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**Public Occupations: art theory, cultural methodology, and social change**

**Josephine Mills**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Department**

**of**

**Communication Studies**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
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Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

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## ABSTRACT

Public Occupations: art theory, cultural methodology, and social change

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Concordia University, 1999

Various combinations of the terms "public" and "art" circulate in news sources, gallery publications, art magazines, and theoretical texts. Within this area of art theory, criticism, and discussion, the designation public functions as a "discursive operator" (J. M. Berthelot) because similar assumptions about identity and belonging (particularly gender and sexuality) are central to, yet evaded within, its multiple uses. To address patterns of arguments as well as particular examples, I analyse discourses around the topics of public art, public-site art practice, public(s) for galleries or art projects, and public funding of the arts. My focus is on Canadian art events in relation to primarily Canadian and American art theory, criticism, and newspaper content. I draw on a variety of feminist, cultural, and political theories in order to analyse art theory in relation to art projects and in relation to other cultural forms. My approach and discussion has two significant levels: one, the dissertation produces a complex analysis of the imbrication of cultural identity and notions of public within representations and discourses that combine public and art; and two, my research process works with the notion of the archive (M. Foucault) and creates a methodology for the analysis of contemporary cultural events which cut across disciplinary and media boundaries.

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My mother, Ann Newdigate, in sharing her experience as an artist who has often made productive use of "arms-length" funding, and as a founding board member of an artist-run centre, provided inspiration for the theory of my topic. My father, John A. Mills, brought his extensive professorial experience and eagle editing eye to earlier drafts. It seems only fitting that I completed this work at the point that he retired from university teaching. I appreciate that my "mother-in-

law," Valerie Armstrong, believes in the value of my education, even if she was not thrilled about the move away from home. Above all, I cannot thank my partner Leila Armstrong enough: she created one of the art works that started my rethinking of the terms that structure this thesis, provided a model for dealing with the hoops involved with graduate school, put up with a great deal of exasperating behaviour, and then agreed to copy edit the entire text when it was completed.

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## Introduction

For the past three or so decades visual artists of varying backgrounds and perspectives have been working in a manner that resembles political and social activity but is distinguished by its aesthetic sensibility. Dealing with some of the most profound issues of our time -- toxic waste, race relations, homelessness, ageing, gang warfare, and cultural identity -- a group of visual artists has developed distinct models for an art whose public strategies of engagement are an important part of its aesthetic language. The source of these artworks' structure is not exclusively visual or political information, but rather an internal necessity perceived by the artist in collaboration with his or her audience. (Lacy, "Introduction" 19)

For thoughtful social critics and cultural theorists, the "public" has been "in question" for some time now. (Baird 5)

The tension between the similarities and differences in the sources for the above two quotes exemplifies the concerns and contradictions which characterise discussions involving the combination of public and art. Both are from introductions to anthologies on the specific topic of how public and art interact with each other. In the full introduction, and selection of material for the books, both editors raise similar sets of associations such as politics, audience, and the role of art in relation to these. Published a year apart, both identify public as a singularly important concept for artists and art theorists and both believe that something relatively new is going on with the interaction between these concepts. Yet, despite all they have in common, these two comments also oppose each other. In the first, public is a guarantee; in the second, public is in need of investigation. Suzanne Lacy, like many others that I discuss in this dissertation, presents public as a way to demonstrate the relevance of art practice, its accessibility and connection to real people, and its ability to participate in larger movements for social change. George Baird shares the desire to connect art



practice with social activism by invoking and addressing the term public, but he also identifies the unresolved dispute associated with that term.

Even though both have produced anthologies on the subject, neither editor has a clear conception of public in relation to art. For Lacy, the term refers to a large range of ideas – from activism about toxic waste to an inherent relationship between artists and their specific audience. For Baird, it is unspecified and in an on-going process of examination. More than anything, both quotes demonstrate the impasse in theorising the combination of public and art: texts either agree that the terms and terrain are almost impossible to define or else they become examples of this impasse when writers slip and slide between a wide variety of uses and assumptions.

One of my desires for this dissertation is to go beyond adding to the list of those who agree that there is a problem and to propose options for moving out of the impasse. As a result, most of the questions I address in this dissertation concern how to juggle the specific contradictions involved with discourses that combine public and art. The main focus for my methodology, discussed in Chapter 1, derives from asking: How can I create a process that works with the imbrication which characterises the terrain of public and art, and yet also produces a sense of order for analysis of this area? How can I work across designations and across source areas as a means to sort out common assumptions and patterns, but also allow attention to the specificity of a given art project? My response involves, first, agreeing with cultural theorists such as Jackie Stacey that this area of research in general, and visual analysis in particular, has been woefully inadequate in developing cultural methodology. Second, I turn to Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* for his discussion of the archive as a process for research. Third, I allow the items in the

archive to define the direction of my analysis and ultimately the structure of the dissertation.

The organising focus for my concerns in this dissertation comes from the notion of the archive and from the items in my archive. By archive, I mean the physical collection of documents on subjects which combine public and art, but also an on-going process of working with those items. I am not assuming that there is a whole debate, a complete structure, somewhere out in the art world and that I must replicate this debate in its entirety through the events and documents I select. Instead, my methodology proposes that creating the archive is central to the analysis within the dissertation because the combination of items included in it is part of the knowledge produced by the research. Thus, my selection process for creating, and working with, the archive as well as my role as the researcher are key components for the dissertation. In Chapter 1, I describe the specific choices in detail as well as explain their connection to the terrain of public and art, to my theoretical sources, and to my position.

I work with Foucault's ideas to construct an archive that cuts across levels which are usually treated as separate. First, in my attention to visual art, I do not make an *a priori* separation between visual documents and written texts nor between artist's statements and critic's or theorist's work: the differentiation in methodology relates to differences in the role of each element for my research. In this way, I work across the division of art practice and art theory. Second, I traverse levels within discourses about public and art and draw from various kinds of sources (news media, art magazines, gallery publications, academic writing, policy statements, artist statements and interviews with arts professionals). Third, my analysis crosses specific designations which combine public and art, but are usually treated as separate areas (public art, public-site art, public(s) for art projects or galleries, and public funding of art).

For all of the different kinds of levels and boundaries that I cross, I do not conflate these elements with each other. In both the construction of the archive and the dissertation text, I mobilise various points of view, but mark these in relation to their role within my analysis and their relation to each other. I want to balance between sorting out all the various components and yet maintaining the entangledness which characterises the area of public and art. In order to avoid imposing a false framework onto the research, I devised a structure for my dissertation that arises from the arguments and concerns present in the items from my archive.

To work with these goals, I greatly expand on the notion of the "discursive operator" from Jean Michel Berthelot's essay "Du corps comme opérateur discursif ou les apories d'une sociologie du corps." I argue that within the analysis of public and art, public functions as a privileged point of entry into these debates because it is a "discursive operator." In other words, public is a point at which various issues and debates condense and through which I can analyse these debates as they function in combination. In particular, gender and sexuality are central to, yet evaded within, discourses that combine public and art. Within my project there are five aspects that the term discursive operator describes: 1) pragmatic -- the designation public has an effect in the world; 2) ideological -- debates and analysis deploy the designation public when something else is actually denoted; 3) cipher for debates -- public is a site of condensation, its usage does not mask but rather conflates diverse and contradictory positions; 4) particular significance -- the definitions and uses of public are not completely open, there are certain meanings which are regularly associated with this

designation; and 5) descriptive -- I am making the designation public into a discursive operator in relation to how I construct and analyse my archive.<sup>1</sup>

The last usage of the concept provides the structure for my archive while the first four provide the structure for Section 1 (Chapters 2 and 3). In Chapter 2, I investigate an overview of the items in my archive in relation to the pragmatic sense of public as it operates in combination with art and also its ideological function in this terrain. In relation to the former, I ask: What matters, and for whom, in discourses which combine public and art? For the latter, I ask: What is at stake in discourses which combine public and art? In Chapter 3, I survey my archive through attention to the operation of public as a cipher for debates and through identifying patterns of particular significance in attention to public and art. The main questions in this chapter are: What larger debates repeatedly occur in association with the combination of public and art? What specific designations commonly reappear in discourses which combine public and art? Are they attached to certain areas (such as art theory or news items) or to certain perspectives (such as Canadian sources compared to American)? Or, instead, does the designation cross many or all areas and perspectives? How do designations appear to operate in relation to each other?

From this overview, it becomes apparent that two designations -- inside and outside the gallery as well as controversy -- structure the majority of discourses which combine public and art. Other designations, such as political, audience, or process, tend to be associated with one or both of these. As a result, Section 2 (Chapters 4 and 5) focuses in-depth on these two main designations and on how the other designations function with them. Chapter 4 looks at several events which have socially active components and which

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<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Line Grenier for suggesting the relevance of Berthelot's text and to Kim Sawchuk for developing these five categories in relation to early stages of my project.

primarily involve either 1) crossing the division between inside and outside the gallery or 2) existing in public space and in comparison to the gallery. These events all generated detailed analysis within art theory or else a variety of discussion across various levels of sources. The main questions I ask here are: How does the designation of inside and outside the gallery result in limiting the analysis of these events? What are possible routes to maintain the desire to address strategies for creating social change within art projects and yet produce a complex analysis of art events that (seem to) cross the division of the gallery and the institutional wall?

I work with two specific developments of Foucault's notion of governmentality to define my attention to power and to politics in relation to notions of being inside, and escaping from, the art institution.<sup>2</sup> For a larger sense of Foucault's concept, Nikolas Rose explains that the term governmentality

suggests alternative ways of thinking the activity of politics. The forms of power that subject us, the systems of rule that administer us, the types of authority that master us - do not find their principle of coherence in a State nor do they answer to a logic of oppression or domination . . . least of all, its ways of dividing the political from the non-political. The force field with which we are confronted in our present is made up of a multiplicity of interlocking apparatuses for the programming of this or that dimension of life, apparatuses that cannot be understood according to a polarization of public and private or state and civil society. (286)

In addition to Rose's definition of governmentality, I also extend Tony Bennett's analysis of the governmental operation of museums. The combination allows me to address the connection between gallery-sited projects and those situated outside of gallery walls through attention to arts policy and funding. Doreen Massey's description of the construction of spatial relations adds further support

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of Foucault's concept, refer to G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) especially for Foucault's article "Governmentality" and Gordon's article "On Governmentality."

for my discussion of the relations involved with moving between gallery space and public space.

Chapter 5 focuses on the reliance on controversy as an inherent quality of, and as a measure of political effect in, projects that combine public and art. As well, this chapter addresses the relationship between controversy and discussions of public funding of the arts. The first part asks: What are the traps that art writers fall into when raising the designation controversy? Specifically, how does art theory use the concept of the public sphere in relation to the recirculation of assumptions in this area of analysis? In order to expand from the limited use of the concept of the public sphere in these texts, I turn to Jürgen Habermas' key work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* and to Craig Calhoun's assessment of it. As well, I discuss art theorist Rosalyn Deutsche's work as an example of discussion which addresses the notion of the public sphere, raises potentially effective points of focus, and yet becomes enmeshed in the tangle of associations involved with discourses that combine public and art. I pull out those potential points and also discuss Deutsche's work as a source for moving out of the problems which plague the use of the public sphere in relation to activist art projects.

In the second part of Chapter 5, I ask: What issues are at stake in the discussion of public funding programs in Canada and in the analysis of socially active projects produced through the various types of programs? Both Rose and Bennett are again useful in shedding light on the confusions around changes in arts policy within Canada as well as the blurring of distinctions between the Canadian systems and the American ones. Rose provides the means to sort out what is specific to the arts realm and what is indicative of larger shifts in liberal

rule. Bennett offers the basis for identifying the nationally specific components of cultural policy.

I conclude the dissertation with a walking tour of several public art projects in Vancouver and a response to a *Vancouver Sun* article that aims to produce a definitive assessment of public art in this city. Before producing the dissertation, the contradictions raised in the article, in letters which oppose it, and in my own immediate impression of the works, would only have appeared as intriguing puzzles. I would have seen the absence in these discussions, as I did in projects which came to my attention before starting the research, but I could not have pinpointed the quality of the absence nor possible ways to address this issue. By the end of the dissertation, I am able to identify what is at stake with these projects and the discussion of them, which designations are raised, and how these designations operate in connection. Most importantly, I can clearly assess that the simultaneous denial of, and concern with, identity and belonging is central to the puzzle and that attending to this perspective is central to the answer.

This account is envisaged as contributing to the engagement with art projects that work with larger movements for social change, particularly with gendered cultural identity. Connected to the goal of building methodological strategies, this dissertation also aims to propose new options for theorising events which combine public and art. The discussion of these events begs for new angles of approach -- given the current propensity to spin around in the same old circles. Art theory is the main theoretical domain in which I propose to intervene. Thus, I include art theory documents in my archive, and examine these in relation to the other levels of documentation. As a secondary goal, I want to bring the attention to meaning production in specific visual representations from art theory to theories of public concepts. My dissertation

draws on interdisciplinary sources which arise from the terrain I examine. Art theorists attempt to ground their discussion with complex terms, such as the public sphere or urban space, that are highly contentious and disputed in other theoretical disciplines. As well, art theorists repeatedly cite the same few texts or authors, such as Habermas' work, but without following through on the implications of these references. I pick up on these strands and explore their ramifications for art theory by bringing in the analysis from sources outside the discipline yet, at the same time, I maintain the attention to visual representation.

The multiplicity and persistence of controversies over public and art suggest that these events very much matter in a variety of locations. Artists who identify their work as addressing various public issues express frustration at the limitations of art theory in terms of analysis of such work. Discussions of public and art are directly related to policy decisions around specific grants and the existence of granting bodies; around gallery budgets and the need for a public gallery; or around the production of specific public art projects and the structure of a civic public art program. Analysts from many sources contest the meaning and value of public and art events. In particular, these arguments focus on events which address issues of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationalism. However, they evade development of this focus on identity and belonging by subsuming the specific points into the recycled generalisations which characterise discussions of public and art.

I propose to create new approaches for analysing the specificity of various combinations of public and art by addressing particular designations which are the subject of debate, analysing assumptions raised in these arguments, and following through on the gender and sexuality stakes. Focusing on the links between designations is a key strategy to escape the self-sustaining binary arguments which dominate discussions of public and art such as inside vs.



outside the gallery or pro-gallery and contemporary art vs. anti-gallery and contemporary art.

This dissertation points out how the evasion of identity stakes in public and art events happens, analyses why it matters, and proposes strategies for shifting attention back to these stakes. I have chosen to focus my research on events which address gender and sexuality partly because this has been the main interest in my work as an art critic and curator and partly because these are hotly contested issues within discussions of public and art.<sup>3</sup> My dissertation also connects to my involvement with arts organisations and my advocacy of salvaging Canadian and regional "arms-length" funding systems. In terms of public funding, public art projects, and art which addresses public issues, I would like to see a diversity of options within Canadian policy, exhibition, production, and arts writing continue. Furthermore, from my work with gallery public programs departments, I believe the issue of accessibility should be complexly analysed rather than used as a club to beat down gay, lesbian, and feminist projects. At the same time, discussion of community involvement or access should not be a tokenist ploy to avoid discussing gallery and artistic practices or approaches within art theory.

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<sup>3</sup>Sexuality and gender are not part of my selection points. I selected documents based on designations which combine public and art, and within these, there is strong attention to gender and sexuality.

## **Chapter I The Production of an Archive and the Production of Knowledge**

### **1) Archives, discursive analysis, and epistemology**

A methodology which facilitates a process of delineating regularities, sorting categories, and analysing recurrent discourses is a necessary component for dealing with the confusion which characterises discussions of public and art. It is not enough just to construct interdisciplinary theoretical approaches for each specific component of my research; there must be a similarly customised, interdisciplinary methodological approach. The initial problem for my research is the difficulty in producing a workable focus on the combination of public and art given the potential magnitude of the topic. Furthermore, my dissertation needs to work with the constant slippage around definitions of terms, points of discussion, and analytical assumptions which operate within the area. As a result, I focus my research process on strategies for setting the boundaries for the scope of my analysis and for addressing the entanglements within and across various combinations of public and art.

Michel Foucault's proposals concerning the construction and analysis of an archive function as points of departure for my research process. I engage with certain specific concepts in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and not with his overall argument about the development of a new history. Foucault supports a "questioning of the *document*" (6) and he emphasises the idea of a series, or series of series, within the archive. He argues that

history has altered its position in relation to the document: it has taken as its primary task, not the interpretation of the document, nor the attempt to decide whether it is telling the truth or what is its expressive value, but to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it,

orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations. (*Archaeology* 6)

For my process, the documents are neither proof of something "real" that exists separate from the archive nor are they examples -- i.e., representative of something else. The discursive formations which I analyse exist in these documents and in the relations between them. Thus, my approach and the structure of my dissertation derive from the issues and patterns which characterise the terrain of public and art.

My analysis combines two main approaches. I use a notion of discourse and discursive formation from Foucault and from cultural theorists who work with his ideas. As well, in relation to specific art projects, I deploy representational analysis, from art theory and from film theory, in order to assess the meaning produced by the visual and textual elements in a given work. In addition, I alter the concept of a "discursive operator" to structure my analysis and assist in sorting out discursive regularities that transcend the documents in my archive. In the Introduction, I explain that, for my dissertation, this term describes four aspects of the role or effect of public within documents and debates which combine public and art (pragmatic, ideological, cipher, and particular significance).

I delineate a fifth level for the concept of a discursive operator which describes how public functions in terms of my methodology. I mobilise the term public as a discursive operator by constructing my archive around this privileged point of entry. As discussed, I describe my approach to key terms by borrowing the concept from Jean Michel Berthelot's essay "Du corps comme opérateur discursif ou les apories d'une sociologie du corps." However, I only use

Berthelot's term and not his implied definitions of discourse nor his approach to discourse analysis.<sup>1</sup>

My attention to the issue of choices and the process of selection arises from pressure within cultural research as well as from the terrain that I analyse. Several theorists have asserted that cultural studies lacks attention to methodology. Jackie Stacey, in "Textual obsessions: methodology, history and researching female spectatorship," addresses film studies in particular and argues for the importance of clarifying decisions as part of developing methodologies for this area. Stacey asserts that "Methodological questions . . . need to be debated in film studies because without such a debate the politics of knowledge remain hidden and mystified" (216-262). Specifically, film theorists need to address the "invisibility of the selection process" (261) in order to subject their research approach to the same rigorous attention as they give to their theoretical concerns.

The role of choices impacts far beyond just the initial construction of the archive. Stacey explains that "Questions of methodology are important not only in terms of sources and objects of study, but also in terms of the selection of particular interpretative theoretical frameworks. Indeed, there is often a close connection between the two" (262). For my project, there are two core links between approach and analysis. First, I attempt both to develop a methodology and to create a theory. I argue that the construction of new strategies for how one conducts analysis is central to producing new options for theoretical discussions of public and art. Second, the composition of my dissertation arises from the structuring concepts in the archive. The four chapters correspond to the

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<sup>1</sup>In short, I wish to acknowledge that the term "discursive operator" comes from a specific source, but at the same time explain that I do not use Berthelot's arguments, theoretical framework, or method.

main concerns within documents which address public and art: mapping or defining the terms, assumptions about inside compared to outside the gallery, and linking notions of controversy with public and art.

My position as a researcher is strongly connected to my selections for the archive, my proposals for theoretical strategies, and my goals for the dissertation. My choice of topic derives from observations and questions that arose while working with artist-run centres and galleries as well as writing art theory and criticism. I am able to produce particular insights about the items in my archive because I am a lesbian and feminist academic, art critic, curator, and art educator. I have a personal and political investment in how I position myself in relation to my archive and my analysis. I would like to support projects which work for social change around identity stakes in general and sexuality and gender in particular. I can use my position, and resulting possibilities for insights, to put stress on the inside/outside division around questions of public in combination with art -- in terms of gallery institutions as well as identity and belonging.

### **1.1) Designations and events**

The issue of definitions is a constant problem within the terrain of public and art and therefore a key issue for my project as a whole and for my methodology in particular. On the one hand, texts discuss various combinations of public and art without stated definitions of the terms involved. The result is a frequently chaotic conflation of different concepts, and levels of concepts, under one term. Yet, at the same time, texts attempt to deal with the messy-ness of public and art by offering static definitions which are inevitably inadequate for the task of mapping this terrain. To put it simply, how can I examine assumptions and analyse documents, art projects, or debates without producing definitions which falsely fix the concepts and issues in question? Part of my solution is to

describe the focus of my project in ways that allow for notions of movement and process and yet also put flexible limits on the scope of my project. In order to do this, there are two key terms which hold specific importance for the knowledge this dissertation is able to produce.

First, I have chosen to use "designation" to describe the particular phrases and concepts which re-occur within discourses concerning public and art. These key designations also serve as the selection points for my archive as well as the focus of my analysis. For example, I refer to public art or public funding of art as designations. In comparison to "term" or "label," which describe a fixed and accepted meaning, designation primarily means the *action* of marking or indicating with words or signs. In this way, the use of designation conveys a sense of how discourses concerning public and art function -- that there is an on-going sorting process -- and also ties in with the categorising process of my methodology. Furthermore, designation suggests that this action of marking is not neutral because the term can specifically mean appointment to an office or nomination for employment.<sup>2</sup> This second definition plays with the title of my dissertation, *Public Occupations*, and also connects with the reason I selected this title. I want to address how certain designations work -- how they are actively part of the possibilities for analysis in the terrain of public and art.

Designation is distinct from discursive operator although the two are intimately connected in my process. Public is the only term I focus on as a discursive operator. It operates within the main designations for my research (public art, public-site practice, public(s) for galleries or art projects, and public funding of the arts) as well as within the discourses associated with these. Designation describes the various combinations of public and art and also

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<sup>2</sup> I am partly using *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 646.

associated concepts or phrases. Describing key terms as designations, along with arguing that public is a discursive operator, recognises that combinations of public and art actively mark the condensation of issues and assumptions as well as indicates that they actively produce my archive.

Second, I use "event" to describe specific art projects or debates which I, and documents in my archive, address. For example, I describe the Vancouver public-site installation *Benchmarks* (1993-1994) as an event. By this, I mean the combination of the panels installed in the advertising space on bus stop benches, the promotional material issued by the group which produced the benches, the art criticism written about the work, the discussions which occurred between the group and the advertising company, stories circulating about the impact of these works, as well as my own memories and impressions of the project. Event describes an occurrence which is "happening" and thereby enables analysis of the processual quality of the items within my archive.

