

A Guide for Public Discussion
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THE INTERACTIVITY FOUNDATION ARTS FORUM



This is not the kind of report that you just read. It is designed for you, along with your peers in the classroom, group, club, neighborhood, community center, church, temple, mosque, book club, and social organization, to interact with it, argue with it, draw on it, and, most of all, have a conversation exploring policy possibilities around the arts.

If you're interested in hosting a Future of the Arts & Society discussion, here are some suggestions on how to do it:

- **Arrange for a room that allows participants to face each other while they talk; an open room where chairs can be set up in a circle, a dinner, or a conference table works well. Food and refreshments are advisable, possibly by potluck. There is enough material in this report for up to three sessions if you discuss 2-3 “possibilities” per session.**
- **Invite six to eight individuals to participate. If more than 10 people want to join, you can break them into smaller groups of at minimum five people. Each group could designate a moderator who will guide the conversation.**
- **To get reports for everyone, either request FREE copies from the Interactivity Foundation by calling 301-424-3605, or download copies of the report from www.interactivityfoundation.org or <http://if-arts.tumblr.com/>**

The moderator's role is to guide the group through different possibilities. Each "possibility" has a summary, questions to consider, explanation of the thinking behind the possibility, and ideas on how to implement it. The moderator should select a possibility, and then give participants a couple of minutes to read it. The moderator can begin the conversation by asking participants to answer the "Questions to Consider." The rest of the conversation can flow from the group's thoughts and reactions to different elements of each possibility. The group can repeat this process for each of the possibilities. Enjoy!



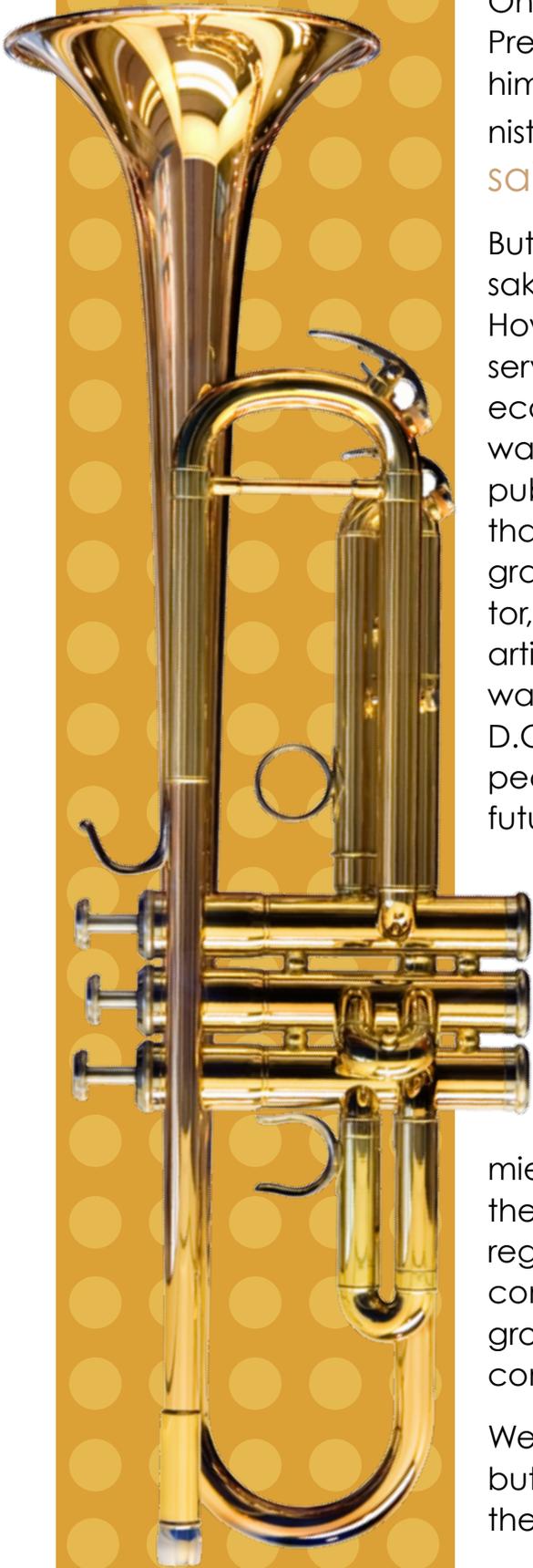
PREFACE

On a 1998 visit to the White House, Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel described how jazz helped him imagine freedom in the darkest days of communist oppression. “Music,” the poet-president said, “is the enemy of totalitarianism.”

