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A Master's Project by Jamie Walsh
Presented to the Arts and Administration Program
of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Masters of Science in Arts and Administration

June 2013

**Access and Inclusion:
Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness**

Approved: Amgalligan

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ABSTRACT //

The purpose of this research is to identify inclusive opportunities that artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and/or mental illness currently have to participate in the contemporary art world. This study has been developed as a Project, wherein I researched the history of segregation of this population in the United States, the historical context and implications of terms such as “Outsider Art”, and current inclusive art opportunities for artists at three different art programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. This provides an informed historical lens to assess public perception of artwork by artists with DD and/or mental illness and to identify the current opportunities such artists have for community engagement and participation in inclusive art exhibitions.

KEYWORDS //

Access, Inclusion, Mainstream, Contemporary Art, Outsider Art

Acknowledgements //

Dr. Ann Galligan: As my research advisor, thank you for providing guidance and enthusiasm throughout my research process.

My AAD cohort: Thank you for all of the love and laughs over the past two years. You all have been an amazing source of inspiration.

My family: Thank you for always providing unconditional support and for always believing in me.

Andrew Hampton: Thank you for being my editor and for all of your encouragement and insight along the way.

Lastly, thank you to all of the wonderful people who participated in this research. This project could not have happened without your experience and expertise.

Cover image:

Purple Red Black
John Patrick McKenzie
marker on paper
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June 2008-September 2010

Access and Inclusion: Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness

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- So Small, *Janet Smith Co-op*, Eugene, OR
- So Small, *Buzz Gallery*, Eugene, OR

2012

- What We Carry, *LaVerne Krause Gallery*, Eugene, OR

2011

- Pablo Rahner and Sergio Paniagua, *Deneff Gallery*, Long Beach, CA

2010

- Wild Life, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Getaway, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Sun, *Suki Boutique*, Eureka, CA
- Connecting to the Soul of my Art, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Paintings by Pablo Rahner, *Humboldt Area Foundation*, Eureka, CA
- Four Worlds Collide, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Paintings by Dawn Wentworth, *St. Joseph Radiation-Oncology*, Eureka, CA
- Cars, Trees & the Holy Spirit, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Paintings by Gerri Sadler, *SHN Engineering*, Eureka, CA

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- Life After Death and Dreams, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Paintings by Linda Turley, *Ryan Fray State Farm Insurance*, Eureka, CA
- Treasure Trash, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Drawings by John Taylor, *Eureka Natural Foods*, Eureka, CA
- The Allen Cassidy show, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
- Paintings by Jim Wilson, *Mad River Hospital*, Eureka, CA
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- Go Figure!, *The Cheri Blackerby Gallery*, Eureka, CA
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Access and Inclusion: Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness

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Conference Participation Scholarship Award
Chicago Zine Fest, exhibitor and workshop facilitator, Fall 2013

Schroeder Family Scholarship Award
Faculty nominated award based on graduate research project, Spring 2013

References:

Available upon request.

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Chapter 1: Introduction



Untitled

Dan Miller

mixed media

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Jamie Walsh

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PROBLEM STATEMENT //

Due to the coining of terms such as “Outsider Art” and a history of community segregation of individuals with disabilities, artwork created by such artists tends to be ignored by the mainstream of contemporary art. The word *outsider*, on its own, promotes the continued segregation of artists with disabilities from within a larger art context and thus perpetuates a continuation of overall community segregation.

The need for support services for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and mental illness gave rise to the many art programs that serve these artists. These programs exist across the United States. As stated by art program founders Florence Ludins-Katz and Elias Katz (1990),

In contrast to earlier beliefs, there is widespread agreement that disabled people not only belong in the community but should be active members of the community, and should not be forced to exist in state institutions isolated from their fellow-citizens (p. vii).

Some of the oldest programs, such as Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, California, Creativity Explored in San Francisco, California, and NIAD Art Center (originally called the National Institute of Art and Disabilities) in Richmond, California were established over thirty years ago and are currently among the most progressive advocating agencies for the inclusion of artists with disabilities. These programs' missions have grown to include exhibition programming and community inclusion.

This project examines and analyzes the ways in which these art programs promote the artists they represent and how their programming counteracts stereotypical public

perception of artwork created by artists with DD and mental illness. In identifying the ways that current art programs promote inclusion through programming, particularly exhibition programming, I hope to encourage a dialogue for arts administrators interested in artwork by artists with DD and mental illness. By better understanding the context of this complex topic, arts administrators can make more informed choices and have more resources to help eliminate stereotype and celebrate diversity.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK //

This project identifies inclusive opportunities artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and/or mental illness have to participate in the contemporary art world. In order to understand the context of these inclusive opportunities, it is necessary to review the historical segregation of individuals with DD and mental illness in the United States. Additionally, it is necessary to understand the social constructs of the Outsider Art market. Being informed in these areas provides a framework for understanding the subsequent cultural context in which art programs for artists with DD and mental illness were founded and continue to exist (See Appendix A).

Examining the social and political history in the United States of individuals with DD and mental illness sheds light on the community perceptions, stigmas, and stereotypes that exist today. Identifying segregation, within both the social and artistic realms, concerning individuals with disabilities helps illustrate the role of art programs in their efforts to provide inclusive access to the mainstream contemporary art world.

This project also analysis the term “Outsider Art” and the subsequent art market.

Historically, those interested in this type of artwork are drawn to the artists “pure and authentic creative impulses” (Dubuffet, 1988, p.36). Many characterize the work as avant-garde and challenging established cultural values. This description and labeling created an “Outsider Art market” both in the United States and internationally. According to the website of *Raw Vision Magazine* (2013), “Outsider Art has now established itself as a vibrant component of contemporary art.”

What happens when the term “Outsider” is applied to artwork created by artists with developmental disabilities and mental illness? Given the historical segregation of individuals with disabilities, the labeling only continues the process of exclusion. This niche Outsider market, unlike other markets, characterizes artwork based on the personal histories of the artists themselves rather than artistic styles, current art practices, and art movements.

This project identifies the ways that current art programs for artists with DD and mental illness create inclusive opportunities for the artists they represent. Through inclusive exhibition and community inclusion programming, artists with disabilities and the artwork created by these artists have increased access to the contemporary mainstream art world. Inclusive opportunities allow for the creativity of individuals to come before a description of the artists’ biography.

A literature review of these issues, the social and artistic segregations affecting individuals with disabilities, is included in this project. The literature review builds the context for fully understanding the case studies and the subsequent data analysis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY //

The intent of this research is to explore how artwork by artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and/or mental illness can be included within a contemporary art context. In particular, the research explores how art programs for artists with DD in the San Francisco Bay Area (*Creativity Explored*, *Creative Growth Art Center*, and *NIAD Art Center*) promote community engagement and inclusive art opportunities.

This research was conducted using qualitative methods, positioning myself in an interpretivist/social constructivist paradigm with the belief that truth is not absolute but decided by human judgment. The epistemology of interpretivism is based on the assumption that cultural identity is a central part of how we understand others, the world, and ourselves. By placing myself, the researcher, in the interpretivist paradigm, I recognized both my personal and professional biases. My art history background and my experiences working in art programs for adults with DD have given me a particular lens in which I view the art world as a whole. This project arose from my interest in creating inclusive opportunities for artists. I view this goal as very important for art organizations.

This research project addresses the following questions: What inclusive opportunities do artists with DD and/or mental illness currently have to participate in the contemporary art world? How do art programs for artists with DD and/or mental illness provide inclusive opportunities through community programming and exhibition programming? How has the level of inclusion changed over time and what barriers continue to exist that limit the level of access artists with disabilities have in the contemporary art world?

This study has a strong focus on the following terms: Access, Inclusion, Contemporary Art, Mainstream, and Outsider Art. For the purposes of this study, I have defined these terms as:

Access	The ability and opportunity to obtain or make use of something.
Inclusion	The act of including or the state of being included.
Contemporary Art	Art produced and recognized at the present point in time.
Mainstream	That which is widely accepted.
Outsider Art	Any artist who is untrained or with disabilities or suffering social exclusion, whatever the nature of their work ("Raw Vision," 2013).

I recognize the many limitations to this study. The topic of arts and disability is complicated and expansive. This study does not focus on artists themselves but rather art programs with missions of supporting the artists they serve and celebrating the creative process. This research focuses solely on three art programs located in California and a selection of their current staff.

This project serves as a tool for arts administrators working in the field of visual arts who are interested in access and inclusion. For those working at programs for artists with DD and/or mental illness, this project provides research and insight into inclusive opportunities through community engagement programming and exhibition practices.

Additionally, this project appeals to those working in contemporary art organizations and are interested in becoming more inclusive with their exhibition offerings.

In a boarder sense, this project seeks to shed light on the socially constructed notion of what constitutes “contemporary fine art” and the ramifications for individuals that have been historically excluded, such as artists with developmental disabilities and mental illness. These conclusions also extend to society as a whole. What are the cultural implications of defining and determining contemporary art in such a way that excludes a portion of the population from access to mainstream art?

RESEARCH DESIGN //

This research project explores inclusive opportunities for artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and/or mental illness to participate in the contemporary art world. The project examines community inclusion programming and exhibition programming for artists with DD. The research was conducted from a qualitative research perspective. The research includes case studies of three art programs in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. The case study sites are: *Creativity Explored* (San Francisco, CA), *Creative Growth Art Center* (Oakland, CA), and the *NIAD Art Center* (Richmond, CA). Each case study consists of multiple key informant interviews as well as document analysis. The programs of focus for this study where chosen due to their prestige within the arts and disability field and because they are some of the oldest existing programs of their kind in the United States.

The case studies involved in-depth key informant interviews with each program's

executive director and gallery manager(s). Interviewees were recruited through an email recruitment letter (see Appendix B), and upon approval, interviewees were provided a consent form (see Appendix C). The interview questions relate to organizational goals regarding community inclusion of both artists and artwork, observed community perception of artwork, specifics on current community inclusion programming, specifics on current inclusive exhibition programming, and how issues around inclusion (related to promotion of artwork, language used to talk about artwork, exhibition opportunities, and community perception) have changed over time (see Appendix D). Executive directors provided an over-arching perspective regarding organizational mission and the ways in which programming has changed or remained the same over time. Additionally, each program's gallery manager provided information regarding inclusive exhibition practices and documentation on exhibition programming. Due to the nature of this study, those who participated as interviewees were at minimal risk.

This study was conducted during the winter and spring terms of 2013 and was completed May 2013 (see Appendix E). Techniques used to establish credibility in this study include triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. Gathering data from three organizations provided a range of programming and policy information regarding the inclusion of artwork within the contemporary art world.

Information gathered through this project serves as a tool for art organizations that support artists with developmental disabilities and mental illness. By conducting this research, I have learned about the community inclusion programming and inclusive exhibition programming currently being offered at art organizations that specialize in supporting artists with disabilities. Simultaneously, through an extensive literature review,

I have learned about the cultural context in which these programs have evolved and about the ways that their actions, policies, and programming impact both the art world and society.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES //

This research began with an extensive literature review. The literature review focused on three main topical areas: 1) The historical segregation of individuals with disabilities and mental illness in the United States, 2) Outsider Art and the Outsider Art market and 3) The development of art programs for adults with disabilities in the United States. This literature review helps to better understand the context in which artwork created by artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and mental illness is perceived today.

The literature review also includes a section on art programs for artists with disabilities in the San Francisco Bay Area, each founded by Florence Ludins-Katz and Elias Katz in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Each of these programs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides a professional studio environment, gallery exhibition opportunities, and some form of community inclusion programming. These programs (*Creativity Explored*, *Creative Growth Art Center*, and *NIAD Art Center*) are the sites of the case studies considered in this project. These programs no longer have any connection to one another but, because they stem from similar beginnings and are among the most established programs of their kind in the United States, together they provide an unmatched wealth of knowledge.

This project discusses the major findings from this research, provides recommendations for these organizations and similar organizations, and suggests areas for further research. Data collection techniques included interviews and document analysis. These methods, talking to selected key informants at each organization and analyzing relevant documentation regarding inclusive exhibition opportunities, best answer the proposed research question.

To establish the participation of each case study site, I sent a recruitment letter (see Appendix B) and a consent form (see Appendix C) for each individual who participated in the interview process. As data relevant to my study was acquired, a data sheet for document analysis or interview protocol sheets for interviews were assigned for future analysis (see Appendix D).