Like designation, event is not neutral because the term implies a significant or noteworthy occurrence.<sup>3</sup> Similar to my identification of key designations as my focus, I select particularly rich projects and debates which include several levels of documentation, deploy combinations of the prevailing assumptions, and address multiple aspects of the issues which I analyse. Furthermore, unlike the terms "example" or "case study," which describe a stand in for something else, an event is meaningful in and of itself. However, this does not preclude that an event could also indicate larger trends or function as part of on-going discursive practices.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* 865.

<sup>4</sup> I only use "example" when I specifically cite a document or event as part of a more general phenomenon. Thus, at times I can describe an event as an example, but I do not conflate these terms.

Using the term event works with the flexible boundaries of my archive and thereby ties in with my methodology. Foucault uses event throughout *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to describe the moments and documents which he includes in his multi-levelled archive. By describing art projects and debates as events, I significantly alter the possibilities for analysis of visual representation. In *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*, Janet Staiger also uses the term "event." Although she specifically discusses the value of reception studies to film, her points explain a larger shift within cultural studies. Staiger argues that taking a film as an "event" includes analysing various textual interpretations of the film, along with the film itself, rather than a textual studies approach which addresses only the film, and posits the film as an "object" (9). The notion of a visual work as an object, as it is developed in art or film discourses, assumes that the art object is passive, it is a thing to be dissected, and it does not play an active role in the construction of the terrain under discussion nor in the construction of the research project itself. By describing items which I analyse as events, I acknowledge their active role in the production of my archive and also allow a sense of contestation and movement within these art projects and documents.

## **1.2) A cultural methodology**

Reception or audience studies could seem appropriate for the area of my research. In particular, the emphasis on "real" audiences interacting with public art as part of their daily life, or the claims by writers to represent true public opinion in a debate about art practice, appears to suggest a need for these approaches. However, I reject this approach precisely because it is a main goal of my dissertation to question these kinds of assumptions and intervene in their constant recirculation. Potentially, there could be a place for the newly complex



approaches to audience studies, but first art theory needs to question the belief that "the man on the street" is the locus of meaning for a public art project.

As well, there is not a clean line between audience and representational analysis. Jackie Stacey explains how, in fact, these two areas overlap. She discusses Janet Staiger's work and examines assumptions about problems with reception analysis. Stacey argues that

Janet Staiger's claim that 'even if we acknowledge mediation and distortion, these stumbling blocks can never be fully overcome' implies the possibility of an unproblematic source of audience response beyond such stumbling blocks. 'Mediation' and 'distortion' suggest that there may be pure cinematic experience beyond the limitations of representation. I would argue instead that all audience researchers must deal inevitably with the question of representation, but not as a *barrier* to meaning, but rather as *the form* of that meaning. Given that language itself is a system of representation, any expression of taste, preference and pleasure is necessarily organized according to certain conventions and patterns. (266-267)

Art theorists who proclaim the direct connection of public art to the real people on the street make this same assumption that there is an ideal, free, and pure audience relation with public art projects. The corollary to this belief is that simply by asking people, one will tap into self-evident truths about public art or the issues which the work raises.

I deliberately do not attempt to ascertain the opinions of random passers-by of an art project. However, I do bring in responses to art projects, events, and debates. Another insight from Stacey is that if such items as fan letters in a film magazine can be examined as audience response (by deploying discourse and institutional analysis), then many of the documents in my archive function at one level as responses to art projects or controversies. Furthermore, my own insights about events or debates structure my research. As well, I conduct semi-formal interviews with individuals who work in the area in order to discuss their

assumptions and opinions about the designations and events which I analyse. Neither my nor other art professionals' viewpoints are random, yet they constitute a form of response to the art projects and issues which they raise.

My main approach is discourse analysis of the documents and events in my archive. From Foucault's work, cultural theorists agree that discursive formations are relatively autonomous systems of regularities and therefore, rather than only being representative of larger social formations, they are meaningful and effective in their own right. For example, Martin Allor and Michelle Gagnon explain that discourse analysis "can make visible the virtual system of regularities and productivities in statements and texts which articulate the cultural domain" (32). This position supports an examination of texts which combine public and art in order to identify the components of the discourses which characterise the terrain. From this, one can then analyse the impact of these discourses on the relationship between the terrain of public and art and the art theory which addresses this area.

Furthermore, Allor and Gagnon describe discursive formations as "systems of regularities which organize the singularity of statements into particular power-knowledge relations" (36). Thus, in addition to examining texts, a project like mine also needs to address how specific assumptions operate across designations, texts, and art projects. Discourse analysis facilitates an investigation of my assertion that discourses which combine public and art condense debates about identity and belonging and, as a result, public and art is a site of contestation and a site of interest for theorists engaged in larger movements for social change.

My strategy combines addressing public as a discursive operator with analysing discursive regularities across public and art documents and events. In relation to a specific project, or to the notions of inside/outside the gallery and of

controversy, theorists and critics claim that public-ness is the central concern. The texts in my archive pose the concept of public as crucial and extraordinarily relevant to art practice, gallery structure, and audience interaction with these. I ask what associations do texts attach to public-ness in relation to art which makes this concept so pressing and significant for art practice and art theory? I argue that there is much more involved than the single concept "public."

My goal is to focus on identity stakes in my archive. Often these are implicit because discussions of public and art mark out, or challenge, the boundaries of what is included within a notion of public and what is excluded. Discursive formations are based on this kind of linked including and excluding process. Part of the difficulty of analysing or critiquing such a formation is that, if positioned outside, it is difficult to explain how this system works and how the outside is in fact intricately connected. Working with Foucault's theories allows me to examine how notions of gender and sexuality are simultaneously excluded from analysis of public and art and yet integral to the construction of definitions and prevailing routes of analysing such events. The addition of the concept of a discursive operator facilitates my specific attention to the simultaneous centrality and evasion of identity and belonging within designations which combine public and art.

At another level, this approach also facilitates discussing how the construction of inside and outside the gallery functions within analysis of public and art. To analyse this configuration, I focus on the terrain of the art projects, the documents, and the debates. I use "institutional and discursive nexus" to describe the field in which public and art projects are located. This definition allows me to look at work inside the gallery, outside the gallery, and situated as overlapping the gallery domain, as all part of a related framework. As well, this approach works with my goal to avoid re-creating the assumption that gallery

institutions ("the art world") constitute a separate sphere from social or other realms. Institutional and discursive nexus describes the interconnection of multiple layers and intersections of relations which characterise the location of public-site art projects and discussions about such events.

The term also works with the notion of governmentality to address the connection between public-site and gallery practices as well as to mark the combination of discursive and institutional analysis within my project. Tony Bennett argues for the inclusion of attention to governmental relations in order to expand the possibilities of cultural analysis. In relation to museum studies, he argues that "an understanding of the relations between culture and power in modern societies needs to take account of the instrumentalization of culture which accompanies its enlistment for governmental purposes" ("Useful Culture" 76). Thus, attention to governmentality supports my analysis across the supposed division of inside and outside the gallery as well as adds to my discussion of what is at stake in the documents I analyse.

## **2) The archive as process**

### **2.1) Selection and collection of documents**

The first stage of my research process involved collecting potential items for the archive. For art theory, I searched university library data bases for the key combinations of public and art and gathered books and academic journal articles. As well, I used the works cited within such items to extend the exploration of art theory sources and to suggest items for the other levels. The majority of art magazines, catalogue essays, and potential projects came from the archives at Artexte in Montreal and the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG). I looked at the table of contents of the main national Canadian art magazines published during the 1990s

(*Parachute*, *Parallélogramme*, *Fuse*, *C Magazine*, and *Canadian Art*) for the key combinations of public and art in articles and reviews. I also used works cited in art magazine articles to suggest art projects and to extend the art magazine or the art theory search (depending on the type of source). I sought artists, artists groups, and events based on the references in art magazines and theory as well as my own experience within galleries and the suggestions of the Artexte and VAG librarians. For news media, I searched Canadian news indexes for the key combinations of public and art as well as for events, projects, and artists suggested by the other levels.

The interaction between the different searches was on-going and circular. I moved back and forth between the various libraries and archives as more authors, artists, or events arose within one area. As well, I added a specific search of the Vancouver Public Art Program documents following references to civic policy in general, and the Vancouver program in particular, in various news sources. I gathered the final policy statements and statements produced during the formation of the program from the Office of Cultural Affairs and from the City of Vancouver archives.

## **2.2) Identification and significance of categories**

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault focuses on the levels and series which relate to the documents in the archive. He argues against a totalizing method that seeks to identify a single, homogenising principle and accounts for the overall form of a given topic. Instead he argues for an approach that seeks to

determine what form of relation may be legitimately described between these different series; what vertical system they are capable of forming; what interplay of correlation and dominance exists between them; what may be the effect of shifts, different

temporalities, and various rehandlings; in what distinct totalities certain elements may figure simultaneously; in short, not only what series, but also what 'series of series' - or, in other words, what 'tables' it is possible to draw up. (*Archaeology* 10)

As a result of reading the potential items for the archive, I determined that there were a series of key designations that were prevalent in the terrain and that were imbricated with each other. Initially, I identified that documents cited and analysed several combinations of public and art. Subsequently, I delineated all of the themes and designations which repeatedly appeared within texts on each combination and which repeatedly traversed these categories. I re-read every item to check for the presence of all the designations on the list and thereby confirmed or altered that list.

Once I completed the description of the prevalent themes and designations, I then read each item a third time in order to categorise the components of my archive by the presence, and combination, of these key designations. I plotted the levels of sources on the horizontal axis of a chart and plotted the designations on the vertical axis. In this way, I could see the configuration of all the designations in one place and thereby notice if designations cluster under certain source areas, if designations associate with each other, and if designations transcend many levels. This process gauged my intuition that notions of inside/outside the gallery and controversy are the two main themes which structure the discussions of public and art. As well, I could investigate if and how certain designations associated with one or the other of these two main notions, such as audience with inside/outside or new-ness with controversy, and if other designations traversed both, such as political-ness.

To reproduce the chart for the reader and to enable referencing to each category, I list the items from each designation and each trend within separate appendices. In this way, when I do want to take documents as examples of a

pattern, I can quote one or two in the body of the text and reference the whole category by the associated appendix. Many items appear in more than one appendix because they deploy multiple designations and assumptions while other items appear in a few or even only two appendices.<sup>5</sup> In this way, I can see, and demonstrate to the reader, if there are patterns to the combinations of designations which sources deploy.

My goal for categorising was not to create leak proof compartments and slot items and ideas into permanent homes. Partly, such an attempt goes against the structure of the terrain of public and art. The categories are porous and items in my archive move around because many texts fit under more than one designation and contain internal contradictions. Documents not only appear in more than one appendix, I also address many of them in more than one part of my dissertation. Secondly, the identification of categories is processual: creating a semblance of order amongst the archive is the beginning part of my analysis rather than an end goal. In other words, these categories are a means to support analysis. My goal is to identify the connections between designations and the associations with them in order to examine the assumptions which produce and re-produce the use of these categories. My dissertation addresses what happens when a text mobilises a particular series of designations. I analyse the role these designations play in the argument, the resulting limits for possible conclusions, the issues which this combination of designations carries, and the implied theoretical sources.

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<sup>5</sup>Two is the minimum number as each item appears once in an appendix for source and then in one or more of the appendices for prevalent themes.

### 2.3) Disruption and examination of divisions

Foucault's arguments support the notion that analysis should cross boundaries set by the terrain and by other theoretical approaches (*Archaeology* 135-139). He opposes his position to the basic tenets of "genesis, continuity, totalization" (*Archaeology* 138) and he rejects the goal of determining origins, beginning/end points, or linear development. His analysis describes discourses themselves instead of examining discourses as a sign of something else and, as a result, his work defines discourses in their specificity. As well, his approach "defines types of rules for discursive practices that run through individual *oeuvres*" (*Archaeology* 138). In other words, the work itself is neither central nor a sign of a linear progress. Working with this position, I develop an approach which cuts across many levels of the items within my archive and examines their interaction in terms of discursive practices.

The archive serves as the boundary for my research -- the archive itself, as a whole, is not my focus of study. Within the borders of the archive, I consider the elements in their specificity and in relation to other parts of the archive. As well, each element does not have equal status. I do not have just one approach to deal with all the aspects of the archive. For example, some art projects are significant in themselves, such as *Benchmarks*, and thus I analyse the meaning produced by the art projects as well as meaning produced by texts directly addressing this project. Other art projects, such as Gilbert Boyer's *Mémoire ardente* (1994), serve as the focus of a controversy and thus I address the debate around the project and do not analyse the project itself. Furthermore, some of the texts I gathered directly address art projects which are in the archive while other texts address the types of art projects I study, but not my specific events. In short, I mobilise several different points of view in my analysis. I



determine my approach to each item in my archive in relation to the focus of that item as well as the item's role within my dissertation.

Because I do not assume that my archive replicates a complete debate which exists somewhere else, I emphasise and clearly delineate my choices for the construction of my archive and my points of entry for the analysis of these items. As stated above, I select the items for the archive according to prevalent designations. My research has no fixed temporal boundary, nor does my dissertation seek to analyse a defining date associated with an event or the emergence of a designation. However, my focus is mainly contemporary. The bulk of the items within the archive date from the 1990s, but, particularly when those texts reference an earlier source, I can also trace beyond that period. My emphasis is the discourses which currently operate within the terrain of public and art and traverse different designations and levels of sources. I have a loose temporal enclosure that works with my attention to discursive formations and does not falsely fix my possible selections or conclusions.

Canada is the geographical boundary for the archive selection, although I include sources from other locations that the Canadian material references or which connects to my chosen analysis. For the purposes of making selections of material for my archive, I define this national boundary in terms of the Canadian federal funding system of the arts. Canada has a distinct arms-length federal arts funding system as well as multiple layers of arts organisation and production. The system supports individual artists and groups through specific grants as well as providing both long-term operational funds and one-time project grants to artist-run centres, civic art galleries, and major galleries. In addition, the system funds individual art critics, catalogue production, and art magazines. I chose this definition of national boundary primarily because attention to funding and policy connects with my analytical attention to the notion of governmentality. I use the

same logic to address art institutional relations such as the connection between public-site art practice and galleries, individual artist's projects and established arts organisations, or public art programs and gallery programs.

The majority of the documents in my archive are in English. However, I include both art and news media texts in French. Partly this combination relates to my definition of Canadian: the federal arts funding system is officially bilingual. In practice, for example, granting juries include French and English speaking members. Secondly, the terrain which I cover is frequently bilingual. For example, many Canadian arts magazines are bilingual (such as *Parachute*) and there are both English and French documents on events within Montreal such as *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* or Boyer's *Mémoire ardente*.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I define "art" as visual representation by the same logic that delineates the national boundary of the archive. I analyse work that falls within the federal and regional funding system. My archive includes projects and documents supported by individual grants as well as projects and documents produced by or for organisations that receive grant support. As well, this definition contains magazines that receive grants and/or which write about such work. I also include projects which are referenced in discussions about the kinds of work that is defined by the funding logic.

I deploy different theoretical sources within each section, depending on which issues the documents raise and which texts they cite. I mobilise theoretical support for my various approaches and arguments in relation to how assumptions traverse levels and designations. Furthermore, I analyse art theoretical texts -- the specific goal of my theoretical development -- as part of the archive and I also deploy some of these texts as reference sources. I not only focus on my own selections, I also build my analysis by identifying the choices underpinning a given theoretical document and the strategies associated with those choices.

### 3) Discussion of method

#### 3.1) Method for analysis

The archive focuses on visual art and cuts across several levels that art theory commonly separates. In no order of priority, the complete list of source material for my research is: 1) art magazines and gallery catalogues; 2) academic journals and books; 3) news media (mainly newspaper content, but also television news and news magazines); 4) documentation of art projects (such as slides and exhibition announcements); 5) gallery and public art program statements (such as policy guidelines and statements of goals); and 6) semi-formal interviews with selected arts professionals. The majority of items which I chart come from the first three types of sources. The remaining three provide additional material for my analysis and engagement with the series and designations arising from the charting process.

First, the archive includes both written and visual documentation, but I do not make an *a priori* separation between visual documents and written texts. Art theory usually posits a visual level (art projects) as the object to be analysed or explained and a textual level (theory and criticism) as the source for that analysis. This assumption also distinguishes between theory and art practice and between theorist and artist with the last word, the authority, residing in the level of theory and with the theorist or critic. Because my goal is to analyse art theory and to examine discourses circulating around public and art, rather than analysing the art projects alone, I include theory, criticism, and other textual documents in my archive along with documentation of visual projects. However, I do not collapse the boundaries between these areas and conflate them all together. I position my analysis as traversing these boundaries i.e., the divisions are still there (because

they exist within the terrain I analyse) but my analysis can move across these assumed differences.

My differentiation in approach relates to how each element works in relation to the overall project and to the specific component of my dissertation which addresses that element. Thus, at times I work with the visual/textual or primary/secondary source division by drawing on theoretical sources to develop my analysis of a visual art project. For example, in my discussion of *Marker of Change* (1997), I activate components of Marita Sturken's analysis of public monuments. In *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, she discusses several American monuments and the production of cultural identity. I extend her points to develop my analysis of the production of gendered cultural identity and the Vancouver monument.<sup>6</sup> At other moments, I controvert the visual/textual separation and discuss the assumptions presented by art projects or artists' statements and by reviews or academic analysis of such projects as all part of the same event. For instance, I compare the representational strategies in *Benchmarks* and *Homophobia is Killing Us* (1991) to the analysis of these specific projects. I discuss the insights produced by the art projects in order to examine the assumptions which Lisa Robertson, Jacqueline Larson, and Wayne Baerwaldt each deploy concerning activist art strategies. As well, I compare the two art projects to each other, identify differences in strategy, and relate these observations to the similarity in designations and assumptions across the three different theoretical texts. Thus, the variation in the art projects demonstrates how the discourses within analysis

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<sup>6</sup>The Vancouver Women's Monument Project refers to the whole event from initiating the idea to have a Vancouver monument to the women massacred on December 6, 1989 up to the installation of the completed work. *Marker of Change* is the title of the completed monument.

of public and art maintain an internal coherence which traverses analysis of different projects.

I am not proposing a universal removal of the primary/secondary or visual/textual separation, nor that this separation is totally fictitious, because differentiating between a visual art level and a theoretical level can be relevant within art theory in general. However, for my project, it is necessary to dispute the solidity and permanence of this barrier and to identify how ideas and issues circulate amongst both visual and textual components of an art event. This is one strategy to develop approaches to theorising public and art that engage with the specific tactics of the art projects under discussion. My goal here is to shift assumptions about what an art project does, what art theory does, and the relation between the two.

Secondly, my analysis crosses the line that both art theory and other disciplines draw around "the art world." My archive includes documents from 1) art locations associated with, or addressing, gallery institutions; 2) from art locations not directly associated with gallery institutions; and 3) from non-art locations. In terms of the first site, I consider such items as reviews of art projects produced within galleries and produced by galleries for public locations, articles in art magazines that discuss public funding of the arts, or academic articles that analyse controversial art events. Within the second area, I examine such items as independent public-site projects and artists' statements relating to these. As well, I specifically analyse the Vancouver Public Art Program's policy documents and interview the program manager, Bryan Newson. The third site consists of news media. I examine such items as newspaper reviews of specific projects and events or newspaper articles which address public and art topics. In relation to events which I discuss in detail, such as the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, I also consider television news.

Again, I do not conflate the differences between the sites, but my project does challenge and investigate the effect of constructing this separation for analysis of visual art projects and art theory. This separation is a central construction of the arguments and conclusions in discussions of public and art. For example, both within the supposed art sphere and outside it, discourses concerning public and art position newspaper articles as an external response to art events; yet, these same discourses frequently position newspaper art critics as part of the art world. On the one hand, in an article published in an anthology of art theory, Kevin Dowler cites Bronwyn Drainie and John Bentley Mays as part of the news media responses to the Barnett Newman and Jana Sterbak controversies at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). On the other hand, in a news paper article concerning artist Lea Vivot, Drainie positions fellow *Globe and Mail* employee Bentley Mays as part of "the art establishment," because he is an art critic, while she aligns herself with "ordinary people" ("An artistic guerrilla" C1). In other words, the placement of the division between sites frequently fluctuates and depends on a given argument, or even on a moment within one argument.

Third, my analysis traverses several specific designations which combine art and public: public art, public-site art, public(s) for art projects or galleries, and public funding of art. I am interested in how public functions as a discursive operator in all of these designations. I analyse them in their interaction but do not conflate these concepts nor their associated events and analysis. Frequently documents address one designation and then refer to, or compare this topic with, other designations. For example, Canadian texts which address public funding deploy the notion of audience as part of their discussion even though they do not examine specific representational or viewing relations. The presence of the designation audience marks a connection in the discourses concerning public funding and the discourses which address actual public art projects or projects

that raise public issues. In this way, my dissertation traces the assumptions which operate across the various combinations of public and art. As a result, I am able to analyse each public and art topic, and each designation, in terms of the connections between all of these. My approach simultaneously positions the designations as separate and yet also treats them as part of the single configuration of public and art. I work with this on-going contradiction, rather than attempting to erase it, because the imbrication of designations and assumptions constitutes a fundamental characteristic of public and art theories.

The assumptions about, and construction of, these three boundaries (visual/textual, art world/non-art world, various designations) are messy and complex. At times, all three divisions align within one document. For example, in his introduction to *Voices of Fire: Art, Rage, Power, and the State*, John O'Brian associates his discussion of the Newman controversy with other examples of art theory, he positions news media responses as separate from the discipline of art history, and focuses on the NGC event as an art world phenomenon. At other moments, the divisions can function separate from each other, operate at different levels, or blend and disappear within a document. For instance, *Vancouver Sun* writer Chris Dafoe cites a plethora of sites in his claim that public art is a hot topic in Vancouver: he focuses on the civic public art program, yet also refers to a VAG publication, the news attention to the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, and the independent project *Artropolis 93* ("Going public" E2).