But even in the best of economic times, art for art’s sake may seem like a luxury that society can ill-afford. However, creativity and innovation will continue to serve as vital engines driving the future of the U.S. economy. Cultural diplomacy is much less costly than war. Today, it is more important than ever to explore public decisions being made about the arts. For more than a year, a diverse panel of citizens—including a graphic designer, sculptor, playwright, attorney, curator, media scholar, poet, comedian, journalist, hip-hop artist, economist, management consultant, filmmaker, waitress, and arts administrator—met in Washington, D.C., to explore issues around the arts that they expect will need to be addressed by public policy in the future.

The panel thought broadly about what “the arts” might be and explored a broad range of factors that might impact the role they play in society. It explored different concepts and visions of what the arts might be. Concerns spanned from education, technology and its impact on the arts, intellectual property, and global and local economies. The group unpacked the various dimensions of the arts in society and looked at emerging concerns regarding how the arts might be created, taught, consumed, financed, and distributed. Finally, the group developed seven possibilities to address these concerns.

We offer these possibilities to you not as prescriptions, but as a way to initiate discussions about the future of the arts in a democratic society.



WHY ART?

think outside

provide a platform for civil dialogue

remember mourn

reflect the times in which we live

express unifying responses generate profits

WHY ART? to heal
mirror society

anticipate what's coming next celebrate emotions

disrupt societal norms

spread knowledge make a living

make beauty present predict changes in society

entertain **criticize society**

be a medium for ritual and civic engagement

build common experiences and ties

express a belief system

make meaning of life

WHAT IS ART TO YOU?



REMIX THE PUBLIC FACE OF ART

SUMMARY

This policy argues that society will need to work more quickly to adapt to changes and re-evaluate which art and art spaces are publicly subsidized. This means remixing the public space we create for art and, in some cases, even pulling the plug on old art forms.



The Bean in Chicago's Millennium Park.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:



Seattle Public Library



New York City Public Library

1. Can you think of any form of expression that we don't currently consider art that might be considered art in the future?
2. What might art look like 50 years from now?
3. What will libraries and museums look like in a future overflowing with electronic media?
4. What should be done when public support goes to art forms enjoyed only by a small elite?



REMIX THE FACE OF ART

HOW WE CAN DO IT:

This policy would reimagine what constitutes art and how we access it. For some, cultural institutions, such as libraries, museums, theaters, and galleries, would get a physical, conceptual, and technological overhaul.



Crown Fountain, Jaume Plensa, Chicago, 2004

1. Expand access to “crowd-sourcing” technologies, such as kickstarter.com and indiegogo.com, to fund new art projects. These technical tools could be used as ways to open up citizen participation regarding how public funding for the arts is distributed. Public funding, for example, could be distributed to the top vote-getters in a community, or citizens might determine where their share of public arts funding is spent.
2. Use public art spaces (libraries, museums, theaters, galleries, bookstores) as interactive “community spaces” for cultural exchange and to reassert a sense of community that exists beyond a virtual world.

HOW WE CAN DO IT:



Sir Duncan Rice Library, University of Aberdeen, Britain

3. Reinvent the library so that it is transformed into an all-purpose multimedia center.
4. Shift public funding to focus on access to art rather than on maintaining buildings as spaces for art. This would mean rotating spaces and mixing up their uses. This could include temporarily repurposing public spaces (in unconventional ways) for artistic use. Multimedia tools may help evolve art spaces from physical to virtual.
5. Reduce the number of tenure-track academic positions in a variety of disciplines to make room for new faculty, new ideas, and new approaches to the arts and to public interaction with the arts.
6. Library and museum collections can be digitized for virtual access, or collections could travel as “museums in a box.”