Document analysis was preformed on existing data created by each organization. Analysis included digital documents (websites and press releases), and tangible documents (postcards, newsletters, and related exhibition materials) (see Appendix D). Digital documents were kept on a locked computer and tangible documents were kept in a locked file to maintain confidentiality.

The interviews consisted of a series of questions for executive directors and gallery managers regarding inclusive opportunities for the artists they support (see Appendix D). Each interview was conducted in person during one interview session. Data from interviews were recorded through audio recording. Participates and their roles at the organization are identified in this project. Participates have had the opportunity to review the content they submitted to the project and edit their remarks if they so choose. Providing these member checks has helped increase credibility of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review



Untitled
Marlon Mullen
30 x 40"
acrylic on canvas
© 2012 NIAD Art Center

INTRODUCTION //

Significant historical events have increased community inclusion opportunities and human rights for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and mental illness. Artists in the United States with DD and mental illness are now part of permanent collections at prestigious art museums, including the Berkeley Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Within the field of Arts & Disability, these are very recent achievements in a long history of segregation, stereotype, and stigma.

Although there have been advancements regarding inclusion, it is important to understand the history of segregation in the United States and how this history still impacts community perception of both individuals with DD and mental illness and the artwork they create. This research project seeks to document the context in which art programs for artists with DD or mental illness have developed, and the current culture and opportunities present today for community inclusion and inclusive art exhibitions. Art programs that support artists with DD and mental illness are now frequently being opened across the country. Though these programs may be new to the areas in which they are founded, they are part of a much larger, nation-wide foundation established over 30 years ago.

The first section of the literature review will highlight significant shifts in the medical treatment of individuals with DD and mental illness and the political shifts pertaining to human rights. These two topics are important in understanding the community perception of individuals throughout history and how this embedded memory in our society influences current perceptions. This history of segregation is also reflected in the way artists with DD and mental illness participate in the contemporary art world.

The second section of the literature review will focus on the Outsider Art market, a market defined by biographies of seclusion and lack of education. The third section highlights the development of art programs with the mission of supporting artists with DD and mental illness.

Definitions //

The separate definitions for Developmental Disability and Mental Illness can be given as:

Developmental Disability (DD)

According to the Developmental Disabilities Act, section 102(8), the term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual five years of age or older that meets certain specific criteria including likeliness to continue indefinitely and manifestation before the age of twenty-two. A full definition is found in Appendix F.

Mental Illness

Mental Illness is defined as "any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal [expected] cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning, and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic, or other factors, such as infection or head trauma" ("American Heritage," 2009).

DD and Mental Illness

In definition and diagnosis, developmental disabilities differ from mental illnesses.

However, these two types of diagnoses are linked together for several reasons. Research has found that psychiatric disorders are more prevalent in adults with learning disabilities than in the general population (Deb, Thomas, & Bright, 2001) . Numerous studies have estimated that 40-70% of all persons with DD have a co-occurring diagnosable psychiatric disorder (Silka & Hauser, 1997).

Due to the prevalence of co-occurring DD and mental illness, social support services intended to support adults with DD also end up supporting adults with mental illness. An example of this dual support system can be seen within California's regional centers. These centers were established to support individuals with DD, but are also in the position of serving individuals with mental illness. According to the *Association of Regional Center Agencies* (2011), more than 20% of regional center clients have a diagnosis of mental illness and are prescribed psychotropic medication. California's regional center system figures centrally into the case studies considered in this paper.

Complexity & Language //

Before diving into the research, I must comment on the scope of this research topic and the language used in the subsequent discussion. Of course, the analysis of historical segregation in the United States of individuals with DD and mental illness is a subject of incredible depth and complexity. The goal of this paper is to identify current inclusive opportunities that artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness have to participate in the contemporary art world. Toward this goal, the next section offers a discussion of the medical and social models of DD as a characteristic example of this much

larger subject. It is my intention that this will provide sufficient background to appreciate the analysis and conclusions that I arrive at in this paper, as well as give an appreciation for this rich and living history.

Diversity is not just a wide spectrum of people, interests, backgrounds, and lifestyles. It is a fractal-type phenomenon that continues as we zoom in. Within different categorized groups of people, there are more layers of diversity. As humans, we categorize information as a way to make sense of the world around us. However, the need to create categories for ourselves only leaves us with a simplified assessment of how people self-identify.

An example of self-identification is people-first language. People-first language restructures language, replacing premodified nouns (disabled people) with postmodified nouns (people with disabilities) (Halmari, 2011). This language reflects the evolution of other euphemisms over the years, where words like crippled have been replaced with terms such as differently-abled. This progression is also visible through the name changes of many agencies and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.

The *American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (AAIDD) has changed names four times since its foundation in 1876. Originally, this non-profit was called the *American Association of Medical Officers of Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Persons*, it then changed the name to the *American Association on Mental Deficiency* in 1933. In 1987 the name was changed to the *American Association on Mental Retardation* and remained that way until 2006, when it became AAIDD (Halmari, 2011, p. 829). VSA, the international organization on arts and disability, has also changed names over the years. When founded in 1974, the organization was known as *National Committee-*

Arts for the Handicapped. In 1985 the name changed to *Very Special Arts* until 1999 when it became *VSA Arts*. Now the organization goes by *VSA- The International Organization on Arts and Disability* ("VSA," 2013).

As with the evolution of organization names, people-first language is the result of a change in the language that our current culture and society deems acceptable and politically correct. The philosophy behind people-first language is that it is more respectful to emphasize the person first, rather than define individuals by their disabilities (Blaska, 1993). Advocacy groups like TASH, then called The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, initially recommended people-first language in the early 1990s and publications in the field of education and psychology soon adopted these new euphemisms (Blaska, 1993). Many individuals with disabilities, advocacy groups, and educators continue to apply and prefer people-first language, but there are those who do not agree with the ideas behind this model.

Jim Sinclair, autism-rights activist and founder of Autism Network International argues that people-first language suggests that disability can be separated from a person as if it is not part of the entirety of a person's existence. He argues people-first language insinuates disability is something bad, stating that "it is only when someone has decided that the characteristic being referred to is negative that suddenly people want to separate it from the person" (Sinclair, 1999). The range of opinions regarding people-first language shows just how complex the ideas of self-representation, empowerment, inclusion, and equality really are.

Overall, people with disabilities reserve the rights to their own self-image and how they choose to identify. I acknowledge and respect this fact but will be using people-first

language throughout this paper for the sake of consistency and because it is a form of linguistic prescriptivism I currently feel comfortable with. I understand that this is not a universally preferred model.

Section I: Historical Segregation in the United States

"Let there be a law that no deformed child shall live."

- (Aristotle, 1905/350BCE, book 7, part XVI)

Aristotle is recognized as a great philosopher and scientist, having a profound influence on the development of Western thought. Thankfully, we have progressed, but Aristotle's statement is a testament to the long history of culturally accepted segregation and the significant shifts that have taken place regarding disability rights.

There are many models for understanding disability: models that describe how individuals with disabilities experience disability and how disability is perceived in society. Two of the most common models of disability are the medical and social models. Throughout history there have been many medical advancements and shifts in policy that have impacted the disability community. How disability is understood both medically and socially has ramifications on policies, rights, and overall community inclusion opportunities for people with disabilities.

Medical Model of Disability//

The medical model of disability fundamentally attributes illness or disability to the individual and their own body. Carol Gill, from the Chicago Institute of Disability Research, explains this model with five basic statements:

1. Disability is a deficiency or abnormality.
2. Being disabled is negative.

3. Disability resides in the individual.
4. The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual.
5. The agent of remedy is the professional.

As you can see, this model leaves the individual in an essentially doomed and passive position. This model makes clear why in our society there is an ingrained reaction to disability of pity and condescension. The medical model encourages the idea that people with disabilities are entirely dependent. However, as pointed out in Joseph Sharpiro's book *No Pity* (1993), rather than disability itself, "it is society's myths, fears, and stereotypes that most make being disabled difficult" (p. 5).

Over the past fifty years the medical treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness has evolved, leading to changes both politically and socially. With advancements in the fields of science and medicine, psychiatric treatments such as lobotomy and insulin shock therapy are now viewed as barbaric. However, these medical-model procedures were commonplace until the advent of the antipsychotic medications developed in the 1950s. In addition to the advances in treatment options during this time period, there was also mounting criticism of involuntary institutional confinement.

Before the 1975 Supreme Court Case *O'Connor V. Donaldson*, there was no policy restricting involuntary commitment to mental hospitals. Kenneth Donaldson was a man committed by his father, diagnosed with schizophrenia, and confined for over 14 years, usually kept in a room and given no psychiatric treatment (Baldwin, 1975). Due to his own efforts advocating for his release, a federal law was passed declaring that "a non-dangerous patient who could live safely in freedom has a right to be released if not receiving

treatment" (Baldwin, 1975, p. 573).

Institutions had improved since the asylums of the 19th century, which were non-therapeutic and merely kept patients isolated (Wright, 1997). However, funding cuts to institutions in the early 20th century created poor living conditions, lack of hygiene, and neglect (Fakhourya W, Priebea S., 2007). A growing concern among families and disability activists led to an assessment of the mental health care system and eventually to patients becoming deinstitutionalized (Thomas, 1998).

Deinstitutionalization was part of the handful of liberal-era reforms of the 1960s, which included the Civil Rights Act and various social welfare programs. Initiatives designed to reform the mental health care system, which included state hospitals, were a reaction to unsatisfactory conditions, patient advocacy, and the advent of new medications. Unfortunately, the implementation of deinstitutionalization was fundamentally disastrous due to insufficient funding for community support services and the release of patients before adequate community support programming was established (Thomas, 1998).

The issue of involuntary commitment vs. voluntary commitment remains a contentious topic today. Without proper support services within communities, individuals who need such services continue to struggle. This illustrates the complexity of determining the most humane method of care. Currently, in the US, the situation is such that if involuntary commitment were not used, individuals who refuse treatment would not receive any kind of care at all.

Deinstitutionalization also brought an increase in those seeking mental health care at hospitals and an influx of individuals with mental illness into the criminal justice system.

Hospitals became overpopulated and patients were released prematurely, many of them not continuing their prescribed medications (Thomas, 1998). This resulted in the criminal justice system, which is not a treatment system, detaining, segregating, and isolating individuals with mental illness, much like the state hospitals of the past.

State legislatures have developed many of the services and programs for individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities. States, on their own, have established social service policies and programs to ensure advocacy, support, and programming for individuals with disabilities. One way states have organized support is through the development of Regional Centers, as with the state of California.

Another significant political shift is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA, a law passed in 1990, is a very recent civil rights act that has shaped policy for individuals with disabilities. This law was, “created to ensure equal access for people with disabilities to employment, government programs and services, and privately owned places with public accommodations, transportation and communication” (Korza & Brown, 2007, p. 334). This law not only ensures services but it also encourages the creation of inclusive communities and the implementation of universal design to allow for widespread accessibility. This progressive way of thinking about our communities, “assumes diversity of users and that a board spectrum of abilities is ordinary, not special” (Korza & Brown, 2007, p. 332).

Although the Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to employment and a means for independence for individuals with disabilities, a study published in the Journal of Intellectual Disability Research entitled “Spaces of Social Inclusion and Belonging for People with Intellectual Disabilities” examines what *social inclusion* really means.

Through a set of case studies focusing on community arts programs for adults with disabilities, Hall argues that inclusion does not necessarily mean that individuals with disabilities participate in 'normal' social activities such as employment and independent living. In fact, hall argues that "these standards and expectations are very difficult, if not impossible, for many people with IDs (Intellectual disabilities) to reach" (Hall, 2010, p. 51).

This complex shift from the medical-model assumption that "the remedy for disability is to normalize the individual" (Carol Gill, above) to the push for social inclusion is more than a shift in policy but also the result of an evolution of socially constructed ideas around disability. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a re-evaluation of the traditional medical-model approach to disability. Disability rights advocate Gerben De Jong challenged the validity of the medical model, "arguing that disability was in large part a social construct, and that environmental factors are at least as important as biophysical ones in the assessment of a disabled person's capacity to live independently" (Barnes, 2000, p. 69).