I do not analyse the archive as a whole nor do I analyse each component with the same approach. The archive serves as a boundary for my exploration of public and art. I bring in different sources, follow various entry points, and develop specific strategies in relation to the given issue, event, and designation. For example, in Section 1, Chapters 2 and 3, I develop my attention to public as a discursive operator and work through the prevalent designations in detail. In

Section 2, I bring in theoretical sources that are relevant to addressing specific designations. Thus, in Chapter 4, I use theories of museums and governmentality to address the institutional and discursive nexus of public-site art practice and the connection to gallery practices. By comparison, in Chapter 5, I bring in theories of the public sphere to examine the notion of controversy and the assumed inherent political quality of public art.

### **3.2) Method for categorising**

I initially organised my archive by dividing the documents and events into working categories based on the type and location of publication. I made this separation so that I could plot assumptions and designations operating within each area before I analysed these regularities and examined the connections between categories. I divided the items specifically addressing public and art into: 1) news media, 2) art magazines and catalogues, and 3) art theory. I further separated the magazines and theoretical documents into Canadian, American, and other countries (I only gathered Canadian news media).

I sorted the news media on public and art into sub-categories around combinations of public and art and by events. The NGC controversies, *Benchmarks* and *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* are each sub-categories on their own because these events traverse several designations. Boyer's *Mémoire ardente* and the Vancouver Women's Monument Project are part of the sub-category of public art while the exhibition *Lost Illusions* (1991) is a part of the sub-category of gallery projects.



The art theory categories are:

- Canadian public and art theory (Appendix A1)
- American public and art theory (Appendix A2)
- Other public and art theory (Appendix A3)
- Museum and exhibition theory (Appendix A4)

The art magazine categories are:

- Canadian art magazines (Appendix B1)
- American art magazines (Appendix B2)
- Other art magazines (Appendix B3)
- Public* (Appendix B4)

The news media categories are:

- public art (Appendix C1)
  - event: Gilbert Boyer's *Mémoire ardente* (Appendix C2)
  - event: Vancouver Women's Monument Project "Marker for change" (Appendix C3)
- art projects in galleries and located both inside and outside galleries (Appendix C4)
  - event: *Lost Illusions* (Appendix C5)
- museums or galleries (Appendix C6)
- art funding (Appendix C7)

The event categories are:

- National Gallery of Canada main three controversies (Appendix D1)
- Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* (Appendix D2)
- Artropolis 93* (Appendix D3)

*Benchmarks (Appendix D4)*

Vancouver Public Art Program (Appendix D5)

I divided the news media items into the sub-categories by each combination of public and art to facilitate answering whether there are marked differences between sub-categories and/or whether similar assumptions and issues do operate across these divisions. Furthermore, if there were differences or commonalties, the categorising process supports analysis of their specific components. Similarly, I divided art magazines and art theory by national location to enable my examination of shared and differing qualities between Canadian and other analysis of public and art. In addition, I also included a separate sub-category for *Public* (a Canadian journal) because it straddles the status of art magazine and academic journal and it has specific attention to public and art. As well, there is a category of museum and exhibition theory (not divided by country) which includes items that do not directly address public and art, but rather relate tangentially.

Following the initial working categorisation, I read each item in a category and marked designations and concerns. As I noticed the repetition of a designation or trend in analysis, I added that to a working list. Subsequent to the first perusal, I then used the working list to re-read each item and confirm the pattern or alter the list -- either adding what I had not noticed before, grouping designations which are interchangeable, or removing a designation that in fact was not common. To complete the list of designations and trends, I recorded the working list on a chart which plotted the designations against the archive categories. I listed the categories on the horizontal axis and the designations on the vertical. In this way, I could track repeated patterns, associations between a designation and a category, as well as associations between designations. Also,

I could return to the chart during the writing of the dissertation and check which designations an individual document or category deploys. For purposes of referencing the categories within the dissertation, I recorded each component of the chart as a separate appendix.

The complete list of designations or themes are:

hot, new, or fresh (Appendix E1)

funding (also: percent-for-public art programs, corporate funding, and government funding) (Appendix E2)

city (also: public art is the measure of a city, the city is an art gallery) (Appendix E3)

permanent compared to temporary public art (Appendix E4)

audience (also: plain folk - with or without comparison to art elite, for and against this notion of audience, accessibility) (Appendix E5)

controversy (also: media controversy, NGC functions as a touchstone) (Appendix E6)

taxpayer (both with and without comparison to art elite) (Appendix E7)

monument (also: traditional public art) (Appendix E8)

public space (also: public site, public place) (Appendix E9)

public sphere (also: public domain, public realm, citizen, democracy) (Appendix E10)

identity (also specifics of: gender, sexuality, nationality, race, and diversity) (Appendix E11)

process (also: decision making for public art, policy) (Appendix E12)

in/out gallery (also: streets, real, everyday life, downtown) (Appendix E13)

community (Appendix E14)

transit or advertising space (Appendix E15)

Modernism (also: aesthetics, art experts, nature of art, status of art  
 object) (Appendix E16)  
 political (Appendix E17)

These designations and concerns are not equal. My goal for categorising the archive was not to conflate the documents in order to facilitate a single approach for my treatment of them. I did plot the items in a similar way, however, this charting process is not the end point of my research, but rather an initial facilitating process. My analysis uses each designation as a point of focus and entry into detailed discussion of the items in the archive. I mobilise different points of view and levels of discussion in relation to the discourses, issues, and connections which each designation raises.

Certain designations function in close association with others and raise a fairly contained set of assumptions. For example, theorists and critics overwhelmingly raise the notion of transit and advertising space as a specific form of the inside/outside the gallery comparison. In other words, they do not make associations that are solely specific to assumptions about artists use of advertising and transit space. Thus, I discuss this designation as it operates as a sub-set of the larger, more complex designation of inside/outside the gallery. I analyse this designation with the same sources that I activate for the overall discussion of spatial relations and assumptions about crossing the boundary of the gallery. By comparison, theorists and critics deploy political in relation to its own particular assumptions and in conjunction both with inside/outside the gallery and with controversy. As a result, I give considerable attention to the designation political. I discuss how this designation functions as a distinct category. As well, I mobilise different theoretical sources depending on whether I focus on the

connection of political with inside/outside, with controversy, or how this one designation shifts and operates across the other designations.

The items within the archive provide the impetus and structure for this project and suggest which theoretical sources are necessary for analysis.

Whenever I was unclear about which direction to take or reached an impasse in analysis, I returned to the documents and the chart of designations. I derived the direction for my analysis and my conclusions from individual quotes, combinations of assumptions within one document, patterns which reappear within one category, trends that cross various categories, and variations in those patterns and trends. In short, my goals of methodology and theory building are intricately connected.

## **Section 1    Public as a Discursive Operator**

### **Introduction**

The main goal of Section 1 is to avoid the problems that reoccur when trying to define the various combinations of public and art and yet, to produce a process that can solve the issues which motivate the desire to define these terms in the first place. Towards this end, I have identified four ways that public functions as a discursive operator within discourses related to public and art. These four aspects of public provide the structure for my discussion in this section. In Chapter 2, I provide a map both of the main area in which public and art combine but also of the major stakes involved. Part of the discussion focuses on the pragmatics of public in relation to art by describing the interest artists have in the concept of public art, the relevance of monuments, and the significance of policy (not only for public funding, but for other combinations of public and art as well). The remainder of the chapter outlines the necessity for a complex attention to the ideological stakes involved with discourses addressing public and art. In Chapter 3, I produce a working classification of the levels of order that exist despite the seeming confusion which characterizes the texts within my archive. The first part discusses the prevalence of certain debates which public functions to condense. The majority of this chapter provides a detailed description of the major designations within discourses of public and art as well as the particular significance of each of these.

Section 1 plays a distinctly different role than Section 2. In the following two chapters, I provide a flexible ordering of the myriad of terms and concepts contained within, and arising from, my archive. From this, I can then undertake an in-depth analysis of the concerns, stakes, debates, or designations in Section 2. However, there are two areas in which it is necessary to mobilize a specific

aspect of theory in order to assist in the sorting process and in the explanation of the significance of that category. To address the contradiction that monuments are supposedly irrelevant to contemporary society and yet create often vociferous controversy, I work with Marita Sturken's and with Tony Bennett's adaption of Michel Foucault's notion of technology. Sturken explains how monuments function as technologies that produce cultural identity and cultural memory while Bennett argues that one can understand how museums produce meaning by examining these institutions as technologized environments. From this, I argue that monuments, like other forms of public art, are technologies that produce and reproduce notions of public.

In a similarly embedded approach to theorising one specific concern, I work with Nikolas Rose's development of Foucault's notion of governmentality in order to explain how public art policies, and controversies over public funding of the arts, connect with other combinations of public and art. Rose describes larger shifts in liberal rule whereby the value of professionals and their expertise has lost value in comparison to the average citizen and whereby the "arm's length" form of government has been increasingly replaced by notions of accountability and consumer demand. I describe the connections between Rose's description of large-scale discourses and the specifics of public art policies and arguments about public funding of the arts in order to argue that public involves stakes beyond the confines of the art world. As well, the significance of other public and art designations relates to the pressure on public funding of the arts: attention to these overlapping discourses can enable a more complex understanding of each of the combinations of public and art.

## Chapter 2 The Pragmatics and the Ideological Implications of Public

### 1) Discursive Operator 1: Pragmatic

#### 1.1) Public and art matters for artists

Since 1983, Vancouver has hosted *Artropolis*, a series of large-scale, artist-run exhibitions meant to showcase a wide range of contemporary British Columbian art.<sup>1</sup> The theme of *Artropolis 93* was "Public Art and Art About Public Issues" and included several outdoor locations as well as the main location in the then recently vacated Woodward's Department Store. The exhibition involved two hundred and forty artists whose work was grouped into six sub-themes by the artists and curators who ran the event. In the catalogue, the organisers discuss the choice of the overall theme and sub-themes as well as the significance of these various aspects of public art or art about public issues.

In her catalogue essay "Public Subjects," artist Susan Schuppli addresses the politically engaged focus of the general area of public art projects. She writes

It has been suggested that the public realm is fast disappearing, that "it is naive to assume that the struggle will take place in the streets when there is a television in every home with the power to convince millions". (Alexander Kluge) Yet if walking down the street one day, you stop because something has caught your eye which makes you aware of your environment, then perhaps for a moment that something can also make you think about the everyday world in which you exist. Getting people to think about their social space has revolutionary implications when one begins to consider the potentials for consciousness-raising at a grass roots level. (11)

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<sup>1</sup> The first version in 1983, entitled *The October Show*, arose as a response by artists left out of the Vancouver Art Gallery's retrospective exhibition entitled *Vancouver Art and Artists 1931-1983*. Subsequent exhibitions occurred in different venues in 1984 (*The Warehouse Show*), 1987 (*Artropolis 87*), 1990 (*Artropolis 90*), 1993 (*Artropolis 93*), and 1997 (*Browser*). Planning for *Artropolis 2000* is currently in process.



Schuppli explains that the artists and curators involved in Artropolis and engaged with public art or art that addresses public issues believe there is a role for visual art in political activism around public concepts and practices. Such projects address, and attempt to redress, specific political issues by commenting on existing social and political relations as well as offering, or documenting, alternatives to these.

Schuppli highlights key questions and concerns for the artists, but, due to the brief space allotted in the catalogue, does not analyse these topics in detail. She describes the trend by artists to address the idea of the city and negotiating city streets as a more concrete engagement with the notion of the public sphere and (supposedly) democratic public space. She also describes this interest in the city as part of a critique of commodity culture because the majority of such work addresses advertising and shopping spaces. As well, Schuppli questions if it would ever be possible to know the impact of public work on random spectators. In relation to these two main notions, she outlines the activist potential of such work and stresses the link between politically engaged public art and identity politics.

Schuppli notes that artists frequently use a strategy of "deliberate indifference to personal authorship" (11) as part of the approach to addressing identity in relation to public concerns. Through anonymous or collective tactics, this form of public art tends to create a "public identity" which displaces particularised identity. As a result, the specific location of a given project is key for the production of knowledge about that work. Schuppli argues that this "direct physical relationship and response to its location" is the factor that "can make public art really exciting" (11). She concludes her essay with the fiery and optimistic statement that:

The public domain, despite its paternalistic organization, continues to be an extremely important and viable site for artistic production because it is a place where we are forced to deal with that which is exterior to ourselves, the everyday world and its inhabitants. It is a site of radical possibilities - of protest, imagination, subversion, critique, social interaction and knowledge. (11)

In other words, the "public" part of public art is what matters most in her description of politically engaged public art. Schuppli works from a notion that deployment of, or attention to, public is the central component of the kinds of activist art that she describes. Public has an effect and analysis of such projects should address this.

The Toronto artist group Public Access, as their name indicates, also work from a strategy of prioritizing attention to public in combination with art. Their goals correspond with Schuppli's claims for the possibilities of visual art projects which address public issues. In 1986 the group organised *Some Uncertain Signs* in which twenty-two artists and writers created work for a large electronic sign board in downtown Toronto. In 1988 Public Access initiated the journal *Public*. The first issue is also called "Some Uncertain Signs" and includes the essay "Public Imaginary," written by Mark Lewis, Janine Marchessault, and Andrew Payne on behalf of the collective.<sup>2</sup> The manifesto-style essay specifically addresses the issues raised by the electronic sign project while the journal provides a means to elaborate on the ideas raised by Public Access' work in general. The mandate in the premiere issue states that "*Public* will present visual and written material that broadly addresses the political, aesthetic and theoretical construction of 'the public'" (1).

Lewis, Marchessault, and Payne identify similar interests to those which Schuppli highlights from the *Artropolis* 93 "Public Subjects" projects. The Public

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<sup>2</sup> "Public Imaginary" was published in *Parachute* 48 Sept.-Nov. (1987) 21-25 prior to the inaugural issue of *Public*.

Access members state that a main interest for the group is "a relentless privatization and homogenization of the public sphere" (8). They too specify that their interest in public is mainly the effects of commodity culture in relation to democratic politics and multiple levels of identity. As well, *Some Uncertain Signs* connects with a specific sense of location. Lewis, Marchessault, and Payne explain that the project worked with, and addressed, advertising space and its accompanying technology

because of the stringent aesthetic and ideological strictures that they enforce. The idea was to engage the difficulties inherent in producing any work of art in a commodified culture and specifically the difficulties inherent in producing so-called "public art" when the spaces afforded to such production are privately owned and regulated. (9)

Many of the artists in *Some Uncertain Signs* focus on ideological constructs around gender and public. In addition, the three writers associate the project with feminist critiques of notions of the public and of the binary opposition of public and private in association with masculinity and femininity.

Both the discussion of the "Public Subjects" component of *Artropolis 93* and of "Some Uncertain Signs" demonstrates that there are several related concerns about public-ness that artists are attempting to address. Analysis of such projects needs to engage with the specificity of this work but also create routes which allow attention to the discourses and issues which traverse such projects. The creation of *Public* is a demonstration of the interest in critical writing which focuses on the same interests as the visual art projects: Lewis, Marchessault, and Payne open their essay by stating that Public Access aims to "pose rigorously the question of art's role within [the] reorganization of the social" (3). Furthermore, Schuppli and the Public Access writers touch on a variety of

theoretical domains which are addressed and referenced by these types of events and which need to be investigated in depth.

## **1.2) Monuments matter**

Traditional style public monuments constitute one such pressing area for the combination of public and art. This form of work serves as the comparison for other forms of public-site art. At one level, the general notion of public monuments function as the defining notion of public art and thus other forms can be seen as a response to, or reaction against, this norm. Both theorists and artists believe that viewers' assumptions about art in public spaces are based on past experience with monuments. At another level, a well-known monument can influence a particular city or neighbourhood. For viewers and critics, a despised work can serve as a warning for all sorts of subsequent projects as much as a beloved piece can function as a goal to meet or exceed.

For example, newspaper accounts of public art projects in Toronto frequently cite vociferous public displeasure for the aesthetics of the Airmen's Memorial -- mockingly labelled "Gumby Goes to Heaven" -- as evidence of the need for input in the decision making process about all public art. In "The perils of public art," Kate Taylor describes the work as "the low point" of contemporary outdoor sculpture and states that it was "erected in 1984 with only the most cursory approval process" ("perils" C1). As she rates various other works, Taylor argues there is only one other that "could give Gumby a run for his money in the ugly sculpture sweepstakes" ("perils" C1). Christopher Hume calls the work "an appalling piece" that was installed "without any public consultation whatsoever" ("politics" M12). He too compares the work to various other public art projects in Toronto.

Similarly, Henry Lehman discusses older, traditional monuments as integrated within his overview of Montreal's public art ("On view" J1). As well, *Montreal Gazette* columnist Ann Duncan held a contest in which readers could send in nominations for three categories -- "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly" -- and they could consider "the city's statues, monuments, and sculptures" as all one group in each of the categories ("Readers" I1). In all of these examples, the writers assume that historical and contemporary monuments are relevant to larger discussions of public art and that monuments continue to have relevance within the cityscape and for the people who live in these cities.

Yet, despite the presence of texts which intermingle discussion of monuments and other public art forms, other analysis of public art dismisses the value and relevance of traditional monuments. Critics and theorists love to quote Arlene Raven's opening sentence of her introduction to *Art in the Public Interest*: "Public art isn't a hero on a horse anymore" (1).<sup>3</sup> Writers use this line as part of arguments that monuments are passé. This public art form has supposedly ceased to have significance because such works only reinforce a narrow status quo, they deploy restrictive representational strategies, and they are incapable of addressing the valences of their given location. As a result, this type of art work has little to no affect on public consciousness and people simply pass by monuments without noticing what is being celebrated or memorialised.

Going against the trend of rejecting interest in the tired old monument, Mark Lewis produced a series of projects that address the disgraced monuments from communist Europe. During the early 1990s, Lewis traced busts of Lenin that had been removed from their public locations, documented their fate, and placed

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<sup>3</sup> For example, W.J.T. Mitchell and Virginia Makysomowicz quote this line while Robin Laurence seems to paraphrase it in "Ephemeral works form passing public fancy," *Vancouver Sun* 30 July 1994: D15.

replicas in public locations of cities that had never been communist (such as Oxford and Montreal). Lewis deliberately selects a monument that is out-of-step with its political and social nexus and thus the role and meaning of that work as a public monument is particularly obvious. By re-creating a bust of Lenin as a civic monument in Britain or Canada, he further highlights the continued impact of this form as well as refuting the belief that the meaning of monuments does not shift over time. In an essay on this work, entitled "Some notes on public art: authority and decline," he states that:

The popular conception of public art pivots around a question of responsibility and authority: the linking of the adjective "public" with particular works of art demands of those works and their defenders a certain dedication to established public ideals (for instance: celebration, accessibility, education, permanence). But precisely because works must answer to shifts and conflicts concerning these public ideals, they can provoke in some publics a veritable desire to silence their existence as such. (42)

Lewis goes on to argue that removing the signs of one authority side-steps the whole question of what constitutes "publicity" given that "the so-called public sphere is seen to be imbued with conflicting authorities, each claiming to be commensurate with public ideals" (42).

Lewis uses the example of Lenin's bust as a means to address the whole notion of public monuments. The magnitude of the political shift in Eastern Europe emphasises the significance and affect of this particular image: the displacement of Lenin's disgraced image to sites where viewers ordinarily encounter monuments that function within that context directs attention to assumptions about public monuments. Lewis' project works from the idea that the designation public puts a particular pressure on this form of art work. Critics, artists, and bureaucrats expect such work to represent a whole set of notions which are attached to "public." As Lewis states, with monuments those

expectations relate to notions of authority. Lewis' project also highlights the instability of the permanent quality of traditional monuments. Analysts of public and art often pose the monument in opposition to new types of public art around the supposedly fixed binary of permanent versus temporary. Yet, the struggles over Lenin's bust demonstrates the mutability of a monument. The work might be physically long-lasting (it resists strong weather and random vandalism) but the meaning of monuments alters in relation to political and social changes. Further undermining the permanent effect, unpopular or out-of-step monuments can even be removed.

Sturken provides another perspective on the continued significance of public monuments. In *Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, she focuses on memorials to events which demonstrate conflicts over authority and American national belonging. Sturken primarily examines two memorials that work with, but also greatly alter, the standard representational strategies for monuments: Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington and the *AIDS Memorial Quilt*. As well, she discusses the relations between these monuments and a range of cultural products. Crucially for her thesis, she identifies the specificity and importance of a complex notion of memory that works with the construct of public memorials. She argues that memory establishes life's continuity, gives meaning to the present, and provides the very core of identity. Different than either personal memory or history, it is cultural memory and cultural identity which are marked through public monuments. Sturken states that she uses "the term 'cultural memory' to define memory that is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning" (3).

In her introduction, Sturken explains how she approaches the various cultural products which she analyses throughout the book:

Cultural memory is produced through objects, images, and representations. These are technologies of memory, not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning. . . . The cultural memory of the events I discuss in this book . . . has been produced through a range of cultural products - public art, memorials, docudramas, television images, photographs, advertisements, yellow ribbons, red ribbons, alternative media, activist art, even bodies themselves. These are *technologies* of memory in that they embody and generate memory and are thus implicated in the power dynamics of memory's production. (9-10)

There are two aspects of Sturken's approach that add to my analysis of public and art. First, her adaptation of Foucault's notion of technology in order to understand how public art, memorials, and other visual representation function as technologies helps explain how public operates in relation to art. Sturken specifically addresses memorials as technologies of memory. However, I argue that memorials, monuments, and other public art are also technologies that embody and generate notions of public. These are projects and events through which notions of public are shared, produced and given meaning. Second, rather than addressing separate events and categories, Sturken examines how cultural identity and memory operate across a number of levels of representation. From this attention to discourses and practices which traverse these levels, she then produces a new route for understanding the specific projects. Thus, she creates a similar approach to my focus on the assumptions and designations which cross various combinations of public and art and various levels of art practice and analysis.