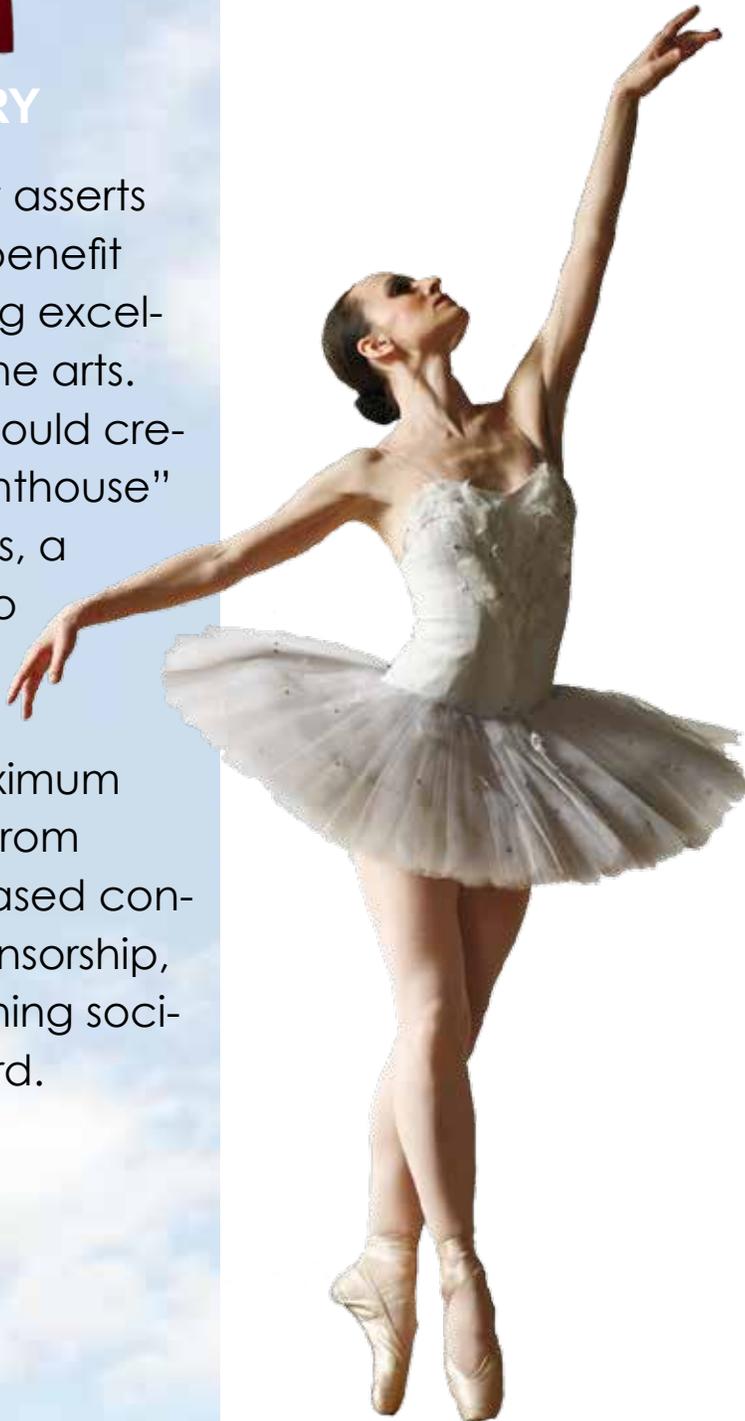


MAINTAIN THE LIGHTHOUSE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

SUMMARY

This policy asserts a public benefit to fostering excellence in the arts. Society should create a “lighthouse” for the arts, a beacon to simultaneously allow maximum freedom from market-based controls or censorship, while pushing society forward.



1. Is art just for the moment (e.g., graffiti or street art), or should it serve a larger purpose?
2. Who is art for? The artist? The public? The customer who pays for it?
3. How would you define artistic integrity? What are some examples that you've seen?
4. What if, inspired by the success of *American Idol*, the Pulitzer Prize committee scrapped its current peer-review system and instead chose the winner by a televised call-in vote or Facebook “likes”?

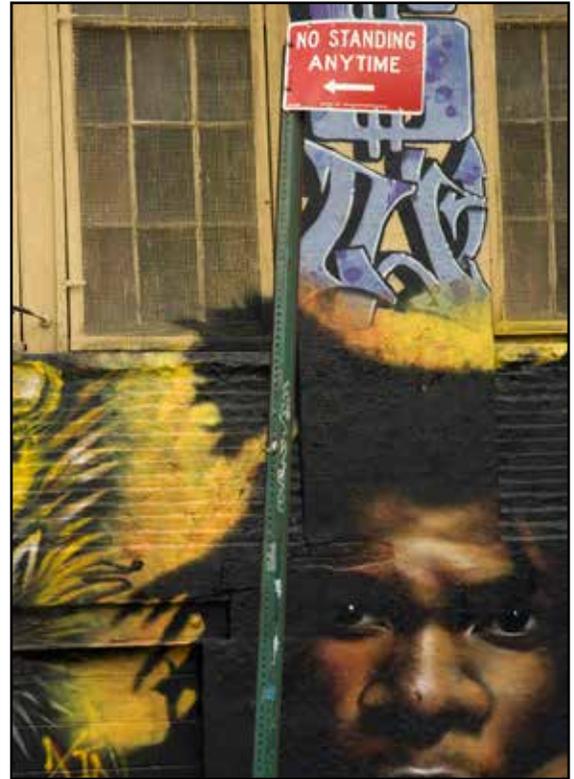
WHY MAINTAIN THE LIGHTHOUSE?

This policy possibility arises from concerns about our ability to create and recognize great works of art not defined by commercial success or immediate market appeal. Before public decisions are made about art, the work must be evaluated.

Is it vandalism or a new form of graffiti art? Should it be preserved or removed?