Social Model of Disability//

The medical model has had an enormous impact on contemporary perception of the capabilities and social contributions of individuals with DD and mental illness. It is one contributing factor to the prejudices of our own time and place. The medical model is placed in opposition with the current *social model* of disability. Carol Gill, from the Chicago Institute of Disability Research, explains this model as:

1. Disability is a difference.
2. Being disabled, in itself, is neutral.
3. Disability derives from interaction between the individual and society.
4. The remedy for disability-related problems are a change in the interaction between the individual and society.
5. The agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society.

Advancements in education and advocacy have changed terms, language, and the way illness and disability are currently understood. This advancement is due to many sources, all of which contribute to this rich history. It's worth noting, simply, that much of this advancement is due to awareness and activism from the disability rights movement itself. Disability rights activists began drawing parallels to race and gender and called for a "relocation of disability from the narrow domain of individual biology to the broader realm of society and its practices and beliefs" (Gill, Kewman, & Brannon, 2003, p. 306).

It is now understood that disability is not an individual occurrence, but in reality is imposed by personal factors (such as negative attitudes and limited social supports) and environmental factors (such as inaccessible transportation and public buildings). The social model of disability identifies society itself as one of the main contributing factors in disabling people. Furthermore, this model treats both disability and normality as social constructs. Gill et al. (2003) states the social model "acknowledges physical or mental impairment as a common aspect of human experience, viewing persons with disabilities as hindered primarily not by their intrinsic differences but by society's response to those differences" (p. 306).

The social model uses modern research to support integrating persons with DD and

mental illness into communities, with the belief that community involvement is crucial to any person's health and well-being. Advances in medicine, political progress, and the re-evaluation of biases and social prejudices toward individuals with DD and mental illness are all achievements in disability rights. However, prejudices, stereotypes, and misconceptions are still pervasive in our culture. Though laws like the ADA permit individuals with DD and mental illness increased access to public spaces, they do little to touch on social and cultural inclusion. The ADA codifies anti-discrimination language, which doesn't necessarily translate into the culture. An example of where issues of segregation and lack of inclusion still exist is within the contemporary art world. The Outsider Art market points to issues of access and inclusion within the visual arts.

Section II: Outsider Art

"Is immunity to culture possible?" - (Fine, 2004, p. 31)

This is a good place to briefly draw out the distinction between physical disability and DD/mental illness, as well as see how the history of segregation of individuals with physical disabilities nonetheless informs the study of artists with DD and mental illness.

Individuals with physical disabilities have also faced the prejudices and misconceptions of society. A disheartening example is that of freak shows. In the United States, in the 19th century, freak shows were a venue in which individuals were put on display and seen not as human beings but as units of entertainment whose only value was derived from the novelty of their physical disabilities.

The memory of freak shows manifests in contemporary culture as the phenomenon of Outsider Art. In particular, the culture of biographies surrounding artists with DD and mental illness emerges out of the culture of freak shows that considers disabilities, whether physical, mental, or developmental, as mere novelties to be consumed for entertainment.

Coining of the term //

The concept of Outsider Art in the United States was derived from the French term *L'art Brut*. French artist Jean Dubuffet invented the term, which translates as *raw art*, in the 1940s to describe the art made by individuals at mental hospitals he visited in Switzerland (Muri, 1999).

The unique aesthetic of the artwork, in combination with the creators' biographies and mental illness, pointed to the "creator being somehow insulated from all social and cultural influences, devoid of all schooling in the arts, and unaware of traditions or present compositional formulae" (Cardinal, 2009). The discovery and collection of such *raw art* became a passion of Dubuffet. He first documents this enthusiasm in a letter to artist René Auberjonois in 1945, writing:

I preferred 'Art Brut' instead of 'Art Obscur' [Obscure Art], because professional art does not seem to me any more visionary or lucid; rather the contrary....Why then do you write that gold in its raw state is more fake than imitation gold? I like it better as a nugget than as a watchcase. Long live fresh-drawn, warm, raw buffalo milk (Dubuffet, 1945).

The concepts of *Art Brut* were introduced to the United States in 1972 with the book *Outsider Art*. *Outsider Art*, by art historian Roger Cardinal, was the first English-language book to be published on the subject of *Art Brut* and also introduced the Americanized synonym- Outsider Art. This term has extended into an umbrella term to "describe everything from works by self-taught and folk artists, to art produced in therapy programs, and art made by those who are maybe just a bit eccentric" (Murrell, 2005). Additionally, Outsider Art has further developed into the contemporary Outsider Art market, made up of galleries, collectors, and art fairs.

Outsider Art market //

Outsider Art, from its ideological inception, places a greater emphasis on an artist's personal biography than on the artist's work itself. *Art Brut* (the term that preceded the coining of Outsider Art) is defined by Dubuffet (1967) as:

A product created from persons immune from the artistic culture, in which mimetism plays a minimal part if not any, in a different way from the activities of the intellectuals. These artists derive all, subjects, the choice of materials, symbologies, rhythms, style, etc., from the personal interiority, and not from the conventions of the traditional and fashionable art (p. 198).

However, as Gary Alan Fine (2004), author and professor of sociology at Northwestern University, questions, "is immunity to culture possible?" (p. 31). Or is this a romanticized idea imposed upon a diverse group of people? Dubuffet sought out artists untouched by culture through visits to psychiatric asylums at a time when patients were socially isolated. As pointed out by Carole Tansella (2007), now that community inclusion is a priority of programs for individuals with DD and mental illness, this type of isolation no longer exists (p. 135).

Despite these observations, Outsider Art in the United States is fixed to cultural isolation, biography, and diagnosis. Since it is a category that lacks aesthetic criteria, definitions of Outsider Art have only become more vague since the term was first introduced by Roger Cardinal in 1972. This multitude of intersecting genres confuses any precise characterization of Outsider Art. What is certain, though, is that Outsider Art is used

by historians, critics and collectors as a term defined by the status of the persons creating the art instead of any formal characteristics (Tansella, 2007, p. 133).

Over the past twenty years, Outsider Art has expanded to become a multi-million dollar marketplace in the United States (Wilson, 2011). Historically, the Outsider Art market has operated apart from the mainstream contemporary art market. Wilson (2011) goes on to explain that, "the field purposefully divorced itself from Western art historical lineage and established its own canon, resisting traditional evaluative strategies such as context and comparison" (p. 331).

It is characteristic of the genre that many well-known and best-selling Outsider artists have documented histories of mental illness (Wilson, 2011). This evaluation based on biography influences who is able to flourish as an Outsider artist. New York dealer Randell Morris reports (as cited in Decarlo & Dintenfass, 1992), "When I speak to audiences, if I talk about surface tension, or even say the artist can paint, I lose them. If I talk about how strange the artist is, they love me. The stranger the human being, the more they like it." Morris goes on to say that their gallery no longer uses biography and personal circumstances as a selling point, but that they've lost a lot of clientele as a result.

Unlike other art markets, opportunities to become successful within the Outsider Art market are determined by the level of authenticity as a stereotypical "outsider." As stated by Gary Alan Fine (2004), "Authenticity becomes a credential, one that is ascribed by others, rather than achieved by the artist" (p. 237). Zolberg and Cherbo (1997) explain this point further, "Because the question of authenticity hinges, ultimately, on the social condition of the artist, biography supersedes the aesthetic analysis to which works by conventional artists are subjected" (p. 29). Becoming a successful Outsider artist has little

to do with creativity, talent, or vision and a lot to do with an interesting or entertaining biography.

Because of certain biographical facts, such as a diagnosis of DD or mental illness, artists become recognized by collectors, dealers, and galleries as Outsider artists. Once classified as an Outsider, an artist faces the challenge of maintaining authenticity. An example of this dilemma has been chronicled by John Windsor (1997) in the internationally recognized Outsider Art journal, *Raw Vision*. Windsor writes about the career of British artist Albert Loudon:

It isn't easy being an outsider. Once elected, there are appearances to be kept up: the solitary lifestyle, the nutty habits, the freedom from artistic influence. Above all, indifference to earning money. Scrounging for canvas and paint, going without luxuries such as food and socks, are all part of the life of austerity that one's public demands. In the end, the outsider's surest way of providing his integrity is to be dead. [Louden's] crime is that he broke the outsider's vow of poverty - by selling his paintings to commercial galleries. Some of the very dealers who bought and sold his work now regard him as the ousted outsider. Untouchable. He might as well be mainstream (p. 50).

The Outsider Art market that adopts artists can also reject them, all for reasons that have nothing to do with the evaluation of their artwork.

The monetary value assigned to artwork by Outsider artists is also significantly less than artwork by mainstream contemporary artists (Fine, 2004. p. 218). This proves to be another limitation for artists placed in this particular market. It does, admittedly, make the market more accessible for collectors who couldn't otherwise afford original pieces of

artwork (Fine, 2004, p. 218). However, this situation merely benefits dealers and collectors at the expense of the artist.

One characteristic of the Outsider biography that strongly intersects with the population of individuals with DD and mental illness is a lack of formal arts education. It is certainly true that artists who are able to obtain a formal arts education, meaning artists who can both afford and meet the prerequisite requirements of colleges and universities, gain more opportunities. They receive formal training, portfolio building, networking connections, and an exhibition history. These opportunities have become essential to a career in the contemporary art world. The Outsider market is presented as an acknowledgment of an underrepresented part of American culture, those without a formal arts education. However, simply classifying artwork based on the artist's level of education does not help resolve the problem of unequal access to arts opportunities. This type of classification constructs its own barriers to inclusion.

Art programs for artists with DD and mental illness are now filling this professional development gap. Artists, no longer segregated from society, have access to materials and mentorship, regularly visit other art spaces, earn income, and show the undeniable influence of popular culture. None of these developments meet the criteria first introduced by Dubuffet, which illustrates the incorrectness of applying the Outsider label to artists with DD and mental illness.

Section III: Art Programs for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

"Creativity is a vital living force that lies within each individual"

- (E. Katz & F.L. Katz, 1990, p. 3)

Art programs supporting adults with DD and mental illness developed out of what Rae Edelson, director of Gateway Arts, describes as "a perfect storm." In the mid-1970s, when Roger Cardinal published his book *Outsider Art*, the effects of deinstitutionalization from the early 1960s were still prevalent, and the concept of Normalization was being introduced in the United States (Edelson, 2011, p.1). Normalization advocates for the acceptance of people with disabilities into society by offering the same conditions offered to those without disabilities.

Within this idea, involvement with the mainstream activities of society is thought to increase life satisfaction, self-esteem, and personal competence for individuals with disabilities. Consequently, segregation is considered detrimental to an individual's development (Landesman & Butterfield, 1987, p. 810). The principle of Normalization was first developed in the Scandinavian countries during the 1960s, and was further developed in the United States by the American academic Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger. Normalization has had significant effects on services provided for people with disabilities and has influenced the shift away from the medical model of disability, towards the social model.

Additionally, the period from the 1960s through the 1970s was a time when *community arts* became an increasingly widespread term in the United States. Such programs, "seek to break down barriers between artist and audience and to include everyone, no matter their skill level, in creating and presenting the arts" (Hager, 2008,

p.160). With that idea, community art programs seek to broaden participation and create inclusive spaces and environments. This surge in community-based arts can be seen as helping to propel the arts programming needed within communities to serve adults with disabilities. Currently, The website for the National Arts and Disability Center (2011) lists 67 art centers for artists with disabilities in the United States.

Development of Art Programs //

As stated above, regional centers were established throughout California in 1969 due to state initiatives such as the Lanterman Mental Retardation Services Act. The Lanterman Act states that “people with developmental disabilities and their families have a right to get the services and supports they need to live like people without disabilities” (“Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center,” 2013). This system of service centers, coordinated by the Department of Developmental Services, originally started out as seven centers statewide but has expanded to twenty-one different regional centers serving all of California.

Regional centers help advocate and provide services for individuals with disabilities and their families. The centers are “nonprofit organizations that arrange, fund, and monitor services provided by service provider organizations” (“Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA),” 2011). Such service providers are comprised of both nonprofit and for-profit providers that work together to meet a range of needs for individuals with disabilities. These needs range from medical and dental to educational and social. A main component of the Lanterman Act and the overall mission of regional centers is the

application of the “person-centered planning” approach to providing services (“ARCA,” 2011). This approach means each individual client has a planning team, which includes the person receiving the services and their personal support network, that advocates for their choices regarding their living situation, how they spend their days, and how they plan for their future.