Bennett also builds on Foucault's notion of technology to address cultural practices, but he analyses the modern public museum rather than specific



projects. Bennett claims that the structure of modern museums arises from their function as means to regulate populations. He argues that state organised recreation

was planned to take place in a technologized environment - the museum or the concert hall, for example - in which the desired behavioural effect was to result not from contact with 'culture' in itself but rather from the deployment of cultural objects within a specific field of social and technological relations. . . . [The] advocacy of the civilizing virtues of science museums thus rested less on the intrinsic properties of the objects displayed than on the manner of their display within the specialized classificatory environment of the museum. ("Useful Culture" 73-74)

In combination, Bennett's and Sturken's insights provide a perspective from which to analyse how various types of public art produce, and give meaning to, notions of public. Sturken develops an attention to the specific form of monuments, but she also suggests analysis of Bennett's concept of the "field of social and technological relations" which monuments are part of through her recognition of other levels of representation. Bennett describes how the museum environment structures the viewer's experience and the reception of objects displayed in these institutions. Because he emphasises contact with a field of relations over contact with a cultural form itself, his approach is not meant to consider how works produced in relation to such environments might function nor what happens for work outside the walls of the museum. Working with both Bennett's and Sturken's insights to address public art as a technology of public involves the imbrication of the representational strategies and the nexus of relations which includes the level of representation.

Analysing public art in this way supports Lewis' insights concerning the connection between public art and public ideals and authority. Battles over a particular public art work are battles over the authority to share and produce notions of belonging and cultural identity. Sturken's identification of memorials as

technologies of memory is central to her analysis of the production of cultural memory but also of cultural identity. She discusses how individuals interact with cultural products particularly around personal memories of public events such as the Vietnam War. There is an on-going process of individuals re-creating their memories through cultural representations and of the incorporation of personal stories and artefacts into the cultural memory produced by those representations. Thus, memorials are not static and there is a complex effect on public consciousness.

The Vancouver memorial dedicated to the fourteen women massacred at Université de Montréal is an event in which all of the pressures on public monuments are condensed. In 1992 a group of women at North Vancouver's Capilano College announced that they wanted to organise a monument which memorialised the fourteen students but also provided a space for contemplation concerning male violence against women. Over the next five years, a lengthy process ensued in which the organising committee created a proposal competition, chose a winning entry, and raised the full three hundred thousand dollar cost of the entire project (administration, selection, and monument production) solely through private and corporate donations. There are several memorials across Canada marking the December 6, 1989 event and/or violence against women. However, the Vancouver work is the most ambitious piece and the only one that generated a prolonged and heated debate.<sup>4</sup> Over a hundred

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<sup>4</sup> Ottawa women's groups erected a plaque as a memorial to local women and a rough-hewn boulder with a carved dedication as a monument to the Montreal massacre; Winnipeg groups created a memorial garden; Université de Montréal erected a plaque with the fourteen women's names. Elizabeth Aird points out in a *Vancouver Sun* article that there was no fuss in Ottawa and "the police department held four barbecues to raise money for the monument" ("Only one group" B1). Her article prompted several letters to the editor condemning her support, including one from Reform MP Ted White. On the letters page, the *Vancouver Sun* includes a photograph of the plaque at Université de Montréal and the sub-heading: "Reminder of violence: plaque in Montreal, above, is appropriate, but not Vancouver version" (3 Aug. 1993 A10).

news items, both local and national, commented on the piece over the five year period prior to its 1997 unveiling.<sup>5</sup>

The main argument focused on the exact wording for the monument (which was proposed before the selection of the actual work). The dedication reads:

The fourteen women named here were murdered December 6, 1989, University of Montreal. We, their sisters and brothers, remember and work for a better world. In memory and in grief for all the women murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours.<sup>6</sup>

A Reform MP, several journalists, and numerous letters to newspapers all took umbrage specifically with the words "women murdered by men." They complained that this phrasing is anti-male and an example of female sexism because it assumes that all men are murderers.<sup>7</sup>

Another major strand of critique was the claim that it is inappropriate for a feminist project to replicate the traditional, permanent monument form. This objection went hand-in-hand with the suggestion that the money would be better spent on direct aid services to solve social problems. For example, Stephen Hume opens his article on the monument debate and the issue of male violence against women with: "While the intellectuals, experts and bureaucrats wrangle

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Appendix C3. I will address the controversy of this project in detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup> The initial proposed dedication text read "The fourteen women named here were murdered December 6, 1989, University of Montreal. In memory and in grief for all the women murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours. We, their sisters and brothers, remember and work for a better world." In the process of passing the monument proposal, including the dedication, with the Vancouver Parks Board, the committee altered the order of lines to reduce the emphasis on the controversial sentence and thereby successfully obtain approval.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Morton describes Reform MP Ted White's objections and calls the monument "anti-male" (B10); Jeani Read argues that "If you are a man, you will really feel bad ... or worse: Like a murderer" (A14); and Trevor Lautens is much quoted for his statement that "The monument's purpose is not to honor slain women but to dishonor living men" and described the organising committee as "female sexists" (A15).

over words appropriate to monuments to female victims of male violence, let's go visit the front lines" (A17). He then describes a visit to a shelter for battered women and cites plentiful statistics on various kinds of violence. He implies that the existence of, or discussion about, a mere monument is not nearly as important as the reality of women who have experienced violence or those working to help them. Another *Vancouver Sun* article features the opposition by a prisoners' rights activist who claims that "Far more urgent is the need to deflect possible future offenders into positive, constructive projects, than to build memorials to their likely victims" (Farrow A6). She advocates funding community centres for young people.

Both lines of critique assume that monuments affect neither social and political relations nor public experience and opinion. Yet, standing in stark contradiction to these claims, these critiques of the inherently banal and uninteresting form of a monument were expressed as part of a heated, five year long debate over a particular memorial. In fact, the tempest focused only on the idea of the memorial as this debate preceded the construction of the actual work. The contradiction and the level of interest sparks the question: Why was this specific project so contentious when permanent, public monuments are supposed to be passé?

The initial goals of the organising committee, as well as the representational strategies which the completed monument deploys, indicate a route for analysing how public features in the significance of the work and in producing fuel to keep the debate running. Kelly Philips and Cate Jones, two members of the committee, wrote an article for *The Vancouver Sun* in order to respond to the fuss. They expressly address the notion that a monument is necessarily insignificant compared to the 'real' issues and facts and, as such, it is

a waste of either public funds or donations that could potentially go elsewhere.

Philips and Jones state that:

Through a national competition, we will seek a monument design that is conceptually new, a "living" monument with which the public can interact in a meaningful way. Public art can be a powerful emotional force. The Vietnam War Memorial [sic] in Washington has helped veterans heal from war trauma and has brought home to the public the huge scale of loss involved in that conflict. (A11)

In other words, the monument committee sought a work which overtly aims to work with the quality of monuments that Sturken describes. Their ambition was to create a memorial designed to encourage the circulation between personal experience of violence against women and cultural knowledge and representation of that violence. They wanted both a site to which individuals could go for private grief and mourning and a site that comments on the systematic continuation of such events. From this perspective, rather than being inappropriate, the construct of a traditional monument potentially aligns rather well with feminist goals given that Sturken's insights elaborate on the feminist slogan "the personal is political."

The completed installation of the winning entry, *Marker of Change*, by Toronto silversmith Beth Alber deploys the representational strategies of a monument to construct a feminist memorial. Alber subtly alters the components of a traditional memorial to work with both the specific subject of the fourteen massacred women and also with the larger notion of a site for collective grief. The piece consists of fourteen benches made of warm, pink, construction-grade Québec granite that are arranged within a three hundred foot circle. The benches are five-and-a-half feet long and each bears the name of one of the students on its inner face. As well, the centres of the top faces have a shallow, rough indentation which fill with Vancouver's copious rain. The much discussed

dedication appears on the outside face of seven of the benches (with the other seven left blank). A continuous ring of paving bricks, inscribed with personal dedications and contributors' names, forms a second, outer circle.<sup>8</sup>

Granite, as a common memorial medium, denotes that *Marker of Change* is a permanent, public monument. However, the construction-grade comments on the ordinary moment in which the murders occurred as well as the everyday repetition of violence against women. The fourteen names singled out inside the benches as well as the dedication, dates, descriptive text, and donors all further indicate the nature and role of this installation. At the same time, Alber's design works with the organising committee's driving goal that this memorial should emphasise an active function. Instead of the much criticised monument style of plopping a sculpture into a park, the arrangement of the fourteen granite benches creates the potential for a gathering place. The circular plan evokes a feminist style of meeting as well as rituals for healing. The indentations for rain water symbolise vessels to collect tears. They will fill, dry out, and refill repeatedly over time. The dimensions and horizontal orientation of the benches reference the fallen bodies, yet the size and arrangement of the works also play with the standard presence of benches in parks and other public spaces. *Marker of Change* invites visitors to sit and to look around at the rest of the site whether or not they deliberately sought out this monument as a place of contemplation.

The committee worked hard to justify, fund, and produce the monument out of a conviction that such a work does affect public consciousness. The opposition to this work derives neither from the general notion that public art sparks a fuss nor from the overly specific notion of objections to a section of the dedication panel. The contentious quality, and the activist effect, of *Marker of*

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<sup>8</sup> There is also an explanatory plaque outside the ring. The dedication appears in seven languages, one each per inscribed bench.

*Change* relates to how monuments function as a technology of public and the authority invested in and produced by this form. Lewis identifies that the assumed relation to "public ideals" can provoke the desire to silence or remove public works. In his case, he addresses the image of past political leaders, but his point extends to preventing the creation of a feminist memorial which would highlight the exclusions within the majority of such works.

Furthermore, far from being intrinsically passé or ineffective, *Marker of Change* demonstrates the potential to work with the representational strategies and authority of a public monument. The memorial functions as a site through which gendered notions of public are shared, produced, and given meaning. For example, *Marker of Change* will now serve as the meeting point for any rallies or marches concerning violence against women such as on December 6th or ad hoc responses to future events. As well, immediately after the opening ceremony, television news used the image of the memorial as their visual to accompany stories on December 6th ceremonies.

### 1.3) Policy matters

Civic public art policy is another significant area for the combination of public and art. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, most major cities in Canada began creating public art programs that manage existing civic art, regulate new civic production, and require private developers to produce public art.<sup>9</sup> At one level, supporters claim that these programs bring strong changes to the whole area of art practice, particularly public art production. Susan Walker states that "Time was when artists worked in studios, showed their work at a private gallery

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<sup>9</sup> Vancouver's Special Council Committee on the Arts cites that programs had been created, or were in process, in Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Metro Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax (Vancouver, *Art in Public* 2).

or artist-run space and got a little ink in obscure art magazines. For many artists, all that changed with the advent of public art" (J10). She then goes on to present this "advent" as the creation of the Toronto Public Art Commission in 1986. In her zeal to identify the importance of this policy initiative, she manages to use the Modernist practice of individual artists working in their private studios to erase the long and varied history of art production as well as to ignore every religious, civic, military, or commercial art object ever placed in an area not designated a gallery.

Other art theorists and critics reach less ludicrous conclusions and explain the recent appearance of civic programs as yet more evidence of the new found significance of public art. For example, Chris Dafoe opens an article on the creation of Vancouver's program with the claim that "these days, public art is a hot topic in Vancouver" ("Going public" E2). He also asserts that debates about public art have been "encouraged by a series of changes in art policy, including the creation of a public-art committee three years ago." In short, discussions which primarily focus on civic policies frequently conflate policy with the whole area of public art. Dafoe backs up his claim to the currency of public art by aligning the new program with *Artropolis 93*, the controversy over the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, and the Vancouver Art Gallery's casebook on public art in the city. In this way, theorists and critics explain the rash of new civic policy in terms of art debates and issues alone rather than considering their possible connection to other trends.

Supporters of civic programs commonly argue that the attention to the selection process is the strongest aspect of these new entities. In "The Politics of Public Art," Christopher Hume discusses public art in Toronto, and compares controversies over such work to the infamous case of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*



in New York.<sup>10</sup> Hume argues that "As much as anything, the sorry tale of *Tilted Arc* underlines the importance of the selection process. In some respects, *how* we choose is more significant than *what* we choose" ("politics" M12). Kate Taylor also argues that the successes and failures in the recent history of Toronto's public art production indicate that the greatest "peril" for public art is failure to address approval and selection processes ("perils" C1). In this way, advocates of civic programs identify the prevention of controversy as the primary role and effect of such policy. They equate negative responses to specific examples of public art with the time before the creation of the civic program which they address. They then conclude that a visibly inclusive process results in successful public art production. Such approaches do not directly compare the new civic programs to other existing art policy and funding in Canada nor to larger social trends. Instead, they treat the new entities as an obvious outcome of the tumultuous quality of public art.

The structure of, and justification for, Vancouver's public art program suggests the need to reconsider analysis of these civic policies and their relationship to the area of public and art.<sup>11</sup> In 1990, the Vancouver City Council instituted a program for civic and private development of public art. As well, it adopted an official procedure for accepting and managing gifts of public art. The final version of the program arose from a four year process in which staff and advisory groups studied Vancouver's specific context and programs in other cities in Canada and the United States (Toronto, Portland, Seattle, and Dallas).

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<sup>10</sup> In 1989, employees at the Federal Plaza in Manhattan successfully campaigned to have *Tilted Arc* (a public sculpture consisting of a 120 foot by 12 foot curved, leaning wall) removed from the court yard. The hearing to decide the work's fate and the decision to remove it generated a vast amount of academic and news interest.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to Appendix D5.

In the final report, the special council committee on the arts detailed its recommendations and the reasons supporting this proposal. Its brief, entitled *Art in Public Places Progress Report*, formed the basis of the Vancouver framework. The council committee, under the heading "Public Art Issues & Benefits," describes the terrain of "The 'New' Public Art" in relation to civic policy concerns:

Conceptions of public art have changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Artists and architects, designers and developers, city leaders and social planners are giving shape to a "new" public art, creating work that is site specific, environmentally integrated, and meaningful to its community. . . . Today, good public art is expected to be more than a mere set of formal responses to a site. It is seen as a social art with a responsibility to stimulate a multiplicity of levels of response: physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, critical -- responses that our urban environments more and more frequently deny. The best works are therefore those that acknowledge that the place is more important than the object. The initial impact of such work upon its audience is not as important as the unfolding that takes place over time. . . . There must be appropriate public process to foster such public art. (*Art in Public 2*)

In short, the council committee identifies the main issues and concerns as: 1) there are new, pressing factors involved with public art; 2) the specific site of public art, and the work's interaction with that site, are paramount; 3) public art is associated with social issues; and 4) a new policy framework is necessary to address and produce public art in relation to these three key points.

The first point, that conceptions of public art have radically altered during the preceding ten years, echoes a dominant notion in discussions of public art. The council committee repeats the prevailing assertion that artists, and others involved with such work, produced fundamentally different types of public art from the 1980s onwards. As well, they suggest that attitudes towards this work, from the people who make, fund, or see it, have significantly shifted. As is the trend when making this assertion, the report does not propose to address why such a change has occurred nor delineate what exactly is the change. Furthermore, the

change seems primarily located within the work itself. In this case, it is the relation of public art to site that is new.

The creation of a Vancouver public art program, the attention to selection process within this program, and the constitution of the selection committees, all point to another route for understanding the quality of the shift in conceptions of public art and the new pressure on such work. Vancouver did not have a public art program at all prior to 1990. There was no process for giving works to the city nor regulations concerning private developers funding and erecting public art projects on their property. In a personal interview, Bryan Newson, the Public Art Program Manager, explains that previously, individual artists or sponsors would essentially connect with one person at City Hall or on the Parks Board and then independently install a work. In the late 1980s, the combination of the legacy of Expo 86 (art works commissioned for Vancouver's Expo which artists or sponsors wished to donate to the city) and the emergence of complaints about over-development of public parks prompted the creation of a public art policy.

Vancouver fits within a Canadian pattern -- most of the major cities instituted or investigated such programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Rather than seeing this development as the product of the tumultuous nature of public art, I argue that this trend relates to larger shifts in governmentality and social organisation. The pressures which art theorists and critics treat as specific to civic public art programs and the area of public and art can be seen as connected to shifts in "formulas of rule."

In "Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism," Rose details trends which characterise alterations in liberal democracies across several different areas. He describes the association of early twentieth century liberalism and "the state of welfare." Rose asserts that in this form, "the truth claims of expertise" were crucial in governmental strategies because "through the powers

of truth, distant events and persons could be governed 'at arms length': political rule would not itself set out the norms of individual conduct, but would install and empower a variety of 'professionals' who would, investing them with authority to act as experts in the devices of social rule" (285). The Canadian "arm's-length" arts funding framework fits within the rationality of rule and strategies which Rose describes. For example, the staff of the Canada Council or the Saskatchewan Arts Board consists of arts professionals who arrange for other arts professionals to serve on juries that determine the allocation of funds and the federal or provincial government invests these professionals with authority.

The focus of Rose's argument is that at the end of the twentieth century, this formula of rule has changed fundamentally. He argues that

A new formula of rule is taking shape, one that we can perhaps best term 'advanced liberal'. Advanced liberal rule depends upon expertise in a different way, and articulates experts differently into the apparatus of rule. It does not seek to govern through 'society', but through the regulated choices of individual citizens. And it seeks to detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule, relocating experts within a market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand. (285)

This particular shift, around the authority of expertise in relation to government, describes the character of various levels of tension and change within combinations of public and art. The Canadian "arm's-length" funding system has been attacked throughout the 1990s in areas such as budget cuts to the Canada Council, objections to acquisitions by the National Gallery of Canada, and debates over individual grants to artists. Orchestrators of these attacks reproduce discourses which transcend the Canadian situation and the art realm: all of these cases repeat the refrain of citizen's opinions, accountability to taxpayers, or the need for galleries to respect consumer demands from visitors as well as disputing the credibility or value of arts professionals. Art experts

inadequately respond by attempting to defend their authority as professionals and the superiority of their truth claims. In short, those within the arts, continue to believe that debates about public and art are located only within the arts realm and do not relate to larger social and political issues. Certainly there is specificity to this domain, but there are also connections to governmental practices.<sup>12</sup>

In the particular case of public art within Canada, the shift in the value and role of expertise within governmental strategies provides a route for understanding the character of the novelty of public art practice and reception. There is a direct contradiction between the older form of "arm's-length" bodies and the new civic public art programs. This tension is evident in the recommendations by the Vancouver council committee concerning the structure for decision making processes by a public art program. The committee's primary proposal was that the city create a public art advisory board. It defines the board as "a citizen's committee, made up of art professionals and other experts as necessary" and argues that the committee had already acted in this capacity because it "functioned as a citizen's public art advisory board" (*Art in Public 3*). Its second proposal was the creation of "objective art selection and removal processes." It defines such a process as "professional, arm's-length art/artist selection and removal procedures which provide for community consultation" (*Art in Public 4*).<sup>13</sup>

Rather than looking for qualities inherent to public art as the sole source of the pressure on such work, the designations which the advisory committee deploys indicate a larger trend that includes the new desire to create civic public

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<sup>12</sup> Refer to Appendix E2.

<sup>13</sup> The final public art committee by-law enacted these proposals and created a committee consisting of two artists, three other art professionals, two urban designers, one developer and "a member of the community" ( *Vancouver, By-law No. 6870 3*).

art programs. The report describes "art professionals" and "citizens" as the two main players in the public art decision making process. It is art professionals and citizens who would have concerns about public art and would also be the appropriate representatives on a jury that selects new work. These are the two designations which are in direct conflict in the different formulas of liberal rule, yet the committee intermingles them.

From this perspective, the reasoning for the strong attention to a policy process for public art, and the creation of new public art programs, becomes clear. When expertise, such as that of artists or art critics, had greater value, Vancouver did not need a public art program. The selection by an artist or art connoisseur of a given sculpture for a public park either did not create argument from 'the man on the street' or such a complaint was not given weight at a city council meeting, in the newspaper, or by a politician. However, with the shift to citizen's opinion, the value of an average park visitor's truth claim shifts in comparison to an art professional's. At one level, the call to create a public art program is a move to maintain authority for art professionals within the production and maintenance of civic public art. The initial advisory committee consisted of people who want to see civic public art created in the future. Dafoe states that "The city assembled a blue-ribbon committee - among the participants were curators [sic] Doris Shadbolt, artist Al McWilliam and architect Jeffrey Massey" ("Going public" E2). With the move away from valuing all expertise, the program proposed in their report has to include business interests -- the developers who must allot a portion of their budget to public art -- and "citizens" or "members of the community" (as if artists and curators were not also citizens or members of the community).

In other words, a major pressure on, and shift in conceptions about, public art relates to this tension between contradictory strategies of liberal rule that is

built into the composition of the public art committee. The council committee recognised that artists and other art professionals need to consider the undermining of their position and the replacement of attention to the average citizen. The proposal to create a public art program, with a public art committee that selects juries for each competition, aims to support a continued place for art expertise within the production of civic public art. At some moments, the move seems to work. For example, the title of a *Globe and Mail* article sums up the shift: "Art experts judged not expert enough" (McInnes C2). The writer describes the creation of the Toronto Public Art Commission and poses public art programs as a cure for the control of civic art by elitist art experts. He argues that the new policy framework will expand the variety of Toronto's art because this process will put an end to selections by donors or artists alone and the resulting public outcry against their unpopular choices (such as the much reviled "Gumby"). McInnes quotes (former) Mayor Arthur Eggleton's comment in support of the new commission: "There needs to be some give and take in the process so that it's not always a small, select group of people who are making their judgement supreme and we get one kind of art" (C2).

Writers such as McInnes represent public art programs as a move away from the art mafia. However, other writers argue that there is a close alignment between the two. For example, Bronwyn Drainie writes a celebratory newspaper article concerning artist Lea Vivot and her public sculptures by setting Vivot in comparison to a scathing description of both art experts and civic art policies. Vivot is the artist responsible for placing realistic, figurative bronze sculptures of pubescent, heterosexual couples in Ottawa and Montreal and similar work in Toronto without receiving a commission nor permission from the cities for these works. In the article, entitled "An artistic guerrilla strikes at night and John Q. Public loves it," Drainie quotes art critic John Bentley Mays opinion that Vivot's

work is "sentimental shlock," "inept," and "downright corny" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). In fervent opposition, Drainie describes Vivot as "the Zorro of Canadian public art" because the artist is "airily defiant of planning rules, zoning by-laws, public art competitions and other bureaucratic hurdles that might get in the way of her communing with her public" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). Drainie claims that there has been no public outcry against the works because "they are accessible and traditional and ordinary people like them" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). She then further demonstrates the popular appeal of Vivot's sculptures by arguing that neither Vivot's work nor the happy acceptance of it "sits well with art critics . . . or with art bureaucrats, who do slow burns when she makes fun of their sober, responsible processes for choosing and installing public art in Canada" ("artistic guerrilla" C1).

