that connect aesthetics to larger questions and challenges of the need for transformation?

• How do we finance Visions two, three and four? What is their financial relationship to the grassroots communities their work carries and is fed by?

• How do we make Vision one about ALAANA people and not European-descended comfort?
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