Nonprofit art programs that serve adults with disabilities are one type of service provider that receives funding through regional centers. These programs use visual arts, performing arts, and/or music to provide educational, recreational, social, and emotional support to adults with disabilities. Many of these programs also include alternative-to-employment programs by assisting clients to develop as artists and participate in exhibitions as a means to sell their artwork. Alternative-to-employment programs “seek to ensure that people with disabilities with high support needs, who require an alternative to paid employment, have access to a range of opportunities to develop skills and participate within their community” (“Activ,” 2013).

Art programs that serve adults with developmental disabilities range from large-scale organizations in large cities to small-scale organizations in small towns. Education regarding disability rights has changed dramatically since the 1950s and it is now understood that people with disabilities not only belong in their communities but should be active members within them.

Research shows that, for adults with DD, living and working in community environments increases motivation and skills, which in turn positively affects self-determination and the amount of control over one's life (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001, p. 372). As pointed out by Dr. Wehmeyer (2001), there are prevalent assumptions that

individuals with DD cannot or do not become self-determined and have a limited capacity to grow (p. 374). These assumptions have been challenged by art programs across the country, particularly those located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Bay Area Art Programs //

Florence Ludins-Katz, MA. and Elias Katz, Ph.D. are leaders in creating the policy and programming for art programs for adults with disabilities. Both came from backgrounds in arts and disability: Florence was an artist who taught at both the high school and college levels and Elias was a psychologist who had worked at the Sonoma State Home for the Mentally Retarded.

In 1973, the Katzes together founded, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the first art program for adults with developmental disabilities: Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland, CA. The model they developed includes the goals of "artistic development, enhancement of self-image and self-esteem, improvement of community skills, marketing of artwork, and active participation in the community" (Korza & Brown, 2007, 343). Their methodology also puts a focus on a group studio environment and professionalism (Rinder, 2011).

In addition to Creative Growth Art Center, the Katzes founded Creativity Explored and NIAD Art Center. Together, these three programs, which are the focus of this case study, have dramatically changed attitudes towards artwork made by artists with disabilities and have become leading models in their field. In combination, these programs are approached by over seventy individuals and organizations each year seeking advice

regarding programming and best practice. This number is a testament to the successful model developed by the Katzes forty years ago.

As pointed out by Lawrence Rinder, Director of the Berkeley Art Museum, artists at these three Bay Area programs have become the antithesis of that envisioned by Cardinal's 'Outsider Art', which sought to, "identify the work of artists who have no contact with the art world and who are physically and/or mentally isolated" (Rinder, 2011, p.9). Instead, due to the progressive methodology of these programs, artists work alongside one another, create new works specifically for exhibition and sale, make regular visits to local galleries and museums, and work with artist mentors who assist them in developing new approaches and techniques (Rinder, 2011). This also contradicts Dubuffet's *Art Brut* definition that, "works are created from solitude, where the worries of competition, acclaim, and social promotion do not interfere" (Dubuffet, 1988, p. 36).

Lawrence Rinder, along with Matthew Higgs, director of White Columns in New York, directed the art exhibition *Create* at the Berkeley Art Museum in 2011. *Create* featured artwork by artists from each of the three Bay Area programs. This was the first time artists from all three programs were contextualized together in a contemporary art museum. For many people, including representatives from the three art programs, this was a monumental opportunity and cause for celebration. Rinder states that artists from the programs are rapidly shifting in status from outsider to that of insider. Additionally, Rinder (2011) states that the Berkeley Art Museum is "tremendously honored to be playing a role in that transformation" (p.7).

However, not everyone was pleased with this exhibition. Petra Kuppers, Associate Professor of English, Women's Studies and Theatre & Drama at the University of Michigan,

published an article in *Disability Studies Quarterly* titled "Nothing About Us Without Us: Mounting a Disability Arts Exhibit in Berkeley, California" (2012). This article brings up many interesting points regarding the *Create* exhibition as well as the overall complexity of arts and disability. Kuppers notices the apparent lack of involvement of the artists in the curation and textual productions surrounding the exhibit and contrasts it with the "*Nothing about us without us*" policy of disability rights and politics. This show was directed by Lawrence Rinder, the director of the Berkeley Art Museum and not a member of the disability community. Kuppers, who is disabled and uses a wheelchair, argues for the innate political and social aspects of art. Kuppers concludes that ignoring this aspect of art and defusing dialogue around such rich and important issues is a failure on the part of the *Create* exhibition.

It is impossible to not see the validity in Kuppers's arguments. Artwork is powerful and artwork made by artists with disabilities is tied to a history of segregation and stigma. However, what isn't said can be just as powerful as what is said. There are many ways in which these current art programs *are* striving to be revolutionary. Artists do participate in politically themed shows with high levels of dialogue, in addition to participating in art exhibitions, such as *Create*, which consciously focus on the artwork itself. Not making disability politics the forefront of the *Create* exhibition was itself a political decision. As with the contention over people-first language, opinions around exhibitions and dialogue highlight the complexity of the intersection of arts and disability.

These programs strive not only to combat issues of seclusion and stereotype for the artists they serve but also struggle against the art-world constraints of the constructed Outsider Art market. This is no small feat for a group of non-profit arts organizations. The

following chapter will introduce these three programs as the case study sites for this research paper. Further, the analysis of these case studies will introduce pertinent topic areas for these art programs, and reveal the strategic thoughtfulness that goes into navigating and advocating for inclusion.

Chapter 3: Case Studies



Abstract III
Vincent Jackson
11 x 8.5 "
Oil pastel on paper
© 2012 Creativity Explored

Data Collection Methods //

Findings from this study were gathered through in-person interviews with executive directors and gallery managers, document analysis of promotional and organizational materials, and on-site observations. Data collected through interviews focused on exhibition programming, community perception of artwork, and the evolution and trajectory of the arts and disabilities field. Data collected through document analysis includes publicity accessible information on websites, business cards, postcards, brochures, and newsletters. On-site observations of the studio and gallery spaces were made at each organization.

The purpose of this study was to gather information about inclusive exhibition opportunities and advancements in the arts and disabilities field by researching three of the oldest and most successful arts and disabilities programs in the United States. I chose to conduct case studies at 1) *Creative Growth Art Center* in Oakland, 2) *Creativity Explored* in San Francisco, and 3) *NIAD Art Center* in Richmond.

Introduction //

As professional contemporary arts organizations representing historically segregated and stereotyped artists, thoughtful and strategic approaches to appearance and presentation are paramount. Organization logos/marketing materials and websites are first impressions to the arts community and general public. In the analysis section of this research I will speak more to the importance of professionalism. This section will introduce locations, organizational logos, mission statements, website content, staffing, and gallery/studio programming for each case study site to provide context.

1) Creative Growth Art Center //



[Photo credit: File Magazine]

- Location

Oakland, California. The expansive studio and gallery are housed in a former auto body repair shop on Oakland's Auto Row, alongside many other galleries that have opened in this cultural area of converted warehouses.

- History

Creative Growth Art Center was co-founded in 1973 by Florence and Elias Katz and is the world's first non-profit art center dedicated to artists with developmental, physical, and mental disabilities.

- Mission Statement

Creative Growth Art Center serves adults with developmental, mental, and physical disabilities, providing a professional studio environment for artistic development, gallery exhibition and representation, and a social atmosphere among peers.

- Logo



[Image credit: Creative Growth Art Center]

The Creative Growth logo is modern and simple. It does not include a tagline nor does it mention arts and disability.

- Staff

Executive Director, Assistant Director, Client Services Coordinator, Summer Youth Scholarship Instructor & Coordinator, Studio Manager, Gallery Manager, Gallery Assistant, Development Manager, PR + Projects Manager, Studio Administration, Nurse's Aide, and Accountant. There are also 14 art teachers specializing in: Painting, drawing, mixed media,

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print making, wood, video, mosaics, ceramics, textiles, and rug making.

- Artists

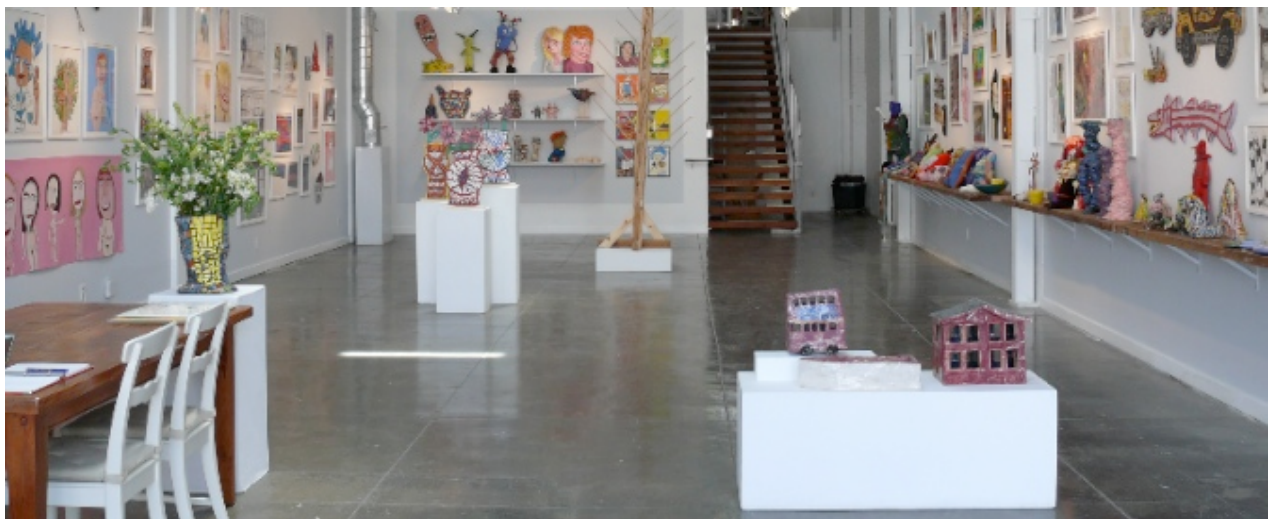
Creative Growth Art Center currently serves over 140 artists.

- Website

www.creativegrowth.org

The website homepage features the Creative Growth logo and opens to the program's news feed. This introductory page does not mention disability or the program's mission but instead lists upcoming events and exhibitions. The *about* page lists the organization's mission and is the only place on the site that mentions "artists with developmental, mental, and physical disabilities." The layout of the website places a greater emphasis on exhibitions than on non-profit programming. Out of the 140+ artists that attend the Creative Growth studio, only 18 are presented on the website. These selected 18 artists are represented through their name, artist statement, exhibition history, birth year, location, and examples of their work.

- Gallery



[Photo credit: Creative Growth Art Center]

The Creative Growth Gallery was established in 1980 and hosts seven exhibitions annually. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:30pm as well each Saturday following the opening of a new exhibition. The Gallery strives to provide an in-depth look at the work made within the Creative Growth studio.

- Studio

The Creative Growth Studio is open 9:30am to 3:30pm, Monday through Friday. The program provides a professional art studio setting and facilitation in drawing, painting, video production, ceramics, mosaics, wood, fiber arts, textiles, printmaking and photography. Creative Growth also offers a Rug Workshop where artists can choose to earn an hourly pay while collaborating in the production of limited edition rugs. Artists also visit museums, galleries, and artists' studios, develop a working portfolio, and produce quality artwork for sale both in the Creative Growth gallery and internationally.



[Photo credit: Creative Growth Art Center]

2) NIAD ART CENTER //



[Photo credit: NIAD Art Center]

- Location

Richmond, California. Located six miles north of Berkeley, Richmond is not an area known for its arts district. In fact, it is infamously more well-known as an unsafe/high crime neighborhood. Because of this, efforts at NIAD are concentrated on community building in their own neighborhood.

- History

NIAD (National Institute of Art & Disabilities) Art Center was founded in 1982 by Florence and Elias Katz.

- Mission

NIAD Art Center is an innovative visual arts center assisting adults with developmental and other physical disabilities.

- Logo



[Image credit: NIAD Art Center]

Of the three art programs considered as case study sites, NIAD Art Center is the only one that chooses to mention "artists with disabilities" in its logo.

Note: Since these case studies were conducted, NIAD Art Center has updated its logo (Appendix H). The new logo is different in two key ways: it does not mention disability and it explicitly establishes NIAD Art Center as a contemporary art studio and gallery. This development highlights the heightened awareness with which art programs are presenting themselves.