Drainie concludes her piece with the argument that public art processes tend to favour the view of the "arts establishment" over the "general public" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). She cites the case of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington which has received critical acclaim for its "esthetic and emotional success" but which "the grunts from the jungles of Vietnam" disliked ("artistic guerrilla" C1). In terms of civic public art programs, Drainie's article suggests that without such programs, the opinion of "John Q. Public" would easily win over the wishes of art professionals. Core to Drainie's anti-art world suspicion of public art programs is the belief that such policy plays an active role in the kind of work produced and in relation to the authority of art professionals. Some art world proponents, such as Dafoe, Hume, and Taylor, share this assumption of the productive effect of civic policy which prompts them to celebrate newly formed programs.

Yet, in contradiction with this position, other art professionals deride public art programs as structures which ensure the continued production of traditional, banal public work. In an article discussing a social activist billboard art project,



published in *Parallélogramme*, Ray Cronin opposes his positive review of the billboards to "the consensus model of art in public plazas" (41-42). In the same vein of complaint, art critic Henry Lehman argues that Montreal work produced under the one-per-cent program results in lack lustre public art. He claims that the "low level of risk-taking . . . [is] due in part to the way one-per-cent artists are selected. The decisions are made by committee, and consensus often guarantees mediocrity" ("Art and architecture" 14). Similarly, Michael Scott, an art critic for *The Vancouver Sun*, claims that "Vancouver's namby-pamby public art disappears into the sidewalks" ("Critical art" C7).

In short, public art programs appear to receive a significant level of attention within discussions of public art. Critics pose these policies as a means to produce new kinds of work, a sign that public art is hot, an extension of art world control of civic spaces, or a stifling force that ensures bland conformity amongst public sculptures and installations. These discussions tend to focus on the process of decision making as the defining component of public art programs and to argue either for or against the effect of this process. As well, analysts agree that there is a great deal of pressure around civic policy, but they do not address the specific quality of the changes in these policies. Art theory avoids both the connection between the structure of public art programs and larger trends in social organisation as well as the differences between these policies and the preceding forms of Canadian art funding.

Attention to the decision making processes touches on the issue of authority and expertise. Those relations need further investigation, particularly in combination with other stakes involved with public art or the combination of public and art. There is a connection between the conflicts over authority in terms of the administration of public art projects and the tension around public art and monuments as technologies of public which produce cultural identity and

belonging. The Vancouver council committee suggests this second aspect in its proposed mission statement for the Vancouver public art program:

We believe that public art must be seen as part of our continuing and evolving culture, each work relating to the cultural, historical, social or political dimensions of its particular site, however complex those dimensions may be; and giving expression in intelligible and symbolic form to our experience as members of an urban public society. (*Art in Public*, Appendix A 2)

The vitriolic opposition to *Marker of Change* indicates that the "our" in this statement cannot be taken for granted. Analysis of the policies and the various kinds of public art projects need to address the imbrication of cultural identity and civic public art which the advisory committee describes.

## 2) Discursive Operator 2: Ideological

In discussions of various combinations of public and art, public can function ideologically.<sup>14</sup> Writers frequently claim to address public when actually they are denoting something else. This pattern increases the slipperiness of designations involving public and art because it is difficult to sort through the conflations and condensations in order to identify what exactly is at stake in a given debate or event. Art theorists and critics tend to provide overly general descriptions of the significance of public and art or of a particular project. They commonly assert that different designations of public and art are hot, cause controversy, or that there is change within this terrain. However, they take the projects themselves, or publications and discussions about art projects, as the demonstration of these assertions and do not question the assumptions which support these claims. There needs to be attention to the specifics of these

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<sup>14</sup> By ideology, I mean a system of political and social beliefs that does involve power relations because this system can be enacted.

pressures, interests, and shifts. Addressing the ideological aspect of public as a discursive operator allows analysis of the stakes involved across the terrain of public and art.

At some points, discussions acknowledge that public and art involve a sense of belonging and cultural identity. In particular, critics identify this notion in relation to ideas about the city. Overviews of a city's public art commonly frame the work as an indicator of the quality and value of that city. The title of Lehman's assessment of the first decade of percent-for-art in Montreal sums up this notion: "If public art is the measure of a society's greatness, what does Montreal's new art suggest about our city" (I2). However, in the article itself, Lehman does not follow through on notions of identity or belonging. He reviews the aesthetics of certain works, their aesthetic relationship to their physical location, and concludes that they lack "creative punch." In another example, the *Globe and Mail* published a trio of articles under the title "A gender gap cast in stone" (Dafoe, Fillion and Canadian Press C11). The writers each discuss the prevalence of monuments to men, and almost total lack of public images of women, in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Again, the articles do not discuss why this matters and thereby cannot push an analysis of cultural identity.

Articles that aim to address such stakes tend to identify these as concerns only related to temporary, activist events and not monuments or civic public art. Ann Rosenberg compares Vancouver to the signature public art of Florence and London and concludes that "it's a city of plop art" ("Plop art" D10). She then proposes that the newly created civic program will lead to "improved standards." This vague label seems only to refer to aesthetic qualities, particularly the fit of art work and physical site. In the second half of the article, she discusses *Out of Place*, a project by the Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Art, and mentions the connection of a sense of place and "ethnic background, sexual

preference" and "religion" -- concerns which she does not connect to permanent forms of work and the standards for these.

At other moments, discussions dismiss the particular significance of public and art projects or debates. Writers commonly assert that the public in public art inevitably results in controversy.<sup>14</sup> The implication is that it does not matter which specific public issue a project addresses because it is the general notion of public that causes the interest and arguments. Several articles on the Vancouver Women's Monument Project repeat this position. When Dafoe makes the claim that public art is a hot topic in Vancouver, he cites the creation of the public art program, the decision by *Artropolis 93* organisers to address "public art," and the Vancouver Art Gallery's publication of a casebook on public art. As well, he states that "one of the fiercest and most broadly joined artistic debates in the city arose over a proposed memorial to the 14 women murdered in Montreal" ("Going public" E2). Thus, he locates the controversy over the Vancouver Women's Monument Project as an "artistic" debate caused by combining art with public.

Dafoe underscores this view by stating that:

Debates about public art are, of course, a recurring event in cities. With a few exceptions - the National Gallery's purchase of *Voice of Fire* and *No. 16*, for example - most people don't spare a thought for what happens behind the doors of art galleries. Put something up in a plaza or a park and everyone has an opinion. ("Going public" E2)

The addition of "of course," combined with placing the controversy over the project as solely within artistic jurisdiction, functions to exclude the specific valences of this debate and to frame this debate as not particularly meaningful. The feminist subject of the monument, and the relation between gendered cultural identity and the controversy, becomes incidental because any monument,

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<sup>14</sup> Refer to Appendix E6.

concerning any issue, would cause debate simply by being an example of public art. In this way, the use of public masks the identity stakes involved with both the memorial itself and the discussion around that memorial.

In "Strategies of Public Address: Which Media, Which Publics," Douglas Crimp addresses the notion of public in relation to work by gay artists and the lack of public voice for gay men. The paper is part of an arranged panel in which Crimp and two artists (Barbara Kruger and Krzysztof Wodiczko) discuss different views on the topic of strategies for addressing the public.<sup>15</sup> Crimp focuses on the relation of gay identity to a notion of public in order to develop analysis of how work by gay artists relates to gay viewers and to demonstrate his larger point that artists and theorists need to focus on the stakes in discussions of public and art. He opens his paper by stating that there is an assumption within art discussions that "we know what we are strategizing about, what we want to address to *the* or a public with this or that medium" (31). He argues that "we have to ask, before we ask anything else, what exactly is at stake?" (31).

Part of the same series of arranged panels, Craig Owens addresses "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art." Owens describes a controversy over the purchase of a Vincent Van Gogh painting in which both sides of the debate purport to speak for "the public." He states that this example demonstrates "how malleable the concept of the public can be" (18). The incident indicates that "'the public' is a discursive formation susceptible to appropriation by the most diverse - indeed, opposed - ideological interests; and that it has little to do with actually existing publics or constituencies" (18). Furthermore, he

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<sup>15</sup> The panel is part of the New York based DIA foundation's *Discussions in Contemporary Culture* series. Under the heading "The Cultural Public Sphere", the DIA foundation brought artists and theorists together for panels and then published the conference proceedings. Thus, Crimp is partly responding to the immediate context of the previous panel and the members of his panel and its audience.

concludes his paper with the argument that "The question of who is to define, manipulate and profit from 'the public' is . . . the central issue of any discussion of the public function of art today" (23).

Owens' and Crimp's arguments are an exception within art theory. As Crimp identifies at the time, but still holds true in 1998, art theorists tend to take the notion of public for granted and these presumptions are frequently at the expense of identity stakes involved in the work. As well, Owens makes a strong point with his attention to the competition around the use of public. However, rather than Owens' description of public as a discursive formation which is susceptible to appropriation, I argue that public, in combination with art, is a discursive operator which is a site of struggle between differing ideological interests. In Dafoe's case, the designation public art functions to erase gender from his conclusions about the Vancouver Women's Monument Project. For the project committee, the proposal and production of a public art project functions to represent a gendered cultural identity. From this perspective, the public of public art very much matters as does the possibility of sharing and producing a particular cultural identity. Controversies over public and art do not just randomly happen and nor do differing ideological interests pick designations which combine public and art by chance. The deployment of public in combination with art can either mask or validate gender and other identity issues within art production, circulation, and reception.

In "Situating Art Within Existing Cultural Events: A Queer Morphology," Wayne Baerwaldt discusses "Homophobia is Killing Us," a billboard project by Winnipeg collective Average Good Looks. Baerwaldt explains that in response to a series of gay bashings and a murder in Winnipeg, a group of artists came together and produced a billboard which included the image of a man's head resting on another man's bare chest, the text "Homophobia is killing us" and a

phone number. The group set up an answering machine for the number, at the artist-run centre Plug-In, and contacted the press in order to increase awareness of their project and to present the phone responses and vandalism prompted by the work.

Baerwaldt argues that "Not unlike the overtly political activities of New York-based ACT UP, Average Good Looks and Plug-In quickly placed the mistreatment of a purposely ignored and openly denounced minority on a very public agenda" (194). Throughout the article, Baerwaldt repeatedly uses the designation public in combination with a variety of terms ("public forum," "public incidents," "public agenda," "public representation," and "public spectacle"). He emphasises that the artists deliberately chose the form of their project in order to encourage "serious public discussion about homophobia" (191). Furthermore, he twice asserts that the project took place "outside the white cube of the art gallery" (192, 194) thereby attempting to place the debate within a public terrain, not an artistic one. In short, Baerwaldt, whose article clearly supports Average Good Looks' goals, deploys public in combination with this art project in order to demonstrate the importance of a project which addresses societal indifference to gay experience.

Similar to Baerwaldt's strategy, but with a very different ideological interest, Drainie uses the designation public to validate Lea Vivot's monuments to normative heterosexuality. In "An artistic guerrilla strikes at night and John Q. Public loves it," Drainie does not directly address the cultural identity embodied in Vivot's sculpture. Instead, she claims that "the public" loves Vivot's work because it is figurative sculpture. Her main example is "The Secret Bench" which she describes as depicting "a boy and girl coyly flirting on a park bench" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). Drainie then quotes an employee of the National Library in Ottawa (which overlooks this work) in order to demonstrate the happy acceptance of the

smooching teens: "It's humanized the library. Wedding parties often come here to have pictures taken on the library staircase, but now they pose outside on the bench as well" ("artistic guerrilla" C1). Drainie never addresses the connection between the supposed lack of "public hue and cry" against Vivot's work and the content of that work. From her position, the designation public should easily align with heterosexual sentimentality and marriage. Her repeated description of the audience, context and support for this work as "the public" functions to maintain that alignment.

If late one night Lea Vivot decided to drop off realistic sculptures of flirtatious lesbians, I doubt that Drainie would sing her praises for defying bureaucratic regulations and communing with her public. Drainie purports that it is the aesthetic quality of the work which renders them accessible and representative of the general public, but work such as "Homophobia is Killing Us" also use realistic images. At the same time Drainie uses public to convey the acceptability of Vivot's work, Baerwaldt deploys various combinations of public in order to describe the activist goals and demonstrate the significance of the Average Good Looks project. Both take the designation public for granted, as something that can ground and define their points, rather than as a site of conflict and tension. In order to support art projects which work with larger movements for social change, art theory needs to address the various combinations of public and art as well as their associated designations and assumptions. Such analysis involves identifying the patterns and regularities within combinations of public and art which traverse various levels of texts that support social change and those that work against this.



## **Chapter 3    Cipher for Debates and the Particular Significance of Public**

### **1) Discursive Operator 3: Cipher for debates**

Discussions of the specific designation public art share either an inability to clearly delineate what exactly constitutes public art or an admission that public art is seemingly impossible to define. Some writers mark the boundaries of public art in terms of the objects which fit this category. In a presentation of her reader's opinions of Montreal's public art, Ann Duncan describes public art as "the city's statues, monuments and sculptures" ("Readers rate" I1). Similarly, John Bentley Mays uses the same object-based criteria in his own rating of Toronto's work, but adds qualifiers to his definitive types: The first type is common in the modern city -- "the Big Sculpture on the Plaza;" the second type provides a new spin on the "most venerable" kind of public art -- "the Updated Monument;" the third is "privately owned and inside private walls, but readily accessible to the public" -- the "Not Exactly Public Sculpture;" and the fourth is "more radical than the other sorts" and "almost invisible" (it does not receive a label) ("In the spring" C5).

Another approach to the problem of definitions aims to leave the category as open as possible. The result is often so fluid that it ceases to function as a description. The by-law to create the advisory body for Vancouver's public art program states that public art "shall include but not be limited to any and all art forms, whether temporary, freestanding, incorporated with other forms of development, or otherwise, which the Committee in its collective judgement determines to be public art" (Vancouver, *By-law 1*). As well, the Vancouver Public Art Program's *Manager's Report* defines public art as "temporary or permanent art work in public places which addresses and enhances the public uses and character of the site, and which qualifies as public art in the opinion of

the public art advisory group" (Vancouver, *Manager's Report* 3). Essentially, as far as Vancouver's city council is concerned, public art is what the public art committee says is public art.

In his article on the program, Dafoe describes the reasoning behind this approach. He states that Vancouver "has tried to avoid defining public art too narrowly and [Public Art Program Manager] Newson hopes the city's artistic community will respond with [a] wide range of public voices" ("Going public" E2). From a bureaucratic perspective, definitions of public art pose the threat of producing too rigid a category that only describes well-established approaches and might close off types of projects that the committee had not considered during the creation of the policy.<sup>1</sup> In a newspaper article on the program, Wendy McLellan quotes Newson's statement that "Public art doesn't always mean a statue in a park" (E13). In other words, the civic policy documents work from the assumption that the program needs to broaden the general notion of public art. However, the inability of the program to define public art, the subject that it governs, indicates the complexity of the designation.

Art theorists identify that definitions of public art tend to be too vague, too confusing or too simple. In particular, editors of anthologies on public art dedicate a portion of their introduction to the difficulty of marking the territory of what should, and should not, be included as part of the discussion. One approach involves separating public art into two periods: the new (political and activist) variety and the old (monument and Modernist sculpture) variety. In this way, they differentiate by type of object, but also by what the new type supposedly does. This approach provides the title for, and a main thread through, the anthology

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<sup>1</sup> In my personal interview with Newson, we discussed the difficulty in defining the very area over which he has jurisdiction in Vancouver and he argued that the needs from a policy perspective can be quite specific.

*Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art.* In the introduction, editor Suzanne Lacy states that her focus is a new form of public art activity covering the preceding thirty years. She defines the area as follows:

We might describe this as 'new genre public art,' to distinguish it in both form and intention from what has been called 'public art' - a term used for the past twenty-five years to describe sculpture and installations sited in public places. Unlike much of what has heretofore been called public art, new genre public art - visual art that uses both traditional and nontraditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly related to their lives - is based on engagement. (19)

Lacy's aim is to complicate the definition based only on object type by including the variation in approaches to production and reception of public art. She wants to address factors such as the political intent, the working process and the representational strategies within notions of public art. However, the rather vague notions of "traditional and nontraditional media" as well as "engagement" fail to clarify a definition of public art. Furthermore, the supposedly new characteristics could equally apply to regular "public art."

Other theorists directly identify that public art is characterised by a mess of definitions and that they have difficulty figuring out what to do about this. Virginia Maksymowicz introduces her article "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art" by stating that in an earlier article she had "struggled with the definition of public art" (147). She turned to a dictionary and came to the conclusion that "if the term 'public' is applied to art . . . it should consequently imply a kind of artmaking that involves or responds to community concerns and interests" (147-148). She then argues that although this definition should be obvious, most discussions of public art "still center around large sculptures placed in urban plazas" (148). In short, Maksymowicz describes a contradiction between

theorists attempts to create a complex definition of public art and the narrow range of examples included within discussions of public art.

A variation on the analysis of public art opens up the area of discussion and looks at several combinations of public and art in relation to the specific subject of public art. This approach deploys a permutation of the division between supposedly new and old forms of public art in which, instead of a shift in the status of object and intention, theorists frame their analysis in terms of the recent relevance and hotness of public in combination with art.<sup>2</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell opens his introduction to the anthology *Art and the Public Sphere* with the claim that "It is no longer news to see art in the news. Controversies over public support and reception of the arts have become a staple of the mass media in the late twentieth century" (1). After citing debates about events such U.S. arts funding, the AIDS Quilt, and the fall of Communism in Europe and the removal of the Berlin wall, Mitchell then discusses what all these controversies mean for notions about, and analysis of, public art. He states that

If traditional studies of "public art" might be characterized as inquiries into the relation of beauty and bureaucracy, the subject of this book might be thought of as the relation between beauty and publicity. This book is not just about public art in the traditional sense - that is, art that is commissioned, paid for, and owned by the state. Instead, the contributors to this volume have addressed themselves to a set of issues that seem at once more enduring and more timely: the problem of artistic production and spectatorship in relation to changing and contested notions of the public sphere. (2)

Mitchell wants to maintain a focus on concerns which are specific to the terrain of public art, but he shifts the definition of this to an area that he delineates as "art and the public sphere." Rather than expanding or questioning the definition of public art, he tries to maintain object-based notions of public art and then to expand the area of study for art theorists when they address this subject.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix E1.

For example, he later refers to "public art 'proper'" as "the hero on the horse or the abstract ornament in the urban corporate plaza" thereby repeating the quite simple approach to defining public art (3). However, in the conclusion of his introduction, he seems to contradict his desire to maintain a specific territory that is public art. He states that "The fundamental message of this book, then, is the forcing of a basic choice in the way we think about art and the public sphere: either there is no such thing as public art, or all art is public art" (4). In this way, the notion of the public sphere supersedes a definition of public art. Yet, all the articles in the anthology do discuss projects and events which fit with the general terrain of public art that Mitchell first identifies. The simultaneous deployment of, and yet suspicion over the need for, a boundary for public art in a book which addresses the subject, further indicates the problems facing analysis of this and other combinations of public and art.

Similar to Mitchell's approach which focuses on the public sphere more so than public art, some theorists address the public as their primary concern.<sup>3</sup> In their introduction to *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*, editors Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster conclude that

As contemporary public art evolved, the definition and role of the public in public art became increasingly important. The search for a meaningful definition of the public has been treated theoretically in recent critical literature and, in a more pragmatic way, in the burgeoning public art community. The general public is now recognized as increasingly diverse and composed of special interest groups whose commitment to self-determination frequently overshadows their sense of participation in the broader fabric of society. (xv)

This approach shifts away from the object-based definition and focuses on notions of the audience and the community for public art projects. From this perspective, it does not matter what the project is, it only matters what the project

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix E5 and Appendix E14.

does. Often the audience-based definition works with the separation of new and old forms -- as seen in Serie and Webster's claim that public art has "evolved." Proponents of such a view identify a recent phenomenon marked by the supposed desire of artists and their art works to connect with a broad range of people. For example, in an article published in *Mapping the Terrain*, Lucy R. Lippard states that "I would define public art as accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment" (121).

Johanne Lamoureux directly addresses the confusion in discussions around public and art due to the conflicting choices in focus for analysis. Her insights arise from the diversity of responses to the exhibition *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots* (1992) which George Baird and Mark Lewis curated for the Walter Philips Gallery at the Banff Centre for the Arts.<sup>4</sup> In her article "Questioning the Public: Addressing the Response," Lamoureux attempts to bring a measure of specificity to critiques of the concept public by addressing the different grammatical status of the term public. She identifies that between the responses to and the curatorial goals of the exhibition, there was a constant slippage in "the grammatical status of the term *public* from noun to adjective" (149). Lamoureux explains that one strategy of critique addresses "the public as a noun, either as a notion in ruin or as a kaleidoscopic all-encompassing term" (149). The basis of this tactic is that

It contests the global reference of public by adding an s and producing a virtually infinite multiplication of fragmented publics . . . The resulting figure of fragmented publics - many different groups of receivers - in the field of art practices, echoes a situation that we are familiar with in other aspects of society: the representation of

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<sup>4</sup>Subsequent to the exhibition, Baird and Lewis edited the anthology *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots: Questioning the public in art and architecture*. Baird and Lewis invited Lamoureux to speak in Banff during the installation and to write the concluding essay for their book.

the *social* as a mosaic of minorities and the demise of a (fantasized) consensus it has entailed. (149)

This tactic describes Senie and Webster's, as well as Lippard's, approach to the key concerns for analysis of public art.

Lamoureux explains that a second strategy of critique expands the discussion of the term public by moving attention to its status as an adjective. According to Lamoureux, such a shift questions more than just who is the receiver, as in the re-working of public-as-noun, because it addresses the entire communicational model of which the receiver is a part. She demonstrates her point through reference to the controversies around Barnett Newman's *Voice of Fire* and Jana Sterbak's *Flesh Dress* at the NGC. These discourses deploy the word public as an adjective, as in public space and public funds. In this usage, public does not just describe those who view the art, it is a determining notion which "challenges the position of the sender/speaker" (151) by claiming to define the context and discourses in which artistic practices function. This tactic describes Mitchell's approach, but also the assumptions behind the subject of *Artropolis 93* as both "Public Art and Art About Public Issues."