This policy approach would support the role of “gatekeepers in the arts” in educational and cultural institutions. Gatekeepers support historic preservation and protect cultural heritage, but they would also support groundbreaking, innovative work—art that can’t sustain itself commercially. This need not mean supporting art that is unpopular; it might be art that is participatory, engaging, and available

through a variety of media. Public resources would be needed to ensure a focus on quality and community dialogue versus private emphasis on ratings and quantifiable measures. Society must ensure that there is always a place for artists, as opposed to letting the market determine the supply. This policy would use federal, state and local public arts, and cultural agencies to maintain a “lighthouse”—a beacon of cultural institutions that point the way toward excellence while helping society navigate its way forward.



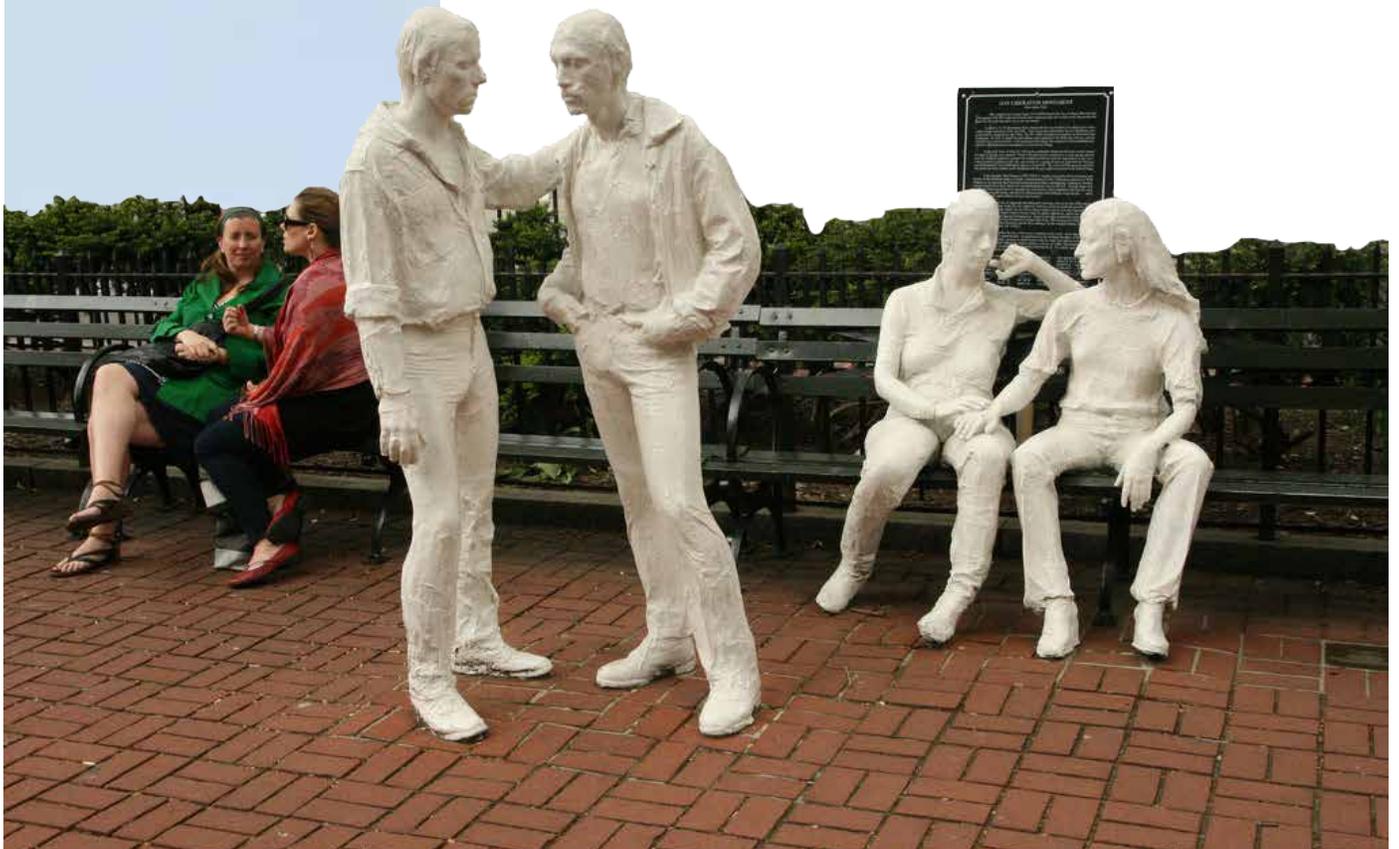
Jean-Michel Basquiat portrait, Long Island City, New York



MAINTAIN THE LIGHTHOUSE

HOW WE CAN DO IT:

1. **Maintain or increase funding to public art agencies working on local, federal, and state levels to support traditional gatekeepers: curators, theater directors, art educators, public performance series, and cultural heritage preservation societies.**
2. **Government should provide a counterweight to “correct” the commercial art market via grants, direct maintenance and ownership of arts institutions, tax breaks to artists, public media, and education programming.**



HOW WE CAN DO IT:



Public spaces can serve as forums where innovative performance art and live music thrive.