- Staff

Executive Director, Director of Art Sales & Exhibitions, Client Services, Administrative Coordinator, Database, Bookkeeper, Studio Manager, Studio Aides. Additionally, there are

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nine artist staff specializing in: Printmaking, Fiber Art, Painting, Drawing, Photography, Ceramics, Sculpture, and Independent Living Skills.

- Artists

NIAD Art Center currently serves 65 artists.

- Website

www.niadart.org

Each page on the website features NIAD Art Center's logo. The homepage features information about current exhibitions, programming, and the organization's history. All 63 artists that attend NIAD Art Center are listed on the website. However, only 35 artists have profiles accessible through links. These selected 35 artists are represented through their names, exhibition histories, and examples of their work.

- Gallery



[Photo credit: NIAD Art Center]

Access and Inclusion: Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness

NIAD galleries are open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. The main gallery exhibits new shows every eight weeks, which are organized by NIAD and by independent curators. In addition to the main gallery, NIAD facilitates their Annex space and Storefront. The Annex space is a two-walled gallery that hosts shows for mainstream contemporary artists as a way to introduce new work to NIAD artists and visitors. The Storefront is an exhibition space that faces the sidewalk and is home to various pop-up shops (seasonal and/or themed), artist-led projects, and spotlight exhibitions.

- Studio

The NIAD Art studio is open Monday through Friday. Artists explore the creative process through painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, fiber and performance.



[Photo credit: NIAD Art Center]

3) Creativity Explored //



[Photo credit: Fecal Face Dot Com]

- Location

San Francisco, California. Creativity Explored is located in the Mission District on 16th street. This location receives the highest amount of foot traffic and daily walk-ins of these case study sites.

- History

Creativity Explored was founded in 1983 by Florence and Elias Katz. A second location, 1.5 miles East of the main studio, was opened in 1995 to provide a more accessible space for adults with severe disabilities to create visual arts.

- Mission

Creativity Explored is a nonprofit visual arts center where artists with developmental disabilities create, exhibit, and sell art.

- Logo



[Image credit: Creativity Explored]

Creativity Explored's logo is simple and includes a tagline. CE's logo does not mention disability. Creativity Explored also has a second logo, pictured above right, used in their social media.

- Staff

Executive Director, Gallery & Office Manager, Marketing & Business Development Director, Studio & Services Manager, Development Director, Habilitation Aide, Gallery and Administrative Assistant, Art Sales Associate, Associate Director, Art & Exhibition Preparator, Services Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator. Additionally, there are 18 visual arts instructors referred to as teaching artists. The CE website includes links to each of the teaching artist's biographies and qualifications.

- Artists

Creativity Explored currently serves 160 artists.

- Website

www.creativityexplored.org

Creativity Explored's website features information regarding organizational mission, goals, and vision; promotes upcoming art exhibitions; hosts the CE online store; and gives virtual representation to all its artists. All artists are presented on the website two ways: through a layout of *faces* (black and white headshot photos of each artist) and *names* (a list of the artists' names in alphabetical order). Individual artist links lead to their artistic biographies, artist statements, images of their work, and their exhibition histories.

- Gallery



[Photo credit: Creativity Explored]

The Creativity Explored gallery was established in 2001 and hosts six exhibitions annually.

The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 3:00pm, Thursday from

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10:00am to 7:00 pm, and weekends from 12:00pm to 5:00pm. The gallery features six unique exhibitions annually, which include: solo and two-person art exhibitions, artist-curated exhibitions, and exhibitions organized by outside curators. Exhibitions are scheduled one year in advance, allowing artists time to create work. The gallery has also been repeatedly voted "Best Art Gallery" in the Bay Area by readers of the *SF Weekly* and *Bay Guardian*.

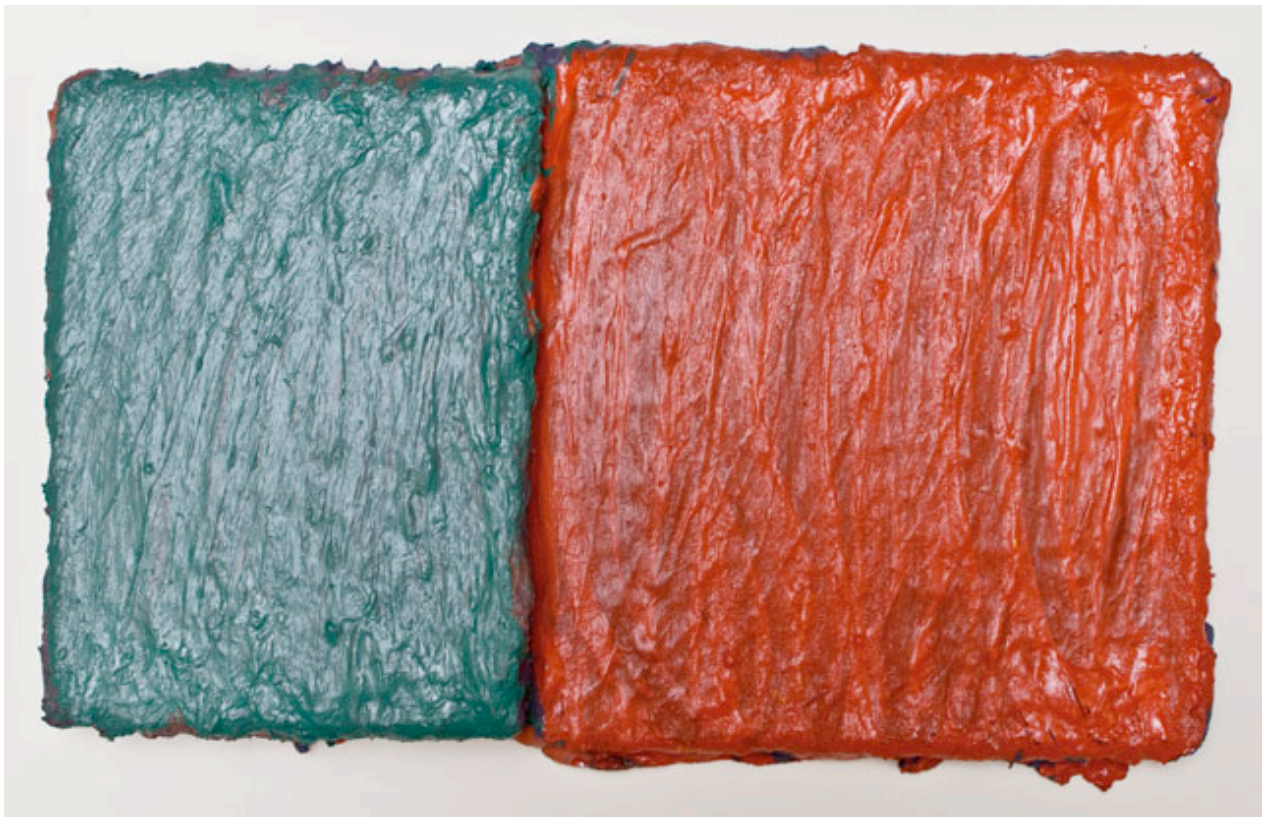
- Studio

The Creativity Explored studio is open 8:30am to 2:30pm, Monday through Friday. Artists are provided with workspace, instruction, and opportunities to explore a wide variety of media. Studio artists choose media and subject matter, and trained professional artists are available to assist each studio artist in exploring the creative process. Printmaking, painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, and fabric art are included in a program designed to meet the needs, choices, and preferences of each studio artist.



[Photo credit: SFMOMA]

Chapter 4: Analysis



Untitled
Willie Harris
13 x 21 x 2.5 "
acrylic on fabric and foam acoustic tiles
© NIAD Art Center

Introduction //

It was an honor to sit down and interview the participants of this research project. The rich history of these three specific art programs offers an unprecedented lens into the evolving world of arts and disability. These three programs share a history of being the first art programs for artists with DD and mental illness. Since their beginnings in the 1970s and 80s, they have become established forerunners towards the inclusion of artwork by artists with DD and mental illness in the contemporary art world. The initial missions of these programs has remained the same since their foundation, but the cultural climate and opportunities available have certainly changed.

The following analysis for my case studies is a result of in-person interviews with representatives from each of these organizations. A complete list of participants can be found in Appendix G.

Based on the interview questions and the answers received, the analysis of this research is grouped into the following sections: Community perception, advocacy, exhibition programming, language, art vs. bio, and the future.

Community Perception //

The community perception of both the artists and artwork at each program varies greatly. With about 15,000 visitors walking into the Creativity Explored (CE) gallery each year, the spectrum of interest and knowledge ranges from those who have known about CE for thirty years to those who walk in because they see artwork through the street level window displays.

Amy Taub, Director at Creativity Explored, acknowledges "some people will come in because they know it's art by people with developmental disabilities and others won't" (personal communication, February 21, 2013). Having a gallery entrance is a great benefit to the CE location because the artwork alone draws visitors walking past. Amy Auerbach, CE's gallery and office manager, states that "a lot of people wouldn't come in if they knew people with disabilities were behind the door" (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

Once in the CE gallery, visitors find a doorway leading to the studio where artists can be seen at work. The reactions of those visitors who walk in unaware that CE is more than an art gallery provide an interesting look into the community perception of artists with disabilities. There is a high level of positive feedback from visitors who are impressed beyond their expectations, and those who feel the artwork surpasses their own creative efforts.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, there are those who discount the work. Deb Dyer, Director at NIAD Art Center explains:

Artists get it. Other artists coming in are often quite amazed at the work that

happens here. The general public still likes to say things like - *it's good even if they are disabled* and *isn't it wonderful that they were able to produce such art* and not just *isn't this great art*. I think we still have some ways to go with that (personal communication, February 19, 2013).

This type of reaction, by those who treat the artwork as an unexpected accomplishment rather than a piece of artwork, comes from those influenced by disability stereotypes. Amy Taub states that "we're still dealing with a society that has lots of preconceived notions, one of which is that people with developmental disabilities never grow up and they're perpetual children" (personal communication, February 21, 2013). The idea of an artist with a disability developing a unique style and artistic voice is hard for many people to realize.

How people react to the artwork depends on differing communities and the reasoning for engagement. Timothy Buckwalter, gallery director at NIAD Art Center, explains that there are different types of audiences that visit and buy artwork from NIAD. A core group of people support NIAD artists out of sympathy, the same way they would support a charity event helping people in need. Buckwalkter states, "Do they then engage with the work any more than that? I'm not sure. As an artist I'm not interested in people buying my work because they feel bad for me" (personal communication, February 19, 2013). This is a reality for all art programs for individuals with DD and mental illness. There are those who buy artwork because they feel bad for the artists and there are those who buy artwork because they genuinely connect with the artwork and want to own it.

Another aspect of community perception is context. The environment in which the artists and artwork are represented has an impact on the way people view the artwork.

Catherine Nguyen, gallery manager at Creative Growth Art Center, is an excellent example of how context can influence perspective. Before working at Creative Growth Art Center, Nguyen was the director of finance and operations at White Columns in New York. White Columns is an alternative art space that has shown Creative Growth artists since 2005. Nguyen's introduction to the artists at Creative Growth was from afar, through the artwork. It is interesting to contemplate the difference between first seeing artwork in a New York, in prestigious galleries and contemporary spaces in Chelsea, and first seeing artwork at an on-site program gallery. Nguyen explains the diversity in community perception:

There is quite a spectrum. When you're working at an art fair, the first thing people gravitate to is the work and they don't ask about how it was created or who created it immediately. They do ask about the artists but not in the sense to learn what their diagnoses are. Their assessment tends to stay within the realm of contemporary art and measuring the work against those standards. When a visitor comes into the Oakland gallery, they are able to see the artists and they are curious. Is this a school? Can I join? There is a dance of how forward they are and if they do want to educate themselves more and learn about what actually goes on here (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

For many of these programs, getting artwork out into the community and placing the work within inclusive environments is a high priority. Art programs for artists with disabilities exist within a society filled with stigma and stereotype. Though there has been progress in the past thirty or forty years, there is still a long way to go.

Advocacy //

Programs providing support and representation for individuals with such a deep history of segregation and stereotype have inherited the role of advocate. Advocacy can be defined as the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support (American Heritage, 2000).

As non-profit art organizations, these programs have always existed to fill a need not otherwise met in society. These programs advocate to change community perception through exhibitions, through inclusive opportunities allowing their artists to be seen as a contemporary voice, and through programming that promotes artistic independence.