Lamoureux pinpoints one key problem that fuels the contestation over combinations of public and art. In debates about the same project, respondents can actually identify significantly different topics of interest, and thus, they end up addressing widely varying areas and concerns while purporting to deal with the same event. The confusion only increases if the focus of debate involves the general area of public art or other larger topics associated with public and art rather than a specific project. Given this trend, it is no wonder that theorists are unable to reconcile definitions and issues. In short, although Lamoureux only aims to discuss the specific variation in the grammatical status of public, her analysis indicates the need to sort through existing general categories of

responses in order to address particular projects and bring improved specificity to art theory.

Lamoureux's insights, as well as a survey of attempts to define public art and demarcate the appropriate focus of analysis, demonstrates that discussions slip and slide between different combinations of public and art. These shifts occur even when writers aim to focus on a particular designation, such as public art. In other words, there are many notions condensed within the designation public art and, as a result, this one designation is too slippery to define. Bentley Mays attempts a light-hearted and fairly simple differentiation between public art forms, and yet his qualifiers bring in funding, space, and viewer response (the difference between "not exactly public" and public) as well as a relationship to social and political goals or effects (the "venerable" monument and the "almost invisible" project). Even when theorists recognise that concepts of public(s), public funding, public space, the public sphere, or public issues are caught up with public art, they still cannot delineate the territory. Mitchell's contradictions within his introduction demonstrate that his definitions do not function. It is only through examination of the themes and topics of the articles which he includes in the anthology, that one maintains a sense of the focus of discussion.

This demonstration of common bonds holds true for my archive as a whole. At the same time that individual texts, or sets of texts on a project or topic, slip between many different concepts and approaches, there is a pattern of regularity to this condensation and shifting. The same associated assumptions arise across the different combinations of public and art. In this way, public functions as a site of conflation for diverse debates. Rather than continuing the tradition of spinning around the problem of defining public art, or public in relation to art, I propose to examine the associated assumptions which traverse the many



combinations of public and art in order to describe the terrain and to propose new routes of analysis.

## **2) Discursive Operator 4: Particular Significance**

### **2.1) Space, place, and the city**

There is a trend within public art projects, or projects that address public issues, to address notions of the city and urban space.<sup>5</sup> Susan Schuppli highlights relationships to the city in her description of the "Public Subjects" sub-theme of *Artropolis 93*. She describes that the projects question "a democratic conceptualization of space in which the city and/or publicly owned property is necessarily accessible" as well as investigate the connection between dominant conceptions of public activities and "how we negotiate the public spaces of the city" (10). Several art theorists discuss these types of projects in terms of political and social theories of city policies, structures, and relations. Thus, in this particular area, art theorists have developed a complex relationship between analysis which engages with larger movements for social change and the art projects which participate in that same critique.

The relationship of Martha Rosler's *If You Lived Here . . .* and the book *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory and Social Activism* demonstrates this kind of strong relationship between art projects and analysis. Rosler's project consisted of three related exhibitions held at the DIA Art Foundation's exhibition space in New York.<sup>6</sup> She co-ordinated work by artists, activists, and homeless people that addressed the experience of being homeless, the civic policies which

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Appendix E3 and Appendix E9.

<sup>6</sup>The exhibitions, titled "Home Front," "If You Lived Here . . .," and "City: Visions and Revisions," ran from September 1988 to June 1989.

lead to gentrification and housing crises, and representations of these issues. Subsequently, Brian Wallis edited a book which documented the project, reproduced conference proceedings, and published several articles addressing this event and the issues which the event raised. The articles cite key theorists on the construction of, and practices within, city space (such as Mike Davis and Henri Lefebvre) and connect these sources to their representational analysis of the exhibitions.

In many ways, this association of art projects that address local civic or policy issues and theory which connects to patterns of civic and policy structure functions well. As a result, I will not specifically focus on the aspect of the city in my analysis. I will draw on this kind of complex approach to address other texts which deploy unproblematised assumptions about the city and urban space as part of the conflation of debates within public and art. At the same time that this area of theory addresses such specific concerns as the privatisation of public space or commodity relations within urban space in detail, various combinations of public and art repeatedly appear in these discussions. Because the main focus is the city, public and art still needs to be expanded. Similarly, this area of theory frequently poses notions of space, but theorists vary greatly in terms of the level of complexity in which they raise and address this notion.

In her article from *If You Lived Here . . .*, Rosler states that "this isn't the place for a broad consideration of public art," but she does want to mention "percent for art" programs in the U.S. and the role of these policies in civic "beautification" or gentrification projects (31). She cites the example of Battery Park City in New York (financed by Montreal's Reichmann Brothers) and how this project demonstrates "the regularized incorporation of art by the authority running it - precisely as though this exclusive preserve reinvented the public, on privatized but publicly subsidized turf" (32). Rosler recognises that she cannot address

notions of the city and of public art at the same time and that these subjects cannot be collapsed into each other.

In a number of articles, Rosalyn Deutsche analyses art projects which address the city. Deutsche begins her article "Alternative Space," published in *If You Lived Here . . .*, by summing up art history's approach to such projects. Part of this overview, she interrogates a politically motivated, simplistic notion of public art posed by neoconservative critics. She discusses two examples in which critics use a generalising notion of "the public" and "site" to separate art practice from the civic social and political concerns of homelessness and gentrification. As well, other types of critics also examine public art in terms of a relationship between art and the city. However, these critics reinforce an assumption that "Public art . . . may be influenced by, even embroiled in, 'non-art' issues. Yet pure 'art issues' can be extracted from these entanglements" (49). Deutsche argues against these different perspectives and proposes an approach which recognises that "art is social in the first instance" (52). She claims that art projects can affect social change and that art theorists need to reject assumptions about a separation of art and social spheres. In addition, her examples of prevailing approaches to the city, public, and art also indicate the ideological function of public in these combinations as well as the conflation of uses and definitions for public art.

In the second section of "Alternative Space," Deutsche draws on the field of urban studies to explain the *If You Lived Here . . .* projects in terms of "the production of urban space" (55). She describes that there are intense debates within the texts which discuss the production of space. However, materialist urban theory shares a focus by which such theory

does not seek to understand its object of study - urban spatial form  
- as an objective entity defined by natural, technological,

mechanical, or other inevitable evolutions. Rather, it defines space as an object that is organized and endowed with meaning through social processes and views urbanization as the spatial component of social change. (55)

From this point, Deutsche then explains that "the production of the city" cannot be seen as either a simplistic spatial expression of a cohesive society nor as a space of inevitable societal conflicts. She argues against the linear relationship between society and space which is frequently used to explain social context and factors involved in urban space as well as art projects which work with notions of urban space. Instead, Deutsche states that urban theory approaches space "not only as the product of social relations but also as an arena for the reproduction of social relations and as itself such a relation" (55).

Deutsche succinctly explains that space is a complex notion. This argument is critical for analysis of public and art as well as projects which address the city because critics and theorists frequently collapse notions of the city, urban space, and public space together.<sup>7</sup> In addition, cultural theorists who address subjectivity developed a trend toward using spatialising metaphors to ground their arguments. In *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*, Gillian Rose examines the deployment of notions of space in various types of feminist social and cultural theory. Significant to my analysis, she examines Teresa de Lauretis' use of spatial metaphors as a means to explain concepts around identity and representation. Rose argues that such a move does not solve problems within cultural analysis, but displaces those problems into a different area. She states that "Space itself - and landscape and place likewise - far from being firm foundations for disciplinary expertise and power, are insecure, precarious and fluctuating" (160). Theorists and critics who discuss public and art or relations of subjectivity cannot take notions of space for granted and, in

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to Appendix E3 and Appendix E9.

particular, they cannot deploy notions of space as an explanation in itself nor as equivalent to "the real."

## 2.2) Inside and outside the gallery

Art theory that engages with, and builds from, complex city art projects can illuminate the problems with prevailing assumptions about the space beyond the gallery walls. A belief in a clear distinction between inside and outside the gallery forms one of the main structures within and across the various combinations of public and art.<sup>8</sup> In particular, discussion of public art bases analysis on the inside/outside distinction. Theorists pose such projects as escaping from gallery structures, as free from the gallery as institution, as closer to real people, and as connected to real, social and political relations -- all by virtue of their location on "the street" and outside of the physical walls of the gallery. Such dramatic changes happen irrespective of whether the work is sponsored by a gallery, produced by an artist who exhibits within galleries, or created by an ad hoc activist group. However, Rosler's and Deutsche's analysis, as well as their urban theory sources, demonstrate that art theorists cannot simply celebrate "the street" as a space that is free and open because this domain is neither free of institutional, economic or political relations nor free for the access of diverse people.

The flier for *Artifice '96*, an exhibition held in empty retail space in downtown Montreal, encapsulates the assumptions about the supposed effect of installation outside the gallery. The exhibition organisers state that the project

challenges conventional structures for the presentation of cutting-edge and experimental contemporary art by geographically situating galleries in a context usually associated with commerce and retail business. The location of art galleries in such a highly visible area

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix E13.

will expose the sometimes difficult but important social, political and cultural issues of contemporary art to as wide a public audience as possible. (N. pag.)

This statement presumes that the power of *Artifice '96* rests solely on its placement in an empty shop instead of in an already existing gallery. Such a position ignores that both civic galleries and smaller, artist-run centres are often located in downtown areas or even in buildings that once housed shops. Secondly, there are plenty of private, commercial galleries engaged in retail art business.

In an interview with curator Mary Jane Jacob, Suzi Gablik conflates a similar set of assumptions. The title itself, "Removing the Frame," demonstrates a similar assumption that art inside the gallery must conform to institutionally imposed meaning and structures while art outside the walls escapes such physical and discursive "frames." Gablik bases her analysis of, and support for, Jacob's body of work on a clear separation between art (the gallery) and life (the real world). In the introduction, she describes that in one of Jacob's projects "Artists . . . were invited to seek out non-traditional exhibition spaces and to include disenfranchised groups, through dealing with issues that would also be of interest to the local community" (14). Gablik further asserts this point when she says to Jacob: "So your shift in curatorial projects does entail a specific move away from the museum. And it's not just a move away from authoritarian structures, like having to answer to a board of trustees and so on, it's also to be free of the space itself, in order to work more directly in life situations" (15). Jacob shares this unproblematised view of the space outside the gallery walls and makes statements such as "we could really understand art's meaning better within the context of the real world, as opposed to that artificial world that the museum creates" (16).

Space is a key component for the assumed differences between inside and outside the gallery, but distinctions between types of people or audience relations are also central.<sup>9</sup> Suzanne Lacy sums up the intertwining of these two notions in her statement that "new genre public art" recognises that "Potential audiences are real people found in real places" (37). Lacy deploys this designation as an indicator of the relevancy and value of the kinds of art projects which she aims to support. Similarly, Jacob's article in *Mapping the Terrain* demonstrates the assumption of authenticity and the linking of public, art, political intent, and the opposition of inside and outside the gallery.<sup>10</sup> She poses the question "Why work 'in public?'" and answers

For those artists with a more pronounced social and political agenda, the role of art as a forum for dialogue or social activism gained in power and effectiveness by being situated in the real world. It was necessary to remain outside the institution to maintain an independent artistic or politically revolutionary stance. ("unfashionable" 53)

Furthermore, in her interview with Gablik, Jacob connects the real people with the real places when she describes that a main achievement of her curatorial projects is the production of "on-the-street conversations" with "the non-museum-goer" (Gablik 17).

Another version of the life/gallery opposition poses the gallery as bland, dull, and devoid of activity while the space outside is noisy, busy, and exciting. In a discussion of various types of public art, Kate Taylor argues for considering the site when choosing public art. She argues against Modernist sculpture because it is "better suited to the quiet of a neutral gallery space than the competitive hubbub of the city" ("perils" C1). This form of assumption frequently appears in

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to Appendix E13, Appendix E9, and Appendix E5.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Appendix E17 and Appendix E13.

discussions of projects which cross the gallery boundary such as public art brought in for a gallery exhibition or gallery projects moved outside for display. The title of an outdoor sculpture exhibition sums this up: "Out of hushed halls, sculpture easier to embrace" (Conlogue C14). The author, Ray Conlogue, works hard to claim that "the public" has meaningful interaction with the sculptures simply by their location in Montreal's Old Port. His examples of such interaction include that somebody stuck a Labrador spring water bottle in the hand of a sculpture of Hector and that the work receives "mystified looks of passers-by pushing baby carriages" (Conlogue C14). As well, Ann Duncan argues that, in a project at Montreal's Peel Metro station, "A group of artists wants to 'shake things up'" by using advertising space at a metro stop and that the project is "an effort to yank art out of the rarefied atmosphere of galleries and museums and put it smack in the middle of an everyday environment" ("Underground art" A3). The putative shaking up derives from the location of the project more so than the representational strategies of the works themselves given that Duncan describes the subjects as: "the Peel Métro, the catacomb in Paris, a mannequin's head and violence and oppression" ("Underground art" A3).

Jacob states that the above types of art projects result from galleries and artists using "alternative, outside locations . . . because of the additional gallery space and visibility they afforded" ("unfashionable" 53). She concludes that "These exhibitions, however, do not necessarily constitute public art. They are essentially museum exhibitions outside museums; they might exist in public view, but they are rarely directed toward engaging that audience unfamiliar with the artists on view . . ." ("unfashionable" 53). Jacob differentiates between outdoor gallery shows and public art based on a difference in audience relations. However, the space provides the foundation for her distinction because she separates the museum-goer group from the people found outside a gallery -- the



people on the street. Apparently, once a person sets foot in a gallery, they cease to be members of the public and to exist outside that gallery space; outside a gallery, only non-museum-goers interact with the projects. In short, analysis of gallery art which moves outside the walls assumes that the notion of space as context is paramount and that this shift in location allows contact with new kinds of viewers.

The prioritising of the inside-as-lifeless and outside-as-dynamic assumption also appears in analysis of gallery exhibitions of previously public-site projects.<sup>11</sup> In a review of the NGC's exhibition of public art projects by Daniel Perez, Jenny Holzer, and Gilbert Boyer, Nancy Baele argues that "the gallery setting drained some lifeblood from [Holzer's] words, robbed her moral and irregular warfare on complacency and complicity of the element of surprise" ("Urban art" C3). She argues that all public art should replicate her first encounter with one of Boyer's works -- a plaque on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. Baele states that this experience was satisfying and productive because it occurred "By chance. In the streets" ("Urban art" C3).

Lacking from both Baele's analysis and discussions of outdoor gallery exhibitions is consideration of how projects are able to move back and forth across the gallery boundary if the outside and the inside are so radically different. Jacob is accurate in her identification that gallery-produced, public-site projects are strongly connected to their host institution. As an example of such a link, galleries commonly include a highly visible label, not unlike an enlarged version of the identifying tags used within the gallery, for events such as billboard projects. This label proclaims not only who or what created the project but also that the billboard is art and not just advertising. For instance, *A Space*, a Toronto artist-

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to Appendix E9 and Appendix E13.

run centre, sponsored a series of billboards by David Byrne for their twenty-fifth anniversary. They used a standard billboard for the images but attached a sign to the top with the text "A Space Gallery - The 25th Anniversary Project." The panel also included the dates of the project and the gallery's phone number (as well as the logo for the advertising company which owns the billboard). In a review of the anniversary project, Gary Michael Dault does not mention the presence of the large panel which states the gallery information. He describes the billboards as "Byrne's first public art project" and argues that they are "profoundly self-conscious exercises in media irony, quietly insinuating themselves, without much graphic fuss, into the design-hot, message-rich world of public attitude-formation" (C4). I argue that perhaps one can reach this conclusion about the billboards if the viewer only looks at the billboard panel alone. However, if one takes the gallery label into consideration, the project cannot "quietly" insinuate and blend in with the advertising around it.

Similar contradictions and assumptions operate within analysis of gallery projects that address public issues and work by artists who produce both gallery and public-site projects.<sup>12</sup> In an article on Gilbert Boyer's body of work, Alison Tett states that she will "begin with his gallery work because it provides the prologue for his frameless, public art" (16). As well, two separate reviews of *Public/Private*, a retrospective exhibition of Dan Graham's work, measure the gallery-based project against a standard of real-ness because of the artist's attention to notions of public. Christopher Hume pans the exhibition for stating the obvious about suburban experience. He argues that the insights of the curators and the artist only work if "seen in the highly restrictive context of the community in which they operate" (i.e., within the art world) and that "Real-world

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<sup>12</sup> Refer to Appendix E13, Appendix C4, and Appendix C5.

experience doesn't apply here. Neither does real-world insight" ("Student" C12). Kate Taylor argues that the retrospective is "a compromised affair" because the organisers had to "take work that was originally designed to confront a passerby in unmediated public space and present it as art that greets the willing visitor to the sanctified gallery. An unconscious experience of such pieces becomes largely impossible" ("flawed" C14). As Taylor demonstrates, the presumed difference in location and viewing relations between inside and outside the gallery often crosses over to ludicrous: Taylor's positing of an "unconscious" viewing experience seems to describe a project that whacks the unsuspecting passer-by on the head. Given a choice between this and a quiet gallery, no wonder the outdoor audience are not "willing" participants.

### **2.2.1) The street**

The designation "the street" condenses assumptions about the space outside the gallery and the practices which occur there: the street serves as a metonym for the city, but also as short-hand for the real, social and political issues which involve the non-gallery going public.<sup>13</sup> When Tett compares Boyer's practice within galleries to his public-site work, she states that her article will "trace his city themes by first marking his own path between the gallery and the street" (16). Within analysis which aims to support activist projects and connect to larger social movements, the street frequently sums up the demarcation of value for the combination of public and art.

"Taking it to the streets" is one of the most common phrases in discussions of public and art. A short item in the lesbian magazine *Curve*, on a

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<sup>13</sup> I have not created a separate appendix for "the street" as a designation. It is included within Appendix E13, inside and outside the gallery, because I did not find "the street" separate from this larger designation.

billboard project by Jill Abrams, says that "By taking her art to the streets, Abrams hopes to heighten awareness about the fact that gay and lesbian Americans are currently denied marital privileges" ("Freedom to Marry' 14). Jacqueline Larson used "Taking it to the streets" for her article on *Benchmarks* and the *Montreal Gazette* also gave that name to an article by Henry Lehman on murals. As well, part of the series of articles on the lack of public monuments depicting women, a Canadian Press item plays with the impact of the phrase when it states that "Montreal officials are trying to make up for the statutory gender gap by taking to the streets:" the item then explains that this statement simply means the city has begun naming new streets after women (Dafoe, Fillion, and Canadian Press C11). As cited earlier, Larson argues that *Benchmarks'* use of bus bench advertising brings "art literally to the streets, to the non-gallery public, with social or political consequences" (9). In short, the street functions to convey notions of political action and the relevancy of public and art to pressing issues.

### **2.2.2) Audience**

The designation "audience" frequently appears in discussions of various combinations of public and art and is particularly common within American art theory and art magazines.<sup>14</sup> These theorists interchange audience with the definition of public as the visitors to a gallery or as the viewers of a project. As well, they frequently distinguish between public art and gallery art on the basis of audience composition or audience relations for each. Virginia Maksymowicz argues that:

The artist without an audience would be a contradiction in terms. The type of audience an artist seeks relates to his or her aspirations . . . . Some direct their efforts towards other artists; some address collectors. Still others believe they have something to say to a

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<sup>14</sup> Refer to Appendix E5.

wider, public audience. How to address that wider audience - an audience that may or may not know anything about art (or even care to know anything) - is an issue for artists who want to work in the public sphere. Does the intended audience alter the form and content of an artist's work? Is there a difference between "private" and "public" art? (147)

Maksymowicz bases her distinctions amongst audience types on assumptions about the groups associated with the gallery (other artists and collectors) and those related to the outside spaces (the public and the public sphere).

Similarly, Lacy states that approaches to audience relations provide the core definition of "new genre public art." She argues that "one of the distinguishing characteristics" of the work discussed in *Mapping the Terrain* "is the factoring of the audience into the actual construction of the work" ("Introduction" 37). Similarly, Patricia C. Phillips claims that new and effective public art strategies shift attention from spatial factors to the audience for the work. She states

A growing number of artists and agencies believe that the responsibility of public artists is not to create permanent objects for presentations in traditionally accepted public places but, instead, to assist in the construction of a public - to encourage, through actions, ideas, and interventions, a participatory audience where none seemed to exist. Inherent in public art is the issue of its reception. The formation of audience is the method and objective, the generative intention and the final outcome. (67)

Thus, these theorists link the designation audience to the designation public as a set of people and relations which occur outside the gallery walls.

In contrast to these unproblematised assumptions, Rosler addresses the difference between audience and public in "The Birth and Death of the Viewer." She argues that artists need to consider that, for billboard projects or for sculpture such as *Tilted Arc*, "the passing audience" can refuse "to constitute itself as [the work's] public, the body implicated in its discourse" ("Birth and Death" 13). Furthermore, Rosler states that "the out-of-doors neither symbolizes

nor necessitates a collectivity, not even the collectivity of the mob" ("Birth and Death" 14). However, Rosler's complex consideration of these designations is rare: the majority of theorists and critics who deploy the designation audience, continue to replicate the conflation of audience, public, and the inherently greater political-ness of projects outside the gallery.

Canadian news media rarely deploy the designation audience except for items concerning public funding and art.<sup>15</sup> In this one category, writers heavily employ audience in their discussions of the public(s) for galleries as well as public funding of the arts. Johanna Powell sums up the intertwining of funding and audience when she states that "Arts organisations in Canada are undergoing a tremendous upheaval as governments slash support. To survive, these organizations will have to develop new sources of funding, new audiences and new ways to generate revenue" (19). The title of another *Financial Post* article demonstrates the same trend: "Funds are cut because no one cares: Artists must regain their public audience" (Byfield 22). Similarly, as part of a *Globe and Mail* series on "cultural subsidies," Andrew Coyne argues that "The case against state funding of the arts is not about 'market forces.' It is not about efficiency, or the deficit, or neo-conservative ideology, whatever that is. It is about the audience" (C1). In short, within Canadian news media, audience commonly appears within discourses relating to tax cuts and reduction in funding for artists and galleries.