3. Maintain policies such as academic tenure that can protect free expression and unpopular ideas.
4. Expand federal, state, and local archives. Protect cultural artifacts. Where physical archives are not possible, support the development of digital archives.
5. Encourage and support artist guilds.



SUMMARY

This policy possibility recognizes that artistic creation is impossible without remixing or transforming elements of prior artworks. In response, it would allow art and ideas to be freely shared, remixed through an “open source” framework for artistic content to encourage the free flow and exchange of ideas.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:



Scenario 1: A young part-time comedian living in Washington, D.C., has been telling a risqué joke for years that always worked well during local stand-up performances. Watching television one day, she was surprised to see the comedic actress Betty White telling a similar version of the joke.

So who really “owns” the joke?
Who gets to tell the joke for a living?



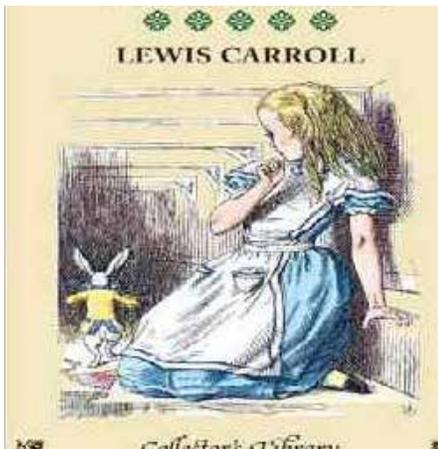
Scenario 2: Watching a recent Beyoncé video, a choreographer realizes it copies similar dance moves from a performance he’d recorded on YouTube years earlier.

So who “owns” the dance moves?

Who has a right to take the dance public?

WHY OPEN-SOURCE ART?

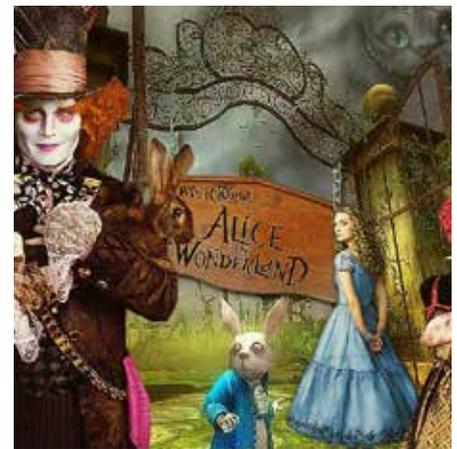
This policy envisions new models for the ownership, distribution, and control of artistic creations that look beyond the Industrial Age notions of “intellectual property.” Traditionally, intellectual property and copyright laws were tools for artists to protect their ability to make a living using their work. Increasingly, intellectual property policy has been used to lock up creative work and to exert strict control over certain elements of them. **Since the Industrial Age, technological changes have made it easier to share and remix creative works, while making it harder to determine ownership and enforce these laws when violations happen.** Artistic creation isn't the product of an assembly line. It is about developing an individual voice that transforms and remixes what has come before.



1866: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written by Lewis Carroll and illustrated by John Tenniel.



1951: Disney's animated adaption of *Alice in Wonderland*

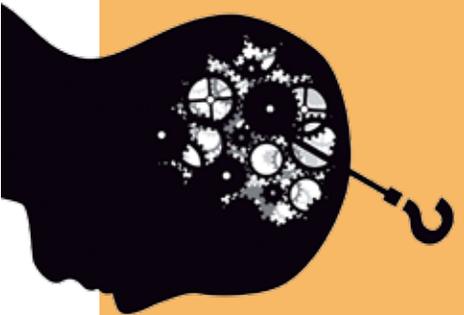
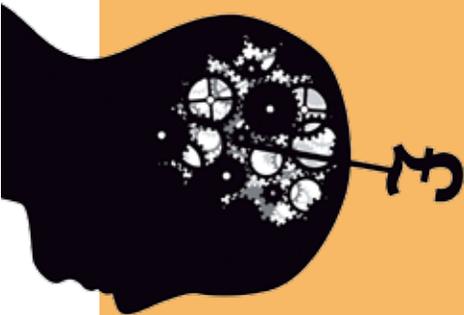
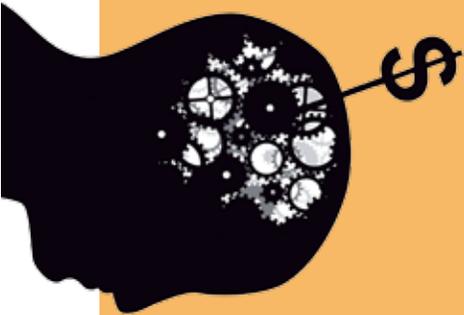


2010: Disney's adaption of *Alice in Wonderland*



WHY OPEN-SOURCE ART?