Advocacy at these programs is two-fold. There is a dedication to empower the community of artists with disabilities they represent and, at the same time, there is also a dedication to the arts and the artwork being created. In each of the program's art studios, the staff is comprised of working contemporary artists. This creates a mentor-type relationship as opposed to an instructor/student dynamic. This *artists working with artists* relationship is an important structure for these programs. Tom di Maria, Director of Creative Growth Art Center, describes the relationship further:

I just really believe that there is something that happens in the communication between artists, it is a particular language. When you work with people who might not have language, whether it's because they were born in another country, or they're non-verbal, or they are on the autistic spectrum, or they don't like to talk, or they don't hear, that something comes through in the way artists relate to each other (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

The unique relationship between artists and staff at these organizations creates an environment for creative activism. One way Creativity Explored addresses stereotypes around arts and disability is through exhibitions designed to promote dialogue around the community perception of disability. Every few years, CE hosts exhibitions that invite people to look at disability differently. Amy Taub, Director of Creativity Explored, states, "it's going to be political and I think that's really important for art centers to do because part of what we are trying to do is transform that attitude towards people" (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

One of CE's most successful exhibitions opened in 2004 and was called *Don't Call Me Retard*. This exhibition created a venue for CE artists to directly address the community about self-identification, stereotype, and the use of the word *retard*. The success of this show, which still stands as their most highly attended opening, led to this becoming their first traveling exhibition - it was shown also at the Jewett Gallery located in the San Francisco Main Public Library.

Another empowering exhibition, called *Fabulous*, opened last year in the CE gallery during San Francisco PRIDE week. *Fabulous*, co-curated by CE artists and staff, celebrated fashion, identity, and queer culture. Ann Kappes, CE's marketing and business development director, points out, "Some people don't think of people with developmental disabilities as having a sexuality at all let alone an active part of gay culture, so to know that subject matter came from the artists was really exciting" (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

Creating these types of exhibitions in their on-site galleries is one way these programs address their role as advocates and give a voice to the artists. However, the

potential for advocacy extends past the walls of these programs. As stated by Tom di Maria:

The most important part of advocacy is having the art and artists speak as a really vibrant and contemporary voice. By having our artists participate with a full voice in the contemporary art arena I think we serve people with disabilities both in terms of talking about the prejudices and stigma about their contributions but also recognizing the inherent cultural contributions people with disabilities can make artistically (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

Programs also advocate for artists by supporting community inclusion and independence. As site-based programs, the segregation and seclusion of individuals with DD and mental illness is still an issue. Inclusion on a social level is met through community engagement programming and a diverse base of mentorship. NIAD Art Center took artists on over 40 field trips last year to galleries, museums, and artists' studios. Deb Dyer, Director of NIAD Art Center, states, "because Richmond is not rich in artistic places to see, I think we provide the only experiences our clients have to see art elsewhere. I have seen it directly affect artists' work" (personal communication, February 19, 2013). NIAD also has an artist-in-residence program allowing artists to come in and work in their art studio, and interns from California College of the Arts and Cal Berkeley that work to help create a more extensive community of artists.

These programs also advocate by promoting independence for a population that is thought to be strictly dependent. Amy Taub honestly admits:

Many people here could care less about a career. It may be their families, it may be us who recognizes that potential and they really aren't interested. They are more interested in art as language, art as something fun, art as some important part of

their life but they're not perceiving it as a development of a career trajectory (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

However, even if having a career isn't of importance to some of the artists it does not change the fact that they are making artwork on a regular basis. One of the most complicated aspects of this type of art program is deciding what to do with the artwork. Choosing not to do anything with works created by artists with DD and mental illness adds to the notion that artists with DD and mental illness are not an important part of creative culture. If someone is not able to understand the significance of their work does it mean that their work is no longer significant?

In order to create artist portfolios and exhibition histories, these programs have on-site galleries and participate in off-site exhibitions. In turn, artists gain recognition for their creative work, generate income, and are able to directly express themselves both through community engagement and within the contemporary art world.

Exhibition Programming //

Exhibition programming is a major component of all three art programs. It provides artists a way to participate in the community by showing their artwork in public gallery exhibitions; it builds exhibition resumes; it draws people into the buildings of these organizations for exhibition openings; and it provides a way to advocate for the inclusion of artists within the contemporary art world.

Exhibition programming also provides artists the opportunity of income. Deb Dyer, Director of NIAD Art Center, states:

Income for the clients has become more important. I think the whole vocational aspect has become more important to people with disabilities and their families. It provides the ability to earn money and to say, "I'm working as....". Mainstreaming has made this more of a priority. Last year, we had 80% of our artists earning income that ranges from \$4-\$4,000 (personal communication, February 19, 2013).

With so many artists producing artwork on a daily basis at each organization, there is a need for structure regarding artwork production and exhibition standards. Once programs decide to promote and exhibit art in their own on-site galleries, they become part of a contemporary art context. Participating in a contemporary art context is expanded further once programs reach past their own walls and seek out exhibitions and exposure within the community and at other venues. As mentioned above by Amy Taub, Director of Creativity Explored, many of the artists could care less about a career in the arts. However, exhibition programs exist for artists who are interested in a career in the arts and artists who are making exceptional work that has the potential to really contribute to the

contemporary art world.

Consideration must be paid to the quality of artwork being exhibited. The common stereotype that artwork made by artists with DD and mental illness looks like artwork made by children connects directly to the stereotype that individuals with DD and mental illness are entirely dependent and are incapable of making serious contributions to society. An extremely important aspect of exhibition programming is to avoid perpetuating this stereotype. This requires strategic planning and structure in order to ensure artists are treated with respect and that exhibited artwork is of professional quality.

The stereotype of low quality artwork is also connected to the curation of artwork for exhibitions, and the perception that less curating takes place in art shows exclusively for artists with disabilities. Deb Dyer puts it bluntly by stating, "Just because you are disabled doesn't mean you make great art" (personal communication, February 19, 2013). In addition, Timothy Buckwalter, gallery director at NIAD Art Center, states that "not everybody at NIAD makes work at the same level. And not everyone at the upper level makes great work" (personal communication, February 19, 2013).

There is artwork made at each program that gets thrown out due to low quality. Thoughtful curation not only produces higher quality art exhibitions but it also encourages artist growth. Low quality art exhibitions reinforce the stereotype that artists with DD and mental illness are only capable of producing low quality art.

Additionally, the quality of materials available to artists and the treatment of the artwork can also impact the overall aesthetics and perception of a piece. As Deb Dyer points out, both the artists and the artwork need to be treated with respect (personal communication, February 19, 2013).

Curation of artwork for exhibitions and the overall quality of the artwork bring created are both important aspects of exhibition programming in art programs for adults with DD and mental illness. This type of consideration promotes art-world standards and helps to eliminate possible stereotypes. Another way in which these Bay Area programs plan for exhibitions is through the structuring and representation of artists.

Acknowledging that all artists aren't the same, these programs have developed methods for determining where an artist is at in their artistic development. Creativity Explored in San Francisco has developed a three-tier system for their artists. People are divided into three groups: beginning artists, emerging artists, and established artists. This system was described by Amy Taub:

For a person to get into Tier 2 they need to have a unique voice, they need to have an exhibition history, and they need to have a sales history of at least \$2000 across two years. Then our relationship changes with them a little bit where we provide more concerted instruction to build a body of work that is exhibition quality (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

Creative Growth Art Center follows a similar method. Acknowledging that each artist is different, they are not all represented in the same context. The on-site gallery in Oakland shows work by all of the artists at least once a year but not all artists are included in art fairs, and not all artwork is priced the same. This attention to the different levels and quality of artists should never discredit the importance and value of art making for all artists, regardless of level or Tier. As Tom di Maria, Director of Creative Growth Art Center, points out:

The artwork and process has huge value for the maker and we try to have a really

balanced studio environment so there aren't stars and that everyone works together. If you come on a tour, you meet all the artists when you come through, you don't come to just see one person. Those values are really important to us as a community, but with the work itself - things rise to different levels and you have to be able to accept that (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

Exhibition programming includes both on-site galleries and off-site exhibitions.

Catherine Nguyen, gallery manager at Creative Growth Art Center, describes the benefits of both, stating that:

Within the Oakland gallery we have about 7 shows a year, which provides a way for the artists to stay connected to the idea that they can pursue arts as a career and they are artists. Outside exhibitions or art fairs in New York or Europe take on a different thrust. It's then also about exposure of the organization and the artwork standing on its own (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

For all organizations, on-site gallery exhibitions give representation for all of their artists and allow for curated and themed shows reflecting the artwork being made in the studios. In comparison, off-site exhibitions allow for integrated settings and involvement in a more contemporary art context. Integrated settings let the artwork be seen as a piece of contemporary art and not defined by an arts and disability context.

Each program helps facilitate off-site exhibitions for artists they represent. Creative Growth participates in 15-20 outside exhibitions and projects each year. Currently, The Brooklyn Museum is doing a retrospective on Creative Growth artist Judith Scott. Creative Growth also works with many outside artists and designers, such as Marc Jacobs, as a way to reach beyond their own walls and provide artistic collaboration opportunities for artists.

NIAD Art Center is also actively trying to get artist representation apart from their on-site gallery and Outsider Art galleries. Marlon Mullen, artist at NIAD Art Center, has had exhibitions at International Art Objects in Los Angeles, White Columns in New York, and the Jack Fischer Gallery in San Francisco. These types of off-site exhibitions, as pointed out by Timothy Buckwalter, are very recent events for NIAD.

This surge in off-site exhibitions in inclusive settings is relatively new for all art programs for artists with disabilities. As Amy Taub states:

It's only been in the last five years that we've really even started to do outreach where we're submitting work to juried shows. I would be happy if we never submitted any work to something that was exclusively for people with developmental disabilities. The work should be viewed and valued because of its artistic merits, not because it was created by an artist with a developmental disability (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

The Outsider Art market and shows specifically for artists with disabilities have always been part of exhibition programming at these organizations. Opportunities for off-site inclusive exhibitions are only just recently becoming possible and, as pointed out by Deb Dyer, the opportunities for art shows for only artists with disabilities are going away (personal communication, February 19, 2013). Representing artists who fall into this specific market requires thoughtful navigation. Inclusive opportunities are prioritized and preferred because, as Catherine Nguyen states, they further the mission of having the artwork speak for itself and not be put into a category (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

The established Outsider Art market does have some benefits that art programs are

utilizing as they also push for more inclusive opportunities. Amy Taub acknowledges that exhibiting artwork in Outsider shows gives some basic exposure to those interested in artwork that appears to fit into Outsider Art constructs (personal communication, February 21, 2013). It can be an entrance point for people to become familiar with the artwork and artists. Even so, leading with an artist's biography and story of disability is not necessary.

Creative Growth Art Center participates in the Outsider Art Fair in New York, and has for the past 12 years. Tom Di Maria explains the reasons for the involvement in such a quintessential Outsider Art event:

I do it because it's an important market so our artists earn income because they sell there but also 12 years ago it was different and there weren't that many other venues for our artists so a lot of the contemporary exhibition opportunities that we've been working towards or have the opportunities to participate in now didn't really exist then. Also, a lot of people come through in terms of collections, and people in the field, and academics. It's been an important meeting place for us to be seen every year. Even in that context we don't lead with artist story or disability. It's Creative Growth Art Center and these are our artists (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

Clearly, exhibition programming is a fundamental component to these art programs' missions. For these programs, exhibition programming isn't as simple as just holding shows in their galleries. It takes careful thought and strategic planning to work for the artists' benefit and try to overcome prevailing stereotypes.

Language //

Deciding what to say and how to say it can be a difficult task. The previous section about people-first language mentioned ways in which individuals with disabilities self-identify and are talked about in general. Empowering individuals and celebrating diversity can at times conflict with promoting inclusion and equality. What is the difference between being *a disabled artist*, *an artist with a disability*, and just *an artist*? The only difference is the amount of information given. What words are used (or not used) and how they are used influences the way in which artists, artwork, and art organizations are viewed.

Each of the Bay Area art programs have made decisions regarding language on their websites and in their promotional materials. Creativity Explored's logo has the tagline *art changes lives* but does not mention disability. Their promotional brochure and exhibition postcards include their mission statement, which does mention that CE is a *visual arts center where artists with disabilities create*. The homepage of the CE website does not mention disability. This information is reserved for the *about* section. Generally, information presented first on a website is the most important. Displaying information about upcoming exhibitions, the artists, and the artwork first suggests these are the most important aspects.