Canadian art theory and magazines occasionally deploy audience, but the designation is not prioritised as it is in U.S texts.<sup>16</sup> If Canadian theorists use audience to refer to the public(s) for a gallery or project, they tend to mix the designation with others such as viewer, (gallery) visitor, and passer-by (of public-

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<sup>15</sup> Refer to Appendix E2 and Appendix E5.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Appendix E5 in relation to Appendix A1 and Appendix B1 and in relation to Appendix A2 and Appendix B2.

site work) as well as in relation to attached notions such as accessibility and community. In a review of *Women on Site*, an exhibition of "site specific murals" organised by A Space, Patricia Seamen argues that "The choice of locating the murals on public sites worked to make the art accessible to a more varied audience" (38). She does not use audience again and she later states that "the public was encouraged to participate in a dialogue on [the issues raised by the work]. Furthermore, by positioning the art in this public space, the artists could be more readily identified as members of the community and their work as having immediacy and relevancy for others in that community" (38). John K. Grande also uses audience just once in his discussion of the notion of the cultural public sphere. In "Which Public? Whose Art?," he critiques exclusionary practices within contemporary art and states that "Public art raises important questions about structural and philosophical issues such as the individual role of the artist, the character of audiences and the relation of art to public and private spaces" (6). In the rest of the article, instead of audience, Grande refers to "the civic body," "public taste and civic interests," "our neighbours," "community," and "the public."

Secondly, Canadian theorists tend to deploy audience in association with projects that use mass media and advertising space such as electronic display signs. In the description of Public Access' project *Some Uncertain Signs*, Marc Glassman states that the goal of the project "appeared to be the self-evident one of providing artists with the opportunity of programming work for a mass audience that rarely sees challenging contemporary art. As the project and curation developed, this notion became increasingly complex for the collective, the artists and the public" (85). Throughout the article, Glassman also deploys "community" and "address" as well as repeating audience, mass audience, and the public.

### 2.2.3) Transit and advertising space

There is a significant trend for artists to work with various types of advertising locations such as billboards, electronic signs, posters at bus and subway stations, or store front window displays.<sup>17</sup> Analysis which supports this type of project often makes the assumption that advertising space is the main comparison to gallery space and that working in such space automatically produces contact with mass and diverse audiences. For example, an *American Artist* article describes a project that involves "artist-clients" renting advertising time on a commuter railway system's display monitors in order to advertise their exhibitions or "present issue-oriented images" ("Artist reaches" 58). Despite a complete lack of attention to representational strategies, location, or viewing practices, the magazine uses the title "Artist reaches masses through underground gallery" for this item. As well, in "Situating Art Within Existing Cultural Events: A Queer Morphology," Wayne Baerwaldt discusses a billboard project by Winnipeg artist group Average Good Looks. He argues that their use of the advertising form, as well as a press conference in conjunction with the project's launch, constitutes a mode of "direct action strategies in a public forum, outside the white cube of the art gallery" (192).

Despite the prevalence of attention to the specific aspect of art within transit or advertising space, this designation is not particularly meaningful on its own. Instead, the designation of inside and outside the gallery is the most productive area for further, in-depth discussion both because of its own characteristics and because of the association of several other designations with it.

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to Appendix E15.



### 2.3) Controversy

In addition to, and imbricated with, the division of inside and outside the gallery, art theory and criticism defines and explains various combinations of public and art in terms of controversy.<sup>18</sup> The notion that public art inherently sparks debate traverses the different levels of analysis and discussion of this designation. Partly, analysis locates the controversial feature of public art as a sub-set of contemporary art and a continuation of the Modernist concept of the avant-garde.<sup>19</sup> As well, discussions locate this feature as a component of participatory democracy and of Jürgen Habermas' description of a successful public sphere predicated on a culture-debating society.<sup>20</sup> The supposed innateness of controversy to public art frequently functions to dismiss the content and specifics of a given event: if it is inevitable that any project located in a public site provokes a fuss, then the subject of the project is not important. Furthermore, although theorists and critics assert that controversy is a property of public art, they commonly link various designations to public art, and to each other, in terms of controversy and regardless of specific designation.

In attempting to create a definition of public art, theorists commonly turn to a notion of controversy. Hamza Walker indicates the combined quality of art and public as the explanation for public art's volatile nature in the statement that "public art [has] an acute case of schizophrenia, with its two principle personalities, 'Public' and 'Art,' each having its own identity crisis. With neither Public nor Art being able to define itself, the multitude of recent controversies seems unavoidable" (5). Elizabeth Aird, writing on the Vancouver Women's

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<sup>18</sup> Refer to Appendix E6.

<sup>19</sup> Refer to Appendix E6 and Appendix E16.

<sup>20</sup> Refer to Appendix E6 and Appendix E10.

Monument Project, references the head of a Seattle art management service for her assertion that "Public art - not just how it looks, but what it represents - always gets people riled" ("Lots of public art" A3). As well, Henry Lehman, in relation to Montreal's percent-for-art program, claims that "Of course, reviling public art for reasons ranging from politics to taste is almost a tradition" ("If public art" I2). Taking sides in the source of public art's supposed nature, Henry Gale references art as the key factor in the Vancouver Women's Monument Project debate, but also for the type of events which are the focus of prolonged dispute. He opens an article with "It isn't news when a public work of art causes controversy. After all, art is supposed to light a fire in the mind" (A24).<sup>21</sup> In comparison, Senie and Webster propose the public sphere explanation in their argument that "Public art with its built-in social focus would seem to be an ideal genre for a democracy. Yet, since its inception, issues surrounding its appropriate form and placement, as well as its funding, have made public art an object of controversy more often than consensus or celebration" (xi).

Theorists and critics commonly link any new event to certain touchstones which serve to epitomise public, art, and controversy. This practice both reinforces the notion that public and art always causes debate and displaces the focus from the specific event to the general combination of public and art. In Canada, the triple furore at the NGC is the pre-eminent reference point no matter whether the altercation concerns funding, location, process, or content nor if the focus is public art, public funding, or public(s) for a project or gallery. The *Montreal Gazette* ran a debate piece in which Mark Abley and Brain Kappler discussed the controversy over *Mémoire ardente*, Gilbert Boyer's commission for

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<sup>21</sup>Gale then proceeds to say that he had held this position in earlier articles and now realises that "The vigorous debate over the Women's Monument Project in Vancouver, however, is not so much about art as about violence and what to do about it" (A24).

Montreal's 350th anniversary. Accompanying the pair, the *Gazette* ran an image of Newman's "Voice of Fire" installed at the NGC and an explanatory blurb which reads

In 1990, Canadians debated the merits of Voice of Fire, the \$1.8-million painting of a stripe. This spring, Montrealers are debating Gilbert Boyer's granite-cube and steel-post sculpture, commemorating Montreal's 350th birthday. We asked two staff members with strong opinions to debate the issues raised by contemporary art. (Abley A1)

In addition to the *Gazette's* framing, Abley cites public contempt for Emily Carr's paintings in 1913, Kappler references Andres Serrano, and both mention "Voice of Fire" before moving onto their discussion of *Mémoire ardente*. In this way, Abley, Kappler, and the *Gazette* locate the specific controversy over Boyer's monument as yet another example of fuss about art in combination with public.

Part of the same pattern, both Canadian and American writers reference *Tilted Arc* and the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* as archetypes of public discontent over public art and public monuments. For example, Athena Paradissis starts off her article on *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991*, which addressed the theme art and public space, with a quote from Richard Serra concerning his *Tilted Arc* and then discusses the Sterbak controversy at the NGC in relation to the Montreal project's theme. As well, Paula Gustofson opens her article on the Vancouver Women's Monument Project with the comparison that "Like the controversy that dogged the commissioning process for the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, by the time . . . Beth Alber's award-winning design was announced . . ., the Women's Monument Project had been vilified in the press in over ninety articles" (19). In fact, the two controversies are distinctly different. Gustafson does proceed to explain that the attacks on the Vancouver project were focused on the inscription, before Alber's design was ever conceived, and on the specific issue of building a

monument to female victims of male violence. She does not address the Washington controversy any further and thus does not acknowledge that this debate primarily focused on Maya Lin's understated, non-representational design and did not relate to the combination of gendered cultural identity and a public monument.

Some theorists link public, art, and controversy but argue that the source of debate originates outside of public art projects. Senie and Webster state that "Art in the public domain, a sign of the power of its patrons, frequently becomes the focus for discontents that often have nothing to do with art. Small wonder that public art and controversy seem to have been joined at birth" (171). However, in contradiction to the first point, their conclusion that controversy is linked to public art undermines the claim that the source of dispute is external. Furthermore, Senie and Webster demonstrate the centrality of controversy to their analysis of public art in the title of their anthology, *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*, and the selection of six articles which focus on events which were the focus of a controversy for section III, "Public Art and Public Response."

### **2.3.1) Modernism and the avant-garde**

In his introduction to *Voices of Fire: Art, Rage, Power, and the State*, John O'Brian situates the NGC debates in relation to the history of the Modernist avant-garde. He explains that

There is a long and noisy history in the modern era of attacks against art. Attacks have been mounted against: (a) the exhibition of art, (b) the acquisition of art with public funds, (c) the placement of art in public settings, and (d) the right of certain kinds of art to exist at all (censorship). (7-8)

O'Brian provides a thorough overview of each type of controversy and demonstrates a connection between the discourse of the avant-garde, as a movement which pushes society's expectations, and the debate over Newman as a leading figure in the development of the American avant-garde. In short, O'Brian argues that the NGC events cannot simply be seen as a 1990's phenomenon. Although there are regional and historical variations to the different events, he asserts that his

recitation of modern-art controversies, and the categories into which they may be divided, serves to frame the *Voice of Fire* debate. The objection to *Voice of Fire*, I want to emphasize, heralded nothing new or unprecedented in the history of art controversies - in Canada or any other place. Mention *Voice of Fire* to an Australian and you will get an earful about *their* national gallery's purchase of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles* for \$2 million in 1973 . . . . (13)

While I agree with O'Brian that it is necessary to consider the history and patterns within art discourses, I argue that the role of the designation public suggests that art theorists should also consider how these events function in relation to other discourses. O'Brian's perspective develops one approach for considering public and art events, but it can reinforce the supposed separation of art from the social. Furthermore, this position can reproduce the essentialising discourse of public and art as controversial and thereby prevent an examination of the effect and function of this framework for analysis of specific events and of the overall combination of public and art.

O'Brian's analysis also suggests how Modernist art discourses, and particularly the discourse of the avant-garde, functions as a reference within analysis of, and assumptions, about public and art.<sup>22</sup> The theorists in *Mapping the Terrain* clearly construct their model of activist, community-based strategies

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to Appendix E16.

against the specific other of Modernist art practice and strive to escape from the particular structure of the Modernist gallery. Lacy argues that

One of the distinguishing characteristics of [new genre public art] is the factoring of audience into the actual construction of the work. This work activates the viewer - creating a participant, even a collaborator. It might be said that all art takes its audience into account, even if only in the subconscious mind of the artist . . . . One traditional notion of late modern art suggests that if this is true, it is not something one ought to admit - as if making art for anyone other than oneself is a failure of the imagination. (37)

The single-minded zeal of Lacy's claims throughout the text, and the claims of those included in the anthology, make more sense if understood as an opposition to, or critique of, Modernist practices in particular rather than of a wider range of other recently occurring art practices. In relation to the continuing streams of Modernist discourses, their position can be seen as contentious. For example, John Bentley Mays argues for the continuation of a die-hard Modernist attitude to viewing practices within a gallery and the composition of gallery visitors. In "Hopping mad and not going to take it any more," he critiques the notion of altering gallery practices to include people who do not like or understand Modernist practices. The sub-title states "A critic eavesdrops on visitors at the [Art Gallery of Ontario] and discovers to his horror that contempt is the prevailing response to contemporary art" ("Hopping mad" C13). Enacting the macho bravado that is key to Modernism, Bentley Mays informs readers that if he hears another visitor mock an abstract painting while he is in a gallery, offenders should "be prepared to get [their] lights punched out" ("Hopping mad" C13).

### **2.3.2) Fresh, new, and hot**

The framing of the NGC controversies as recent phenomena, to which O'Brian objects, fits within the pattern for theorists to explain public and art

designations as new and hot.<sup>23</sup> Analysis of *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* and *Artropolis 93*, two different projects that both focus on a public and art theme, explain the subject of each project as part of increasing pressure within, and attention to, this area. Texts in both English and French concerning *Cent jours* make comments such as, "En choisissant un thème comme celui de l'art et de l'espace public, pour les Cent jours d'art contemporain de Montréal 1991, [le directeur] plonge au coeur d'un débat qui ne cesse de s'animer, non seulement à Montréal, mais dans toutes les grandes villes du monde industrialisé" (Dumont, "CIAC" B9). The introduction to the *Artropolis 93* catalogue presents a similar view on the local and wider importance of the topic. The organisers state that

*Artropolis 93* seeks to address the new artistic, cultural, economic and political landscape by presenting many points of view on a varied terrain. The theme of *Artropolis 93* - Public Art and Art about Public Issues - is not only a topical subject for a Vancouver exhibition of the 90's [sic], but also a critical matter for artists' participation, public debate and information-giving documentation.  
(6)

The link between controversy and the new-ness of public and art flows in both directions: theorists explain that public and art projects spark debate by claiming that these topics are currently hot and they argue that public and art projects are relevant, timely, and fresh by citing controversies.<sup>24</sup> Both strategies appear in analysis of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project. Paula Gustafson presents the project as a type of currently pressing controversy, however, she aligns the interest with Vancouver's supposed passion for the environment rather than with other art events. Gustafson states that "In Vancouver the most hotly-debated issues are trees and whales, not public sculptures. But in the case of the Women's Monument Project the uproar began

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<sup>23</sup> Refer to Appendix E1.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to Appendix E1 and Appendix E6.

almost as soon as plans . . . were conceived" (19). Chris Dafoe also refers to Vancouver's non-art interests and he deploys the more common tactic of listing the monument as further proof of the pressure on public and art. He states "Vancouver is not a city renowned for its public art. Surrounded by mountains and ocean, its setting offers stiff competition for the works of mere mortals . . . . And yet, these days, public art is a hot topic in Vancouver" ("Going public" E2). For Dafoe, the natural distractions of the city demonstrate the degree of hot-ness for public and art -- the designation even overcomes such competition.

In addition to connecting the new-ness of public and art with a notion of controversy, theorists and critics also tie the recent quality of controversy specifically to mass media. Lacy argues, in "Debated Territory: Toward a Critical Language for Public Art," that artists who produce public-site work are now experiencing new pressures. She claims that

artists have achieved a level of public visibility not experienced in several decades, if ever. . . . From an assumed "right to know" about the lives of politicians, to the revelation of family secrets . . . formerly private lives have assumed the character of public property through the media. Visual artists are no exception, and many have catapulted into national prominence overnight by virtue of controversies surrounding their work. ("Debated" 171)

In this way, the debates over public and art are a recent phenomenon that happen in the media and because of the media.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, theorists and critics frequently identify the prevalence of the discourse of new-ness within public and art analysis. For a few, this observation serves to support a call to investigate the terrain. Mark Lewis, in his essay for *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots*, states that "We hear a lot today about the importance of public art. An abundance of exhibitions, conferences, books and essays testify to the fact that it has become the lingua franca [sic] of curators,

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<sup>25</sup> In the introduction, Lacy describes her focus as the "past three or so decades" (19).



museum administrators and all those who are concerned to enlarge art's franchise" (37). As well, recognising the claims for the new-ness of public and art can serve to validate a given project which a theorist aims to support or to validate an area of art theory. For example, the contributors to *Mapping the Terrain* connect the relevance of the work which they discuss to their choice of the designation new genre public art and to the notion of new kinds of pressure from, and visibility within, mass media.

### **2.3.3) Funding, taxpayers, and citizens**

Public art is one specific designation which is supposedly inherently controversial. Public funding, in various forms, is the other designation most associated with debate.<sup>26</sup> Lehman makes a direct connection between the new-ness of public and art and his interest in analysing civic art funding when he states that "Public art is much in the news these days, making it a good time to examine some of the latest Montreal creations done under the one-per-cent program" ("Art and architecture" I1). Craig McInnes also argues that the controversial quality of public art causes attention to funding. He asserts that "After years of controversy over the monumental works of art chosen to enrich the collective scene, [Toronto] is again reviewing how public art is chosen and how it is financed" (C2).

As with public art, theorists and critics frame the provocative quality of funding, public, and art as new and ever-increasing in significance. Christopher Hume argues that "The need for state funding of the arts has never been more pressing, but neither has the case against it" ("Facing up" J1). As well, discussion of the selection of *Mémoire ardente* focuses on the funding of the

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<sup>26</sup> Refer to Appendix E2, Appendix E6, Appendix E7, and Appendix E12.

project as the fuel for the controversy. Before the work was ever installed, there was a debate in the Montreal press about the work's form (opponents disparagingly referred to it as "the cube"), but particularly about the cost. For example, commenting on the maquette and the ensuing debate, in an article entitled "Controverse au cube," Stéphane Baillargeon repeatedly refers to the cost (\$70, 000) and the funding process. He quotes the head of the *Parti civique's* comments that "Ma philosophie c'est qu'un dollar de la Ville investi là, c'est toujours un dollar de trop" and that "on a autre chose à faire avec l'argent que l'investir dans une boîte carrée" (A3).

The *Montreal Gazette* similarly highlights the funding and controversy angle with *Mémoire ardente* in their dual feature on the project. As I discussed earlier, they accompany the pair of articles with an image of "Voice of Fire" and a sub-heading which mentions the cost of the NGC purchase. Each article discusses the controversy about Boyer's monument by referring to other controversial artists and art works. As well, Kappler demonstrates the association of the notion of taxpayers or citizens with opposition to public funding of art. He claims that most people cannot relate to Boyer's work because it is "abstract to the point of meaninglessness" (A13). Kappler claims that both the "Voice of Fire" purchase and the selection of Boyer's "cube" prove that there is "the implicit message: mere taxpayers, ignorant of holy Art Theory, are not entitled to an opinion. The [Newman] case exposed Cultureburg's deep contempt for Taxpayerville" (A13).

Even when funding or controversy are not the main focus of an article, the writer will mention the cost of the project, allude to tax support or, in Canada, refer to the granting system. In the article on the exhibition in the Peel Métro, Duncan cites that the Canada Council provided a \$13,000 grant and that the project cost a total of \$25,000, yet she does not relate these points to any other

aspect of her article ("Underground art" A3). Similarly, in his assessment of Montreal's different types of public art, Henry Lehman mentions that "And it's all free admission, though some of these objects have been prepaid with your tax dollars" ("On view" J1). In short, interest in funding traverses analysis of various combinations of public and art. Whether funding serves as a main touchstone or a minor point, theorists and critics frequently include the cost, the process, state support, or the notion of the taxpayer.

Canadian art theory and news media commonly refer to American examples of funding structures and controversial events. Despite the differences between Canadian and American state funding, theorists and critics compare the two forms as if they are simply equivalent. This pattern is particularly associated with discussion of the attacks on, and controversies about, public funding of artists, projects, or galleries. In "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defense of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding," Robert Labossière focuses on issues for Canadian artists and specifically addresses cuts to the Canada Council. To introduce his argument, he states that "Perhaps the most thorough analysis of the legitimization crisis within public arts funding is Grant Kester's study of the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) in the U.S." (15). Similarly, Bronwyn Drainie cites American writer Alice Goldfarb Marquis, and her book *Art Lessons: Learning from the Rise and Fall of Public Arts Funding*, in order to argue that "Public funds . . . should now be used to give all citizens access to arts and artists, and let audiences decide what they prefer" ("Art lessons" C1). In this way, both Labossière and Drainie present funding as located within the arts and particular to that isolated realm rather than as specific to national funding structures and policy frameworks.

As well as referring to controversies over American policy, Canadian theorists and critics also discuss American models of private funding. This trend

usually appears within arguments that such examples provide a cure for depletion of public funds and that private support functions in direct relation to audience interest in projects or galleries. As I stated earlier, within Canadian analysis, audience appears most frequently within discussions about funding. From a pro-art perspective, Glenn Lowry, as the director of the Art Gallery of Ontario, wrote an item for the *Globe and Mail* entitled "Private funding for arts needn't spell sellout" in which he discusses American examples and asserts the benefits of corporate sponsorship of galleries (C5). As well, Charles Gordon, in a *Macleans*' article, accepts public funding cuts as an inevitable fact and argues that

The only way the arts can adapt to a drop in government support is to create an increase in audience support. The arts, in other words, have to find a way to create more customers. No one in the arts community would complain if support from the government was replaced by support from the audience, and there is no logical reason it couldn't happen. (13)

In both Canadian and American discussions of funding controversies and comparisons between private and public funding, writers frequently refer to taxpayers and citizens.<sup>27</sup> As quoted above, Drainie interchanges citizens and audiences in her comments on public funding. In "Public domain," Walker relates a recent fuss over a work by Frank Stella to several other controversies and observes that "the issue of tax-payers' dollars, the dead horse that always manages to be resurrected and beaten yet again, was in fine form" (55). As well, arts proponents directly address the dismissal of anti-art discourses, such as Walker's dead horse metaphor, and argue that arts professionals need to engage with the attacks on arts funding and with associated designations such as taxpayer and citizen. In an article entitled "On Cultural Citizenship," curator John R. Killacky argues that arts professionals need to redress the claim to "taxpayers'

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<sup>27</sup> Refer to Appendix E10, Appendix E7, and Appendix E2.

privilege" by arts opponents and learn to function as delegates for the arts. This process involves ceasing the practice of "talking only to ourselves" and, instead, working for "true dialog in our communities" (14).

Unlike controversies over public art and monuments, theorists and critics commonly acknowledge the imbrication of identity stakes and controversies over funding.<sup>28</sup> Opponents of public funding choose projects that address sexuality, gender, and race in order to support their attacks. *Financial Post* writer Michael Coren starts his argument against the Canadian grants system with the comment that "The debate over public funding of the arts in this country has a history so long there is probably a grant being given at this very moment to someone who intends to write a book on it" (9). Then, from the recent list of successful Toronto Arts Council applications, he selects project descriptions which all involve gender, sexuality, or race. Coren concludes that "Generous support went to projects concerning confused female sexuality, dysfunctional families, the need for special literature for black children and, of course Canadian racism - themes that are financed year after year" (9). Art theorists who support public funding notice the types of projects cited in grant controversies and comment on the connection of identity and opposition to funding. For example, an *Art in America* series on "Art and Politics" has the title "Too Shocking to Show?" and the sub-heading "Right-wing groups have attacked Marlon Riggs's [sic] award-winning documentary film of black gay life in an effort to restrict cultural funding" (Berger 37).