This policy approach recognizes the remix nature of all creative artwork. It is impossible to create something purely “new” and without relation to what has come before. Ideas are constantly re-formatted. **There is no end or beginning of an idea.** Re-editing, even the erasure of history, is not new. Jazz music, for example, is a cumulative tradition where artists learn the standards well enough to make them their own then build upon them in improvisation. Technology is creating a permanent archive of expressions, ideas, music, and culture online. Rather than fighting a rear-guard action against our ability to remix, or trying to lock down this archive and subject it to permanent intellectual property control, this policy embraces technology to enable more sharing and creative remixing of artistic works.



HOW WE CAN DO IT:

1. Encourage the use of “Creative Commons” licensing for distribution of creative works, which can allow sharing of content without artists giving up all ability to profit from their work.
2. Establish new protocols and agreements between artists who share and remix each other’s ideas.
3. In the marketplace of free ideas and artistic creation, people gain currency by respecting the rules of engagement, fairness, and other people’s ideas.
4. To avoid exploitation of other people’s ideas, establish better clearinghouses to find out what the restrictions and guidelines for each cultural artifact or reference might be.



ART HURTS



SUMMARY

This possibility focuses public policy on the many ways society could minimize the damage that art may do as it becomes harder and harder to regulate or monitor the content and distribution of artistic expressions.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Can you think of a time when art put someone in danger or directly harmed society? What was done about it? What should be done?
2. What if an artwork promoted harm to children, women, or other marginalized groups? Should something be done? If so, what?
3. What could stop the government and politicians from using art exhibitions or educational curricula to promote their own narrow self-interests or ideological points of view?

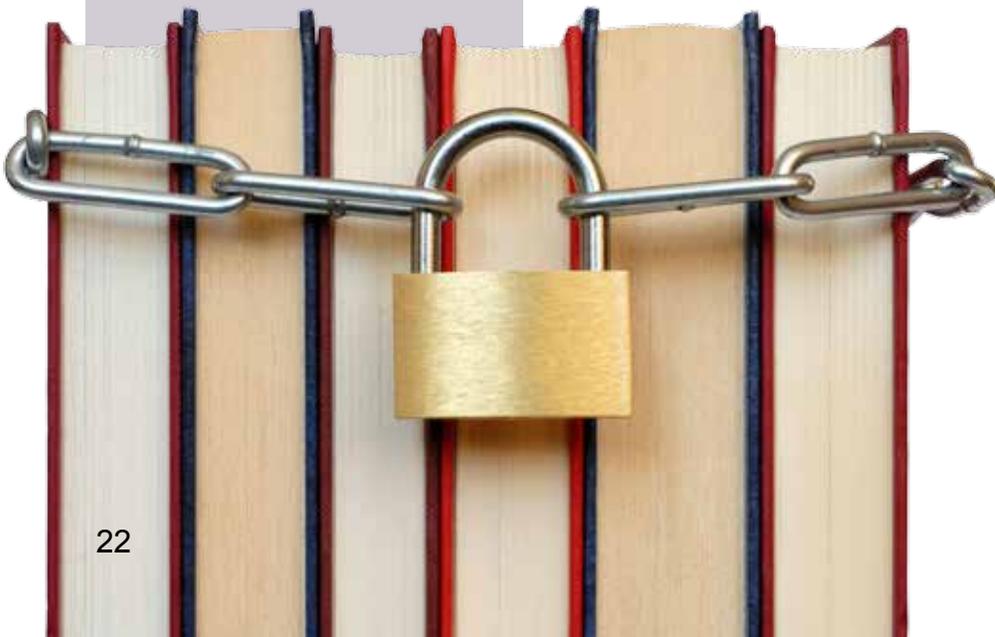


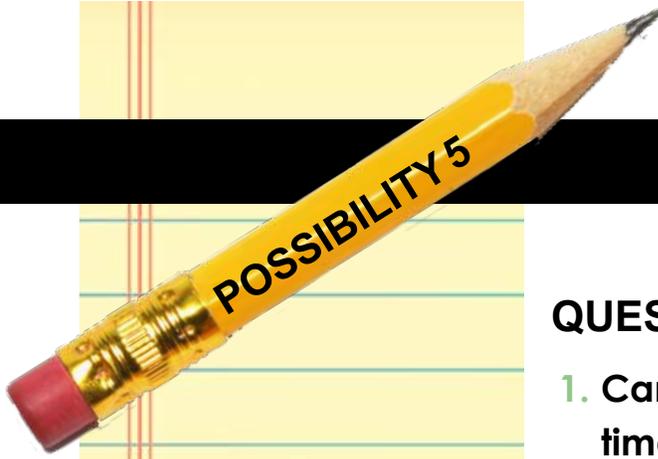
ART HURTS



HOW WE CAN DO IT:

1. Encourage audiences to independently perform oversight via boycotts and other public relations campaigns against offending artists or companies or institutions that support them.
2. Make sure that technical filtering tools, such as software blockers, become readily available to the public, so that audiences have greater control over the artistic expressions they encounter (and so parents would be better able to regulate what their children are exposed to).
3. Withhold government funds, permissions, permits, or access to public space and airwaves for offenders.
4. Encourage privately owned media, such as the computer, film/TV industries, social media, and Internet Service Providers, to voluntarily police content according to their own standards and publicly disclosed rating systems.





SCHOOLS OF ART

SUMMARY

This policy views art as a “public good” that should be available to all, since it will be of benefit to all. This possibility would have the arts infused throughout all of our public education systems and public spaces to spur creativity in a variety of fields.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Can you think of a time when an encounter with the arts or literature helped you better understand something?
2. How does our fast-paced world affect children’s ability to think creatively?
3. Is there any value in preparing students to express themselves artistically and think creatively beyond becoming a professional artist? In what fields are these skills useful?
4. Does art primarily benefit the elite, or is there a larger public benefit as well?



SCHOOLS OF ART

HOW WE CAN DO IT:



1. Foster the integration of art into other subjects in K-12 settings, including the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); mandate standards for art education in federal testing requirements
2. Foster an approach of teaching art with students at the epicenter, and then branch out. Begin with individual personal history, religion, etc., and then explore connections to local and global communities. Use art to train children about biases, encourage critical thinking, and develop children's natural instincts. This would help students think in a more interconnected and less formulaic way.
3. Subsidize artists-in-residence programs in all parts of the private and public sector.
4. Public funding for artists and arts organizations should be apportioned so that audiences reflect U.S. Census demographics in order to reach underserved communities.



5. Develop new, interactive tools for cross programming to create art encounters in public spaces, e.g., ice skating at a sculpture garden, barbecuing on the neighborhood museum lawn, public meetings in a museum gallery.
6. Encourage or require the use of public opinion polling to determine cultural programming that ensures all citizens have a voice.
7. Create virtual and satellite museums for smaller and more remote communities.



PRIVATIZE IT

This possibility would take the government out of the art business altogether. It would free up artistic expression from governmental or public intervention. At the same time, it would remove public subsidies from the arts.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Historically, who, besides the government, has funded the arts?
2. What might happen to art if it were totally devoid of public financial support?
3. How might the absence of public arts funding “free” art from the shackles of public opinion and public interference?



WHY PRIVATIZE IT?

For this policy possibility, it is essential to keep art free from public interference. The government often tries to exert control over artistic creations by the power of the purse. By removing public funding from the equation, art can be freed from governmental intervention. Whenever there is public support for the arts, the discussion over what is “good” becomes political, because everyone feels entitled to their opinion. Private philanthropy has been the foundation for supporting the arts for centuries. **Angel investors, wealthy benefactors, or venture capitalist projects often seed innovative work. Corporate philanthropy is good for society and can help companies get access to new and foreign markets.** Private sources could step in for maintenance, or preservation of public assets such as museums, theaters, and schools.





PRIVATIZE IT

HOW WE CAN DO IT:



1. Privatize museums and arts venues via sponsorships and outright private sector ownership.
2. Remove all public subsidies for the arts by removing tax breaks from private sector donations to the arts.
3. Establish a "charter" model for the arts (as with charter schools), where government would give money to endow cultural institutions to be run by private sector or non-governmental organizations.
4. Establish a model for a private sector role for the arts (as with the world of athletics), where government lightly regulates for basic safety but mostly stays out of the way.





THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What art or artists from other countries or cultures have contributed to your sense of art?
2. How has American art contributed to the culture of other nations?
3. How has art contributed to international conflict or peace?

SUMMARY

This possibility would encourage art to be used as a tool to promote harmonious relationships with countries around the world.



A Kathakali dance performance in Kerala, India



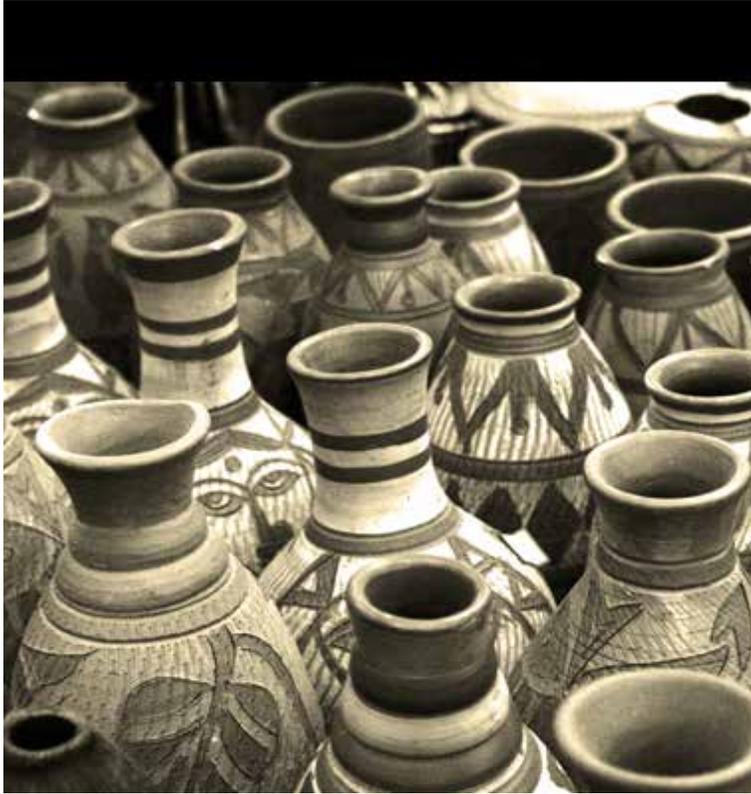
THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

HOW WE CAN DO IT:

1. Make foreign language learning a higher priority in the United States.
2. Increase government-funded artistic and cultural exchanges abroad.
3. Publicly subsidize high-quality foreign film, music, visual art, cuisine etc., to bring them to the United States.
4. Subsidize high-quality non-commercial U.S. films, music and visual art, cuisine, etc. to be sent abroad.



HOW WE CAN DO IT:



5. Encourage the use of foreign embassies and consular offices as arts venues and establish the corresponding role for U.S. embassies and consular offices abroad.
6. Provide public support to establish popular forums, such as food and fashion summits for chefs and designers from around the world.



POSSIBILITY #8, 9, 10...

Now you tell us. **WHAT DID WE MISS?**

Give us feedback! IF's Future of the Arts & Society project is a living document that we expect to evolve over time with new editions. We need your help to make it better. Please e-mail questions, reactions, and suggestions for how to improve the next edition of this report by e-mailing if@citynet.net or by posting your thoughts at <http://if-arts.tumblr.com>. You can also tweet us at [@IF_arts](https://twitter.com/IF_arts)

Take our survey! Research is an important part of what IF does. You can greatly help us by completing a five-minute survey by visiting www.interactivityfoundation.org/public-discussions/survey-monkey-links/ and using code 141-21-00 or by printing and mailing it to:

**c/o Dr. Natalie Hopkinson
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Published Discussion Books

Let's Talk Politics: Restoring Civility Through Exploratory Discussion (2013)

Discussion Report

The Future of Higher Education (2012)
America's Democratic Promise (2011)*
Democratic Nation Building (2011)
Food: What Might Be For Dinner? (2011)*
The Future of Energy (2011)
The Future of K-12 Education (2011)*
Future Possibilities for Civil Rights Policy (2011)*
Helping Out: Humanitarian Policy for Global Security (2011)*
Health Care: The Case of Depression (3rd edition, 2010)
How Will We All Retire? (2010)
Privacy & Privacy Rights (2nd edition, 2010)
The Future of Regulation (2009)
Property (2009)
Rewarding Work (2007)
Science (2007)
Anticipating Human Genetic Technology (2006)

Other Discussion Reports

Julius "Jay" Stern: A Biography (2010)
Contrasting Possibilities & the IF Discussion Process (2nd edition, 2009)
Facilitation Guidebook for Small Group Citizen Discussions (2nd edition, 2009)
Support Materials for the IF Discussion Process (2009)
Teaching Tips (2009)
Guidebook for Student-Centered Classroom Discussions (2008)
Public Discussion as the Exploration & Development
of Contrasting Conceptual Possibilities (2006)
Facilitation Guidebook (2005)
*Reports are available in Spanish

In pursuit of its mission to encourage and enhance the discussion of—and engagement with—broad public policy ideas (or “possibilities”), the Interactivity Foundation continues to conduct new discussion projects and develop new Discussion Reports from those projects. It is also continually revising its prior reports and developing new discussion guidebooks and other materials. The above list of publications was accurate as of the print date. For an up-to-date listing, visit the IF website at www.interactivityfoundation.org. Interactivity Foundation provides copies of its reports both online and printed without charge and encourages others to use, share, redistribute, and modify the reports within the terms of the creative commons license found on the inside front cover.

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ONE WAY

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