Creative Growth Art Center has no tagline and their exhibition postcards do not mention disability or their mission statement. Creative Growth does offer in-house informational cards that include information about programming for people with disabilities, which include the tagline *visionary center for artists with disabilities*. As with CE, Creative Growth's website homepage does not mention their mission or disability and puts

news and current events at the forefront.

NIAD Art Center, on the other hand, uses the tagline *empowering artists with disabilities*. This tagline is preset on exhibition postcards as well as their website homepage. The NIAD newsletter also uses the words *outsider*, *intuitive*, and *inclusive* as part of the banner. Deb Dyer, NIAD director, explains that using words like *outsider* "creates an entry point for people and I think that is what it's been used for. We still have it on our literature but we are softening that also" (personal communication, February 19, 2013). Presenting these organizations as art organizations first and not art organizations for artist with disabilities is a way to promote inclusion and equality within the art world. At the same time, it's hard to discount the words of autism-rights activist Jim Sinclair, who stated, "It is only when someone has decided that the characteristic being referred to is negative that suddenly people want to separate it from the person" (Sinclair, 1999).

When art programs do discuss disability, it can be difficult finding the most inclusive way to do so. Amy Taub, Director of Creativity Explored, helps describe this challenge:

The language used to describe disability is constantly changing. *Is a person deaf, are they hearing impaired, or do they not hear? Are you queer or are you gay?* It depends on the politics at play at any given time. In terms of our language, our artists' creation definitely comes first; disability generally comes second (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

The issues around language are made more complex when the language is coming from those without a disability trying to represent a community of individuals with a wide spectrum of disabilities. There are those who can self-advocate and express how they self-identify and what information is important for them to share as an artist. However, there

are many people who cannot, yet they are being represented through these arts organizations.

Artist representation on each organization's website presents typical artistic resumes. Even in biographies, no mention of disability or diagnosis is made. Artists are instead represented through their artwork and their exhibition histories.

Both Creativity Explored and NIAD have worked to develop ways to represent artists without the use of language. Creativity Explored has created 1-minute videos on their website for all of the artists. The videos show the artist working, allowing anyone to see the artist and their processes. This has become a way for each artist to essentially tell their story personally, giving an accurate presentation of who the person is. Similarly, Deb Dyer, Director of NIAD Art Center, has made it a point to take pictures of artists making their art and including these process-based images on their website.

These art organizations also use language differently in different contexts. As described by Ann Kappas, CE's marketing and business development director:

The emphasis on language and message can be very different depending if you're solely talking about the art or if you're talking about raising donations. Fundraising may emphasize human rights and the impact of the program on the person's life. That becomes the main focus instead of the art product. Not to say they aren't connected but you have a different emphasis depending on who you are talking to. We use language differently for different audiences (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

In addition to different audiences there is the difference in language inherent to different environments. Catherine Nguyen, gallery manager at Creative Growth Art Center

states that:

In the gallery, language takes on more of an educational bent to it: history, the area where art and disability overlap, Outsider Art, Art Brut, talking more generally about it. For outside projects and exhibitions, it's always about the piece and promoting the artist, where they've been showing, prominent people who have collected it (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

The use of language is important in both representing each individual artist and the organization as a whole. Each program is strategic and thoughtful about what information is shared, where it is shared, and when it is shared. Since language etiquette is constantly evolving, it is important for programs representing individuals with DD and mental illness to be informed and make educated decisions.

Art vs. Bio //

"We have decided that we are really wanting to show how strong the artists are versus the fact that they are disabled" (D.Dyer, personal communication, February 19, 2013). This statement runs true across all three art programs. There is a conscious effort to celebrate the artwork first and foremost, and not have disability always preface the artwork or the artists.

Not surprisingly, this can be a complicated challenge. All of the artists at these programs do have a disability and it is important to empower each individual and create dialogue around arts and disability. As mentioned above, there is a spectrum of capability in which artists can express how they self-identify. Ann Kappes, CE's marketing and business development director, states that "when some of the people can't say what they want, it's our job to help promote their work and how much of their story is told or not. It's hard" (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

Possibly more important than what information is being told is realizing who is telling it and for what reason. When representing artists whose artwork falls into the Outsider Art category, there is pressure to provide biographical and personal information regarding the artists. Tom di Maria, Director of Creative Growth Art Center, speaks to this dilemma:

Shows still really want this really biographical information, they want the photograph of the artist, they want the diagnosis, and I don't like to provide that. People will fight you for it, they'll whine and tell you if they put in on the wall they'll sell more and I just don't agree with that (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

The more information there is about a piece of artwork, the more interesting the artwork can become. This includes information about any artist - who they are, their life story, and what may have inspired them. However, when the artist has a developmental disability or mental illness and may not be the one choosing to share such personal information, should this type of information be shared?

Satisfying curiosity without specifically mentioning that an artist has a disability is a strategy to promote inclusion in the arts. Against the predominate Outsider Art market and history of segregation, choosing carefully what information to share can help correct negative stereotypes.

These programs work to find ways in which an artist and their life situation can be talked about that doesn't lead with the story of disability. For example, many represent their artists as artists of their program, with a description such as *an artist at Creativity Explored*. Those interested in finding out more information can then research Creativity Explored and find out that it is an art program for adults with DD, but this information isn't what is being used to define the artwork.

Future //

Programs for artists with DD and mental illness have been around since 1973, when Creative Growth Art Center was founded. Over the past forty years, these programs have evolved within the arts community and within the disability rights culture. Similar art programs have been developed all over the country, greatly expanding the field of arts and disability.

These three art programs have become leading models for similar programs. When asked, Tom di Maria, Director of Creative Growth, described the future for artists at Creative Growth Art Center:

I feel the future is that our artists will have the choice of where to work and how to be represented. I think about artists like Dan Miller or William Scott, both very successful contemporary artists - is it better for them to work at a place like Creative Growth or should they have a loft in a downtown art district somewhere? I think that is their choice. There has to be a choice to be fully independent for each individual" (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

For these established programs, new issues have come along with heightened artist success. It has become increasingly important to have artists involved in every step of the artistic and exhibition processes, allowing artists to be as independent and informed as possible.

Another important issue regarding the future of art programs for artists with DD and mental illness has to do with sharing best practice knowledge. With so many people currently running or looking to start similar programs, it is necessary to create some

record of collected experience and best practice. Currently, the only documented resource for those looking to start art programs is *Art & Disabilities: Establishing the Creative Art Center for People with Disabilities*, an outdated book from 1990 (E. Katz & F.L. Katz, 1990). The three programs considered in this project, being so established and connected to the contemporary art world, have a wealth of knowledge on contemporary best practices that needs to be shared.

These programs have excelled at navigating language. As stated above by Ann Kappes, CE's marketing and business development director, it is important for programs to use language differently for different audiences and to understand that distinction. Knowing when to share information and having a thoughtful and strategic approach is a process these programs have learned and developed over the years. However, Amy Taub, Director of Creativity Explored, expresses concern for new programs:

I'm not sure some organizations starting out really grasp that distinction and it's pretty clear once you make it in your own mind but the organizations that we've spoken to have not yet made that distinction (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

In addition to language, there are other concerns regarding new programs who have recently joined into the national community of arts and disability. Again, Amy Taub states:

Websites for new organizations appear and, in some cases, the quality of art they are beginning to promote is not as great and may continue to perpetuate some of the stereotypes because they're just not ready yet. Presenting art of "lesser quality" is part of a much bigger whole. I'm concerned that as more and more arts organizations pop up around the country, it's not going to help us. It may actually

hinder our desire to assist our artists to penetrate the 'real' world of art (personal communication, February 21, 2013).

Not paying attention to, or not having high standards for quality and professionalism not only creates a negative impression within the arts community, but it is also disrespectful to the artists creating within such programs. New art programs must be mindful of their own organizational image, too. These three art programs have paid considerable attention to their logos, promotional materials, websites, and how they present themselves in their own establishments and within the community. What kind of impression does a bubbly hand-drawn logo with a heart portray? It is important to not fall into stereotypical notions of the capabilities of artists with DD and mental illness.

Tom di Maria provides more advice for newer art programs:

Other programs should keep their eye on the prize. A barber shop comes to you or a flower shop comes to you and says *I really want to support your program by putting some art in the window that we can sell*. Programs say yes without realizing that it takes a lot of staff time to pick the work, frame it, put it there, it probably won't sell and will be in the sun, and it's not the way I want our artists' work to be seen. That's not the way you'd invite a contemporary artist to participate in the art world (personal communication, February 20, 2013).

All art programs for artists with DD and mental illness are situated within the same context. They are all representing artists with DD and mental illness and they all have the ability and responsibility to advocate and empower the artists they have chosen to represent. As Amy Taub mentioned, if there is an art program out there not giving thoughtful consideration to the way they are operating, it reflects poorly on all the similar

organizations.

With disability-only exhibitions diminishing and inclusive art opportunities increasing, it's clear that this is an exciting time in the world of arts and disability, and that there are many opportunities for positive change.

Chapter 5: Summary & Recommendations



Untitled

Judith Scott

yarn, embroidery floss, trims, cardboard, fabric, and newspaper | 2000

© 2000 Creative Growth Art Center

Summary //

This project examines the inclusive opportunities that artists with developmental disabilities (DD) and/or mental illness currently have to participate in the contemporary art world. A historical analysis of the segregation of individuals with disabilities in the United States, along with an analysis of the Outsider Art market, provide the context in which art programs for adults with disabilities were established. This project also provides an in-depth look at three case study sites: Creative Growth Art Center, NIAD Art Center, and Creativity Explored, all located in the San Francisco Bay Area. This project is intended as a tool for arts administrators in both established and new art programs for artists with disabilities. More specifically, this project is meant to stimulate discussion and reflection within arts and culture organizations regarding artwork by artists with disabilities.

This research project begins with a three-part literature review. The literature review provides a more thorough understanding of the history of arts and disability, which informs the analysis of contemporary issues in the field. The shift from the *medical model* of disability to the *social model* of disability reflects a larger cultural shift that encouraged, among other progressive developments, the inclusion in the arts of individuals with disabilities. A substantial amount of academic research is available on the topics of Outsider Art and the subsequent Outsider Art market. However, little research has been conducted that considers how the historical stigmatization and segregation of individuals with DD and mental illness has situated this population within the Outsider Art market. Additionally, little research has been conducted on the effects of historical segregation and the Outsider Art market on art programs for adults with disabilities.

Traces of the history of segregation and stigma for individuals with DD and mental illness can be seen in contemporary society and culture. The introduction of Outsider Art to the United States has created a market that thrives on artists' personal biographies, particularly those of artists with DD and mental illness. Art programs for artists with DD and mental illness are working to overcome these lingering traces of discrimination by providing their artists with needed resources, advocating for their artists in the contemporary art world, and representing their artists in inclusive, professional art exhibitions.

In conjunction with the literature review, the case studies offer an understanding of the current practices and policies of art programs for adults with disabilities. Case study interviews provide insight into the follow topic areas: community perception, the organizational role of the advocate, exhibition programming, use of language, artwork vs. biography, and the future of art programs for artists with disabilities. An analysis of the case studies relates the current issues faced by these programs to the development of inclusive opportunities that have counteracted segregation and stereotype.

A significant observation of this research project is recognition of the extraordinary level of complex strategic planning at some art programs. The more that art programs consider the historical segregation of individuals with disabilities, and the effects of the Outsider Art market, the more they are able to strategically plan to overcome stereotype. Several examples are given: the use of language by art programs, and in particular the way that language is used differently for different audiences; the level of professionalism in how arts organizations present themselves through their websites and marketing material; and the conscious effort to highlight artwork rather than an artist's biography.

A thorough knowledge of the mainstream contemporary art world has also proved to be an important factor contributing to strategic planning in these arts organizations. Awareness of gallery standards and professional expectations allow programs to present artwork competitively, dissolving the stereotype of "low quality" artwork. Contemporary art world familiarity also provides the networking and connections that lead to inclusive exhibitions in well-regarded galleries. This has created a huge shift in community perception. When well-known collectors and galleries announce through exhibitions that artwork by artists with disabilities is relevant within a contemporary art context, public perception follows. Each inclusive opportunity diminishes segregation and erases the stigma attached to artwork by artists with disabilities.

In addition to inclusive opportunities, art programs also facilitate discussions around arts and disability. Finding a balance between inclusive opportunities that do not mention disability and the creation of discussions about disability stereotypes and rights may be the best way for art programs to progress their cause.

Recommendations //

This research not only highlights progressive and inclusive programming but it also highlights the complexity and diversity among art programs for adults with disabilities, and in disability culture in general. Evidence of this diversity is seen in the discussion around people-first language, as well as in the discussion around exhibitions that discuss disability vs. those that do not. It is important that art programs representing artists with disabilities understand the diverse cultural context in which they are participants. Arts administrators and organizations must strategically set goals and create programming that meets not only their own missions but also positively contributes to the greater scope of their field. Arts programs are not lonely atoms but connected molecules in the matter of social progress.

Providing transparency in decision making and allowing for an open dialogue between artists, arts administrators, and the community is important in building a community of understanding around artwork created by artists with disabilities. It is crucial for arts administrators to understand common stereotypes and stigmas connected to individuals with disabilities to avoid perpetuating these stereotypes themselves. Community stereotypes that art programs must be aware of include: low quality artwork, lack of curation, lack of professionalism, the idea of artists as dependents, and at bottom the idea that these programs make an unsophisticated contribution to contemporary arts and culture. Programming and policy at art programs for adults with disabilities do shape the culture of arts and disabilities, and art programs must not ignore this fact.

As evidenced by the inclusive opportunities available to the artists at the programs considered in this research project, the community perception of artwork by artists with

disabilities has definitely shifted over the past thirty years. It is an exciting time for artists and for the art programs that advocate for them. With thoughtful and strategic programming by arts administrators both at art programs and within the contemporary art world, artists with developmental disabilities and mental illness can and will be heard as significant voices in contemporary culture.

Appendices & References



Carrots

Evelyn Reyes

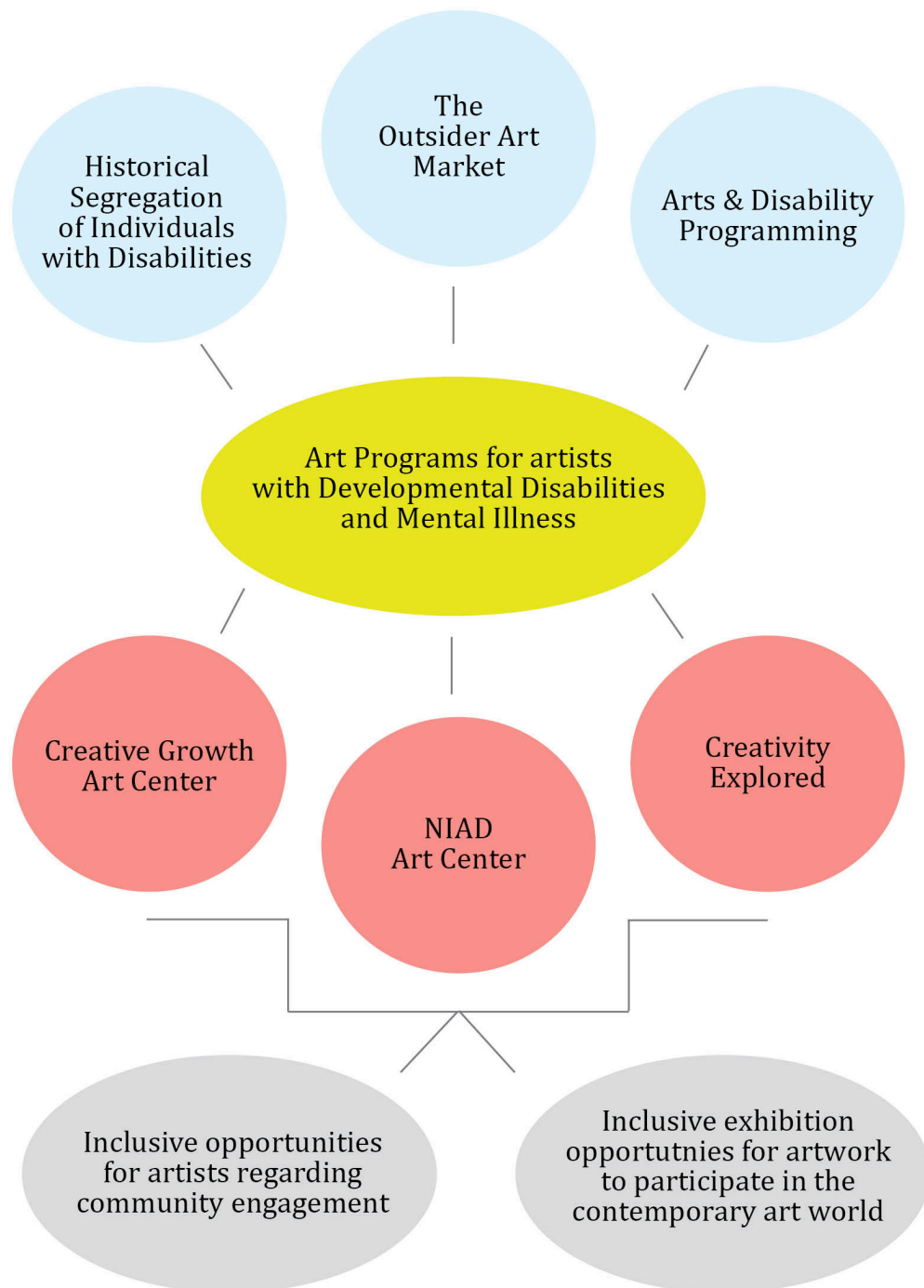
pastel on paper

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Jamie Walsh

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Appendix A // Conceptual Framework Schematic



Appendix B // Email Recruitment Letter

Date
Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Access and Inclusion: Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness*, conducted by Jamie Walsh from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore inclusive opportunities for artists with developmental disabilities or mental illness in participating in the contemporary art world.

Attached is a brief description and overview of the project.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with (Art Program) and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to inclusive art opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during winter 2013. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at (Art Program), or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxx@uoregon.edu. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Jamie Walsh
Master's Candidate, Arts Administration, University of Oregon

Appendix C // Consent Form

Consent Form

Access and Inclusion: Artwork by Artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness

Principal Investigator: Jamie Walsh

University of Oregon – Arts and Administration Program

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Access and Inclusion: Artwork by artists with Developmental Disabilities & Mental Illness*, conducted by Jamie Walsh from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore current inclusive opportunities artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness have to participate in the contemporary art world. Please read this form and ask any questions before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore inclusive opportunities artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness have to participate in the contemporary art world. Participants in this study are from the San Francisco Bay Area, are art organizations that support artists with developmental disabilities and mental illness, and have a prestigious reputation in the arts & disabilities field.

Description of the Study Procedures:

If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during winter 2013. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at your organization, or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email. You will be given an opportunity to review the content you've submitted before completion of the project. The interview should take no longer than an hour of your time. In addition to an interview, you will also be asked to provide relevant organizational materials.

This study will be conducted over the course of one month, but participants can expect to be involved directly with the research for not more than two weeks time over the one-month period.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in the Study:

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study, particularly since this phase of research is exploratory in nature.

Benefits of Being in the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore in inclusive opportunities artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness have to participate in the contemporary art world. This project will serve as a tool for arts administrators working in the field of visual arts who are interested in issues of access and inclusion. For those working at programs for artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness, this project serves to understand and examine inclusive opportunities through community engagement programming and exhibition practices.

Furthermore, this project may also appeal to those working in contemporary art organizations that are interested in become more inclusive with their exhibition programming.

Confidentiality:

If you decide to be involved in this study, it is likely that your name will be identified in the final paper when reporting findings of the organization's structure relating to inclusive opportunities. Identification of your name may be used through quoting and in the references section. Before the study is completed, you will have the opportunity to review the comments you've submitted and where applicable, edit your remarks.

____ I wish to review the content I've submitted before completion of this project.

All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected computer. Access to the records will be limited to the researcher; however, please note that the Institutional Review Board and internal University of Oregon auditors may review the research records. Files will be deleted after three years (as determined by the University of Oregon).

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University. You are free to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not taking part or for stopping your participation.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Jamie Walsh. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxx@uoregon.edu. The research advisor overseeing this project is Ann Galligan. If for any reason you wish to contact her, you may do so at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxx@uoregon.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact: the Office for Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxx@uoregon.edu.

Copy of Consent Form:

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records and future reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

Signature_____Date_____

Study Participant (Print Name):

Participant
Signature_____Date_____

Appendix D // Interview Questions

Questions for Executive Directors

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. How long have you worked for this organization?
2. Can you tell me why this organization was originally created?
3. What do you see as being the role of the organization currently?
4. What are the organization's goals regarding exhibition programming?
5. Since the creation of the exhibition programming, how have you seen these goals change over the years?
6. What are the organization's goals regarding community inclusion?
7. How have these goals changed over the years?
8. What do you feel are the pros and cons of having both on-site exhibitions as well as off-site exhibitions?
9. Describe to me how you view the community perception of the artwork itself.
10. What are some of the main challenges regarding exhibitions and community inclusion for artists at your organization?
11. What do you see the future looking like regarding opportunities for the artists you represent?
12. What are your thoughts on exhibitions featuring artwork by artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness vs. inclusive exhibitions?

Questions for Gallery Managers

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. How long have you worked for this organization?
2. What are the organization's goals regarding exhibition programming?
3. Since the creation of the exhibition programming, how have you seen these goals change over the years?
4. What do you feel are the pros and cons of having both on-site exhibitions as well as off-site exhibitions?
5. Describe to me how you view the community perception of the artwork itself.
6. How do you go about seeking exhibition opportunities at off-site venues?
7. What are some of the main challenges regarding exhibitions for artists at your organization?
8. What do you see the future looking like regarding opportunities for the artists you represent?
9. What are your thoughts on exhibitions featuring artwork by artists with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness vs. inclusive exhibitions?
10. How are the artists represented in language used in promotional materials, press, and the website?

Appendix E // Time Line

Arts and Administration: Program Master's Research Timeline, 2012-2013

Fall 2012 (AAD 631)

- Complete full research proposal, meeting regularly with research adviser
- Draft detailed research instruments
- Draft human subjects documents and complete CITI training
- Create general outline of final document
- Submit human subjects application

Winter 2013 (AAD 501, 601)

JANUARY

- Submit human subjects application documents)if not completed in fall
- Refine research instruments
- Convert proposal into chapter drafts
- Plan with your advisor the dates that chapter drafts will be due; submission of chapter drafts will be worked out in agreement with your advisor over the next several months

FEBRUARY/MARCH

- Begin data collection and analysis
- Prepare detailed outline of full document
- Begin to submit chapter drafts

Spring 2013 (AAD 503, 601)

April

- Complete data collection
- Continue with ongoing data analysis
- Write full first draft of final document, submitting chapters to advisor for review and feedback according to plan

May

- Wednesday, May 1: Deadline for draft of full document to be submitted to advisor
- Week of May 6: Feedback from advisor prior to student presentations
- Friday, May 10: Student presentations of master's research
- Monday, May 13th (5:00pm): Deadline to submit text and images for inclusion in student research journal
- May 20-31: Continue revisions to full document
- Friday, May 31: Deadline for full final draft to be submitted to adviser

June

- June 3-11: Submit final document and PDF

Appendix F // Developmental Disabilities Act, section 102(8)

1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
2. Is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
3. Is likely to continue indefinitely;
4. Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;
 - (i) Self-care;
 - (ii) Receptive and expressive language;
 - (iii) Learning;
 - (iv) Mobility;
 - (v) Self-direction;
 - (vi) Capacity for independent living; and
 - (vii) Economic self-sufficiency.
5. Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated, except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age 5, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided.

Appendix G // Case Study Interview Participants

NIAD Art Center (February 19, 2013):

- Deborah Dyer, Executive Director
- Timothy Buckwalter, Director of Art Sales and Exhibitions

Creative Growth Art Center (February 20, 2013):

- Tom di Maria, Executive Director
- Catherine Nguyen, Gallery Manager

Creativity Explored (February 21, 2013):

- Amy Taub, Executive Director
- Amy Auerbach, Gallery Manager
- Ann Kappes, Director of Marketing and Licensing

Appendix H // Updated NIAD Art Center Logo



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