#### **2.3.4) Process and permanence**

As I discussed in detail earlier in this chapter, theorists and critics associate controversy with the process of selecting the form and location for

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<sup>28</sup> Refer to Appendix E11 and Appendix E2.

public art and monuments.<sup>29</sup> Taylor and Hume each explain the fuss over the Airmen's Memorial as a result of the " cursory approval process" (Taylor, "perils" C1) or lack of "public consultation" (Hume, "politics" M12). In this way, supportive analysis of civic public art programs argue that such policy, when democratic and inclusive, provides a cure for controversies over selection processes. In relation to this notion that policy calms dispute, supporters of activist projects pose civic and traditional public art projects as inherently less political and disruptive because of their process. Cronin partially establishes his support for Artcote's billboard project, *In Control*, by making a disparaging comparison to "the consensus model of art in public plazas that has prevailed in [Windsor's] few other public art installations" (41-42). Similarly, Lehman emphasises process in the effect of Montreal's civic projects when he argues that "decisions are made by committee, and consensus often guarantees mediocrity" ("Art and architecture" 14).

The notion of process is overwhelmingly attached to the notion of permanence.<sup>30</sup> The celebration of civic art policy as a cure for controversy specifically addresses the regulation of permanent projects. Within this approach, analysis posits that there is a greater level of public interest toward projects with an extended period of installation because people will have to see and negotiate these forms over time and their duration gives them greater symbolic authority. In his essay for *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots*, George Baird discusses his and Lewis' failed attempt to hold a public art competition as part of the Banff exhibition. In a section entitled "the selection process," Baird explains the details which resulted in the "impasse" concerning that component. He

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to Appendix E12 and Appendix E6.

<sup>30</sup> Refer to Appendix E12 and Appendix E4.

concludes that "Yet, perhaps, we should not have been too surprised. After all, we had argued that permanent art installations were far more contentious than 'temporary' ones" (16). On the other hand, the dismissal of civic and traditional works frequently argues that the complex processes attached to permanent forms renders them critically and symbolically impotent and therefore less contentious than temporary projects, such as renting advertising space, which are not supposedly subject to external decision-making and interference.

### 2.3.5) The public sphere

Analysts frequently associate the notion of debate within public and art to notions of the public sphere and participatory democracy as well as to the specific assumption that the mass media are the public sphere.<sup>31</sup> Such a configuration structures Danielle Rice's article "The 'Rocky' Dilemma: Museums, Monuments, and Popular Culture in the Postmodern Era." Rice discusses Sylvester Stallone's attempt to donate the sculpture of the film character Rocky Balboa (a prop for *Rocky III*) to the Philadelphia Museum of Art so that "Rocky" can remain permanently atop the museum's steps. The museum refused and fans of Stallone and the *Rocky* films, including newspaper sports writers, complained of the museum's elitism. Rice states that

Public art, specifically the contemporary practice of installing works of art in urban spaces, usually through a process that combines jurying by art world "experts" with consensus building among bureaucrats and city dwellers, has traditionally provided a forum for the airing of conflicting opinions about the nature and role of art. The controversies over the Rocky statue and *Tilted Arc* highlight the failure of communication between the practitioners and experts of the art world and the diverse publics of urban environments. But the controversies also reveal the active - and to a great extent

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<sup>31</sup> Refer to Appendix E10.

unstudied - role of the media in mythifying [sic] and representing so-called public opinion. (235)

Thus, the debate over "Rocky," on one hand, exhibits the role of democratic debate in the process of understanding art and, on the other hand, the event displays the role of art in the democratic system and in a mass mediated form of that system.

The linking of public and art controversies to the mass media shifts the location and cause of the controversy from a characteristic of the arts to a characteristic of the mass media. W. J. T. Mitchell opens his introduction to *Art and the Public Sphere* with the statement that "It is no longer news to see art in the news. Controversies over public support and reception of the arts have become a staple of the mass media in the late twentieth century" (1). His first line is similar to Gale's comment, on the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, that "It isn't news when a public work of art causes controversy. After all, art is supposed to light a fire in the mind" (A24). However, unlike Gale, Mitchell's second line explains those controversies as partly the property of the mass media and not solely the dominion of avant-garde art practice. The anthology's title and Mitchell's framing also places these controversies as part of the structure of the public sphere. He states that the articles in the anthology address "the problem of artistic production and spectatorship in relation to changing and contested notions of the public sphere" (2). Art, controversy, the public sphere, and mass media are all interlocked within analysis such as Mitchell's or within the articles included in *Art and the Public Sphere*.

Although it is common to link mass media and the public sphere, notions of democracy and debate occur without this association. An article in *High Performance*, entitled "The Public Art Controversy," argues that America's increasing diversity has brought changes to "the traditional notion of the 'public



square" and as a result "art in public places, like libraries and town halls, often gets caught in a cultural crossfire" (Artsave 15). The article then argues that as long as the "battle" is not too contentious, then "lively debate is a healthy part of any democracy" (Artsave 15). The *High Performance* article only refers in passing to potential ideological stakes within these debates with the mention of "increasing diversity." In comparison, an *ARTnews* article clearly identifies the connection between cultural identity and pressure on the notion of the public sphere. Entitled "Public Sculpture: Race, Sex, and Politics," the article discusses art projects related to those three issues which have caused controversy. However, the article then undermines the significance of identity with the common move to frame specific events as yet more evidence of the provocative quality of public art: the item quotes New York sculptor Tom Otterness' statements that "It's the function of public art to stir debate" and "If that discussion is heated and ongoing, it's all the better for society. The problem comes up if the result is the removal of the art" (Cembalest 30).

## 2.4) Politics

Discussions of public and art strongly associate the notion of politics with their analysis.<sup>32</sup> In some case, critics and theorists deploy the label political, or associated designations, in order to denigrate a given art project. For example, opponents of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project claimed that the work would have a limited audience and, as Brian Morton claims, only relate to the "special-interest group" of feminists (B10). As well, Kate Gray praises a public installation project in Guelph because it was "the antithesis of agit-prop; instead of politicking for change, the artists were describing and reacting to life in an

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<sup>32</sup> Refer to Appendix E17.

urban centre. Instead of proffering a political ideology, they gave citizens [a] glimpse into . . . the city around them" (21-22).

It is much more common for theorists and critics to celebrate the political quality of a particular public and art event. Many deploy a notion of political as a measure of success for public art: they celebrate projects which engage with larger movements for social change and condemn projects that do not. Within this position, political-ness -- like controversy -- appears as an inherent feature of public art. Gordon Brent Ingram complains that "public art's typical compromises around space and real estate have effectively defanged much of its radical and transformative potential" (11). Allison Gamble critiques a tour given by a Sculpture Chicago docent for lacking attention to the political qualities of the works. She claims that the docent

conveniently bypassed some of the messier controversies that have arisen over the past several decades, as well as the seemingly endless critical debates on what might constitute the public - not to mention public art. The new public art is . . . a splicing together of two different histories - the site-specific integrationist approach to placing art in public places and the socially specific interventionist practices of political and oppositional artists. (18)

Theorists and critics that deploy political as a measure of success frequently attach this notion to a comparison of temporary and permanent projects.<sup>33</sup> Within this framework, either temporary work is political and permanent work is not or temporary projects are critical while permanent projects reinforce the status quo. Maksymowicz argues that in order to analyse temporary, activist work as art, she needs to deal with the problem that few critics see such work as public art because it is not permanent or monumental. In fact, she says, most activist work "gets labelled pejoratively as 'political' art" (149). She then says that "Despite the 'political' nature of this work and the less-than-

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<sup>33</sup> Refer to Appendix E17 and Appendix E4.

fine-art appearance that the use of nontraditional media gives it, I would contend - especially given the etymological root of the word *political* in the Latin and Greek words for *citizen*, a member of the 'public' - that it may well be the most authentic type of public art" (149). Thus, Maksymowicz locates political-ness as a specific property of temporary public art and uses this notion to assert the value and relevancy of the projects which she supports.

### 3) Conclusion

In mapping out and sorting through the patterns that structure discussion of public and art, I have identified the two main frameworks of either the opposition inside/outside the gallery or the notion of controversy. Each of the designations which I cite, although they traverse various levels of analysis and combinations of public and art, tend to align with arguments for, and assumptions about, one or the other main framework. However, the designation political is the most messy and complex. Theorists and critics strongly associate political-ness with controversy and with the related designations of hot-ness, public funding, process and temporality, and the public sphere. At the same time, assumptions about political-ness arise from, and inform, the opposition of inside and outside the gallery. Discussions of public and art mark the space outside the gallery as political and as inherently conducive to activist projects. In addition to references to space itself, theorists and critics tend to demonstrate the political quality of outside the gallery through the notions of audience and community.

In a review of Mark Lewis' reworking of Lenin's bust, Len Guenther focuses on the "placement of the statues of Lenin in public places" and their "site-specific" quality as the key factor in the project's political effect (58). Similarly,

Glassman, in his discussion of *Some Uncertain Signs*, attaches the notion of political-ness to space: he answers the question "Is public art necessarily political?" by discussing how the artists "took advantage of public space" (85). Yet, he also describes that many of the artists "posited a direct address to a presumed audience . . . about specific societal issues" (85). In comparison, Kate Gray emphasises viewing relations over spatial factors. She argues that "the main intention" of a Guelph public installation and performance program was "to build connections between artists and their communities" (21). Gray does discuss the sites of the various projects, such as store fronts and cafés, municipal parking lots and city parks, but she describes all of these as community locations.

Discussion of public and art also links politics with identity issues. In some cases, this move is pejorative, such as Morton's critique of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project. However, the majority combine a notion of politics with identity as part of their support for projects which engage with larger movements for social change. The first part of the *Art in America* series on "Art and Politics" has the title "Activist Art in the Shadow of Rebellion" and the sub-heading "Well before the Los Angeles riots, three activist art groups began using public art to address the area's racial and economic tensions" (Durant 31). In this way, political-ness is not inherent to public art, but activists can use public art as part of a strategy for social critique. The articles in the "Public Art and Public Response" section of *Critical Issues in Public Art* combine politics, identity, and controversy. Donna Graves discusses a dispute over the city of Detroit's monument to Joe Louis. She argues that the event provides an example of "the politics of public art" and "the politics of representation" and she identifies that "appropriate methods of memorialization" and "racial ideology" are the two main issues in the debate (215). As well, Joseph Disponzio discusses controversy and

politics in relation to a proposed monument to gay liberation in New York and argues that the "primary purpose of the work" is "political" (210).

Attention to the connection of a notion of politics and identity issues, as these traverse various combinations of public and art and various levels of analysis, provides a route for the examination of the assumptions concerning inside/outside the gallery and the notion of controversy. Theorists and critics who discuss public and art overwhelmingly align with a particular social and political movement. Arguments about cultural identity are central to the support and the condemnation of public art projects or combinations of public and art, such as public funding of the arts, and yet, analysis rarely discusses this relationship. When theorists and critics do discuss how identity issues in general -- or specific relations of sexuality, gender, race, or nationality -- appear within this terrain, they attempt to restrict the effect and relevance to distinct events or designations. However, art theory in fact does treat the various combinations of public and art as connected: theorists and critics slip and slide amongst different designations even as they purport to address a single topic. I argue that a deliberate attention to the imbrication of the various combinations of public and art will produce a complex understanding of each specific designation and of how this imbrication functions within existing analysis.

## **Section 2     Evaluating controversy inside and outside the gallery**

### **1) Introduction**

Section 2 produces an in-depth analysis of the major stakes and concerns that exist within discussions of public and art. In the following chapters, I focus in detail on items from my archive. Many of these appear briefly in the preceding section as examples from their appendix or as demonstrations of given components of discourses related to public and art. I revisit these items, and bring in others that I have not yet cited, in order to fully investigate the key designations and events raised by my research. Given the complexity and overlap between different categories, some documents and events require attention in two or more areas of Section 2. I address these debates by focusing on the main designations that organise my archive: in Chapter 4 I examine inside and outside the gallery while in Chapter 5 I discuss controversy. Each designation involves specific assumptions and requires particular theoretical sources in order to analyse the area. As a result, I continue to work with an embedded approach to theory whereby I mobilise texts or arguments that are appropriate to a particular aspect of analysis.

In Chapter 4, I return to Tony Bennett and Nikolas Rose in order to work with their development of Michel Foucault's notion of governmentality. In the previous section, I drew on Bennett's discussion of cultural technologies in relation to the specific area of monuments and public art. The following chapter develops from his institutional approach to museums and examines how art that is not literally within gallery space can still be part of the institutional *dispositif* of the gallery. I combine Bennett's arguments about discourses of museum reform, Rose's large-scale approach to governmental relations, and Doreen Massey's

attention to spatial relations in order to move out of the trap that comparison with the gallery is the only relevant factor for art events located in public space.

I again turn to Bennett's and to Rose's development of governmentality in Chapter 5, but here I work with the interplay between Bennett's attention to national specificity in cultural policy and Rose's discussion of large-scale commonalities for liberal democracies. By adding these perspectives to my own approach, I am able to address the particular tensions present in Canadian public art policy in relation to the older form of "arms-length" arts funding. As well, in the first section of Chapter 5, I draw on several sources to discuss the notion of the public sphere in relation to the larger area of controversy and of designations which combine public and art. I focus on Rosalyn Deutsche's texts as both an example for analysis, but also as a reference for creating specific attention to the role of activist art projects that work with components associated with the concept of the public sphere such as debate and participation. Connected to my dual discussion and use of Deutsche's work, I bring in Jürgen Habermas' key text, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, as well as Craig Calhoun's critique of, and development from, this book.

Despite the fact that the two major designations of inside and outside the gallery as well as controversy can be separated in terms of certain arguments and assumptions, I do not want to lose sight of the ways in which they overlap, inform, and produce each other. Thus, prior to commencing the last two chapters, I address the imbrication of these designations within the pivotal event of the three major controversies at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). I argue that although identity is the central stake in the apparently confused discussion of this event, gender and sexuality or race and nationalism are not overtly addressed. This perspective becomes clear by relating the NGC disputes

to other discussions of public and art and by maintaining a sense of the larger picture of shifting, yet specific and limited, designations that structure the area.

## **2) Contradictions in responses to Newman, Sterbak, and *Lost Illusions***

### **2.1) Discourses of museum reform within public and art debates**

Newspaper items, art magazine articles, and academic essays share the assumption that debate about various aspects of public and art is part of an external critique of art institutions. Opponents to a given art project position themselves as outside the art system, either self-identifying as citizens, taxpayers, elected officials, and members of the general public or evoking elements from this list. Supporters accept this outsider status and either see the arguments as irrelevant because they are external or as necessary because a supposedly fresh perspective will lead to reform of art institutions by putting new pressure on them.

Contrary to these assumptions, Bennett argues in *The Birth of the Museum: history, theory, politics* that modern museums have been constantly subject to demands for reform since the inception of this type of institution. Furthermore, there is a consistency to critiques of museums over the last century (though specific details and political constituencies involved vary). Two principles characterise the critique: "first the principle of public rights sustaining the demand that museums should be equally open and accessible to all; and second, the principle of representational adequacy sustaining the demand that museums should adequately represent the cultures and values of different sections of the public" (*Birth* 90). Bennett's argument, and his numerous examples, can be extended to undermine the assumption that recent Canadian



art controversies are solely produced out of new economic conditions or fresh societal expectations.

The repetition and constancy of the overall structure and goal of the critiques, despite variations in specific details, suggest that the structure of the institution itself plays a significant role in producing and sustaining the discourses which call for its reform. Bennett states that:

While it might be tempting to see these as alien demands imposed on museums by their external political environments, I shall suggest that they are ones which flow out of, are generated by and only make sense in relation to the internal dynamics of the museum form. Or, more exactly, I shall argue that they are fuelled by the mismatch between, on the one hand, the rhetorics which govern the stated aims of museums and, on the other, the political rationality embodied in the actual modes of their functioning -- a mismatch which guarantees that the demands it generates are insatiable. (*Birth* 90)

In other words, in relation to the principle of representational adequacy, it is possible to critique a particular museum display for inadequately representing a race, class, gender, et cetera because, by definition, public museums are supposed to represent all members of the public. Similarly, in relation to the principle of public rights, the requirement that public museums should address an equal and undifferentiated public validates the advocacy of public accessibility for an exhibition or art project. However, these principles are never fulfilled, and the demands for reform never satisfied, because the museum functions against the supposed goals of equal access and full representation. Bennett explains through numerous examples how museums have historically operated to regulate behaviour and assist in various forms of social control.

Although Bennett's argument specifically addresses museums, he analyses these cultural institutions as part of larger social movements by working with Foucault's theory of governmentality. It is this focus which makes Bennett's

discussion applicable to questions of public and art, particularly around the relation of inside and outside the gallery. Other engagements with the notion of governmentality further support my analysis of these relations, of the role of art experts, and of the significance of government arts funding (such as the Canada Council) and systems for supporting art installed outside the gallery walls (such as a civic public art program). Rose argues that there has been a shift in governmental relations, particularly around the configuration of experts. In "Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism," he outlines the accepted argument that late nineteenth and early twentieth century liberalism produced various social technologies which are seemingly distant from the state and which govern events and persons through constitution of social norms. He goes on to argue that advanced liberalism detaches expertise from political rule and instead accentuates individual citizens, competition, accountability, and consumer demand. Bennett's ideas fit within this theory in that museums, and related art experts, are one instance of these technologies. However, Bennett's focus is historical and thus he does not attempt to address recent processes.

I argue that discourses based in Bennett's two principles of museum reform operate across art projects installed inside and outside of a gallery. At one level, the discourse of representational adequacy sustains the demand that public art projects, or publicly funded works, should adequately represent a community. For some arguments, there is an assumption that the work outside is an extension of a gallery because installing work outside the walls constitutes community outreach by a gallery. Other approaches argue that public-site projects are better than work inside an art gallery because work located in a community necessarily better represents the specifics of that community. In this way, proponents of non-gallery public art claim such work as external to the gallery and position it as part of the seeming outside critique of galleries.

Similarly, the discourse of public rights sustains much of the controversies over art and public. These critiques address either purchases for public galleries, funding of the arts, or projects installed in public space and demand that the opinions of all citizens should have equal weight in the decision making process for this funding, purchasing, or installing. There is little differentiation between objects installed inside compared to outside a gallery. As well, debate about the products of public funding, and projects installed in public space, rates these works in terms of how accessible they are for the general public. Proponents of public art also rely on this discourse to position the work as part of the critique of galleries by claiming that public art has a better connection with its audience, and increased accessibility, simply by installation outside the gallery walls.

In addition to identifying these characteristics, Bennett demonstrates that there needs to be new strategies for sorting through the specifics of different levels and types of argument about public and art. Bennett's arguments explain that it is not sufficient simply to plot regularities and common tropes across seemingly different areas of public and art as an end goal. As I discussed in the previous section, the concepts which combine public and art are notoriously slippery and difficult to define. Given this problem, it is tempting to restrict analysis to a single event and thereby isolate analysis to the particular valences of that moment. However, Bennett's arguments suggest that such a restricted approach is not effective because one needs to examine underlying assumptions and address connections across events.

## **2.2) The controversies at the National Gallery of Canada**

The notion of controversy is taken for granted in academic articles, art criticism, and mainstream media reports about public and art. There is a distinct pattern to the attacks on public funding of art or criticism of art installed in public

space. Opponents set themselves up as outside the art world and on the side of the people, the citizens, the taxpayers. The art supporters go along with the supposed exteriority of this criticism and argue back by defending their territory on the basis of professional expertise and the unique relevance of aesthetic criteria to art objects. As well, the pro-art side tries to win support by proving that they do cross-over the art sphere versus public sphere line and relate to the masses. The three controversies over Barnett Newman's, Jana Sterbak's, and Mark Rothko's work at the NGC amply demonstrate this phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Their treatment by art theorists also demonstrates the problem with taking the notion of controversy for granted and with focusing on a single event or series. The pro-NGC responses, and the academic work written about them, assume that anti-NGC discourses are indeed external to art institutions. They take the NGC altercations as special moments that indicate a new crisis for art institutions and thereby miss the ways in which the attacks on the NGC arise out of the structure of art institutions. These sorts of controversies do have implications for art institutions, but as markers of larger trends and not simply as new things that change the playing field.

For example, Kevin Dowler, in his article "In Defence of the Realm: Public Controversy and the Apologetics of Art," does address both mainstream media coverage of art controversies and art institution responses in the purchase of Newman's *Voice of Fire* and the exhibition of Sterbak's *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*.<sup>2</sup> He argues that, similar to recent arts funding fusses in the U.S., politicians and journalists challenge the validity of Newman's and Sterbak's

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<sup>1</sup> As I discuss in Chapter 3, most articles discussing Canadian art controversies subsequent to 1990 mention the NGC events as examples against which they measure their argument and as moments which encapsulates all the issues raised by such controversies. Refer to Appendix C2 and Appendix E6.

<sup>2</sup> Dowler wrote the article before the 1993 Mark Rothko controversy.

work in the name of "fiscal responsibility," but in fact, these critiques are a "smokescreen for a general indictment of contemporary art" (83). He asserts that these are two rare moments which momentarily collapse "the distinction between . . . the sphere of aesthetic production and reception and . . . the spheres of everyday social and political interaction" (82). Dowler concludes that the NGC events demonstrate that contemporary art is becoming increasingly irrelevant to, or marginalised from, the social order. In this way, he perpetuates the mismatch between arguments that claim location within the art world versus arguments that claim location in the everyday sphere of the social and the political. The former support contemporary art, prioritise aesthetics, and recognise professional art expertise while the latter attack contemporary art and art expertise by situating the critique as external to the art world and raised by politicians and mainstream media. He also does not recognise the interconnection between the pro and con sides of the debate particularly around shared tropes such as the dual claims to represent the public.

Dowler essentially conflates the Newman and Sterbak cases, partly because he positions the controversy in terms of a separation of art and the social and partly because he defines the role of contemporary art as the key stake in the debate. I agree that there are similarities between the Newman and Sterbak controversies, such as the smