



Arts Engagement Literature Review Summary

Companion to *Building the Field of Arts Engagement*

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Find the full report, *Building the Field of Arts Engagement: Prospects and Challenges*, at Irvine.org/AEAreport.



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Books

Alinsky, Saul. *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. Random House, 1971.

Saul Alinsky's impassioned counsel to young radicals on how to effect constructive social change and know "the difference between being a realistic radical and being a rhetorical one." Each chapter of *Rules for Radicals* provides a lesson on how a community organizer can accomplish the goal of successfully uniting people into an active organization with the power to effect change on a variety of issues. Though targeted at community organization, these chapters also touch on a myriad of other issues that range from ethics, education, communication, and symbol construction to nonviolence and political philosophy.

Borwick, Doug. *Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States*. ArtsEngaged, 2012.

Borwick holds that established arts organizations, for practical and moral reasons, need to be more deeply connected to their communities. He discusses new ways of looking at the arts as a powerful force for building better communities and improving lives, and identifies the factors that serve to isolate established arts organizations from their communities; he points out the trends that loom as imminent threats to the long-term viability of the artistic status quo; and presents principles and mechanisms whereby, in his view, arts organizations can significantly extend their reach into the community, supporting enhanced sustainability. Included are case studies and examples of successful community engagement work being conducted by arts organizations from around the U.S.

Grams, Diane and Farrell, Betty, eds. *Entering Cultural Communities: Diversity and Change in the Nonprofit Arts*. Rutgers University Press, 2008.

The book draws on interviews with leaders, staff, volunteers, and audience members from 85 nonprofit cultural organizations to explore how they are trying to increase participation and the extent to which they have been successful. The accounts point to the opportunities and challenges involved in such efforts, from the reinvention of programs and creation of new activities, to the addition of new departments and staff dynamics, to partnerships with new groups. The arts leaders report that, although positive results are difficult to measure conclusively, long-term efforts bring better outcomes than short-term activities.

Graves, James Bau. *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community, and the Public Purpose*. University of Illinois Press, 2004.

This book explores the crisis of our national cultural vitality, as access to the arts becomes increasingly mediated, the author contends, by a handful of corporations and the narrow tastes of wealthy elites. Graves offers the concept of cultural democracy as corrective - an idea with important historic and contemporary validation, and an alternative pathway toward ethical cultural development that is part of a global shift in values. He explains the dynamics of how traditional and grassroots cultures may survive and thrive — or not — and what we can do to provide them opportunities equal to those of mainstream, Eurocentric culture.

Marshall, Catherine. *Field Building: Your Blueprint for Creating an Effective and Powerful Social Movement*. Capbuilders Publishing, 2011.

The author presents the complex tasks associated with launching and building a social movement, and offers step-by-step guidance to help ensure that the effort is successful. The book also provides real-life examples and points to further resources likely needed down the road as the movement grows.

Pitman, Bonnie. *New Forums: Art Museums and Communities*. American Association of Museums Press, 2004.

Pitman believes a new museum environment is taking shape in America — art museums are becoming forums for the discussion of new ideas; places where people can interact and learn from one another. This book explains how this transformation is occurring in a nationwide test group of eleven art museums. Supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts' Program for Art Museums and Communities, these museums were able to think creatively about enhancing the quality of the visitor experience and expanding service to their communities. Though the routes they took were different, from community-based artist residencies to fundamental changes in board/staff attitudes, all became institutions where learning, flexibility, and innovation are integral parts of the organizational culture.

Simon, Nina. *The Art of Relevance. Museum 2.0*, 2016.

The followup to *The Participatory Museum*, this book (also a free downloadable PDF) develops Nina Simon's central thesis in that piece and illustrates it with extensive international examples from museums and science centers. This work confirms Simon as perhaps the leading U.S. advocate of an approach that puts relevance to defined communities front and center.

Simon, Nina. *The Participatory Museum. Museum 2.0*, 2010.

The Participatory Museum is a guide to working with community members and visitors to make cultural institutions more dynamic, relevant, essential places. Museum consultant and exhibit designer Nina Simon weaves together innovative design techniques and case studies to make a case for participatory practice.

Tepper, Steven J. and Ivey, William. *Engaging Art: The Next Great Transformation of America's Cultural Life*. Routledge, 2008.

Engaging Art explores what it means to participate in the arts in contemporary society — from museum attendance to music downloading. Drawing on the perspectives of experts from diverse fields, the book analyzes key trends involving technology, audience demographics, religion, and the rise of “do-it-yourself” participatory culture. It offers a new framework for understanding the momentous changes impacting America’s cultural life over the past fifty years. The authors argue that if we center a new commitment to arts participation in everyday art making, creativity, and quality of life, we will not only restore the lifelong pleasure of homemade art, but will likely seed a new generation of enthusiasts who will support America’s signature nonprofit cultural institutions well into the future.

Van Dyke, Nella and McCammon, Holly J. *Strategic Alliances: Coalition Building and Social Movements (Social Movements, Protest and Contention)*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Strategic Alliances provides a set of in-depth analyses of the circumstances leading to the organizational movement alliances. Contributors investigate coalition dynamics among social movements, including antiwar, environmental, and labor movements, as well as ethnic organizations and women’s groups.

Zakaras, Laura and Lowell, Julia F. *Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State Arts Policy*. RAND Corporation, 2008.

To shed light on the decline in demand for the nonprofit arts, the authors describe what it means to cultivate demand for the arts, examine how well U.S. institutions are serving this function, and discuss whether it is in the public interest to make such cultivation a higher priority than it has been in the past. The authors propose that a strong cultural sector is characterized by three conditions: adequate amounts of high-quality artworks (supply), ample opportunities for people to encounter those works (access), and sufficient numbers of individuals with an interest in experiencing those works (demand). They argue that arts policies have long focused on supporting supply and expanding access while neglecting demand, which calls for cultivating the capacity of individuals to have engaging experiences with the arts. The authors conclude that greater investment in comprehensive arts learning, particularly for the young, is the most effective strategy for building demand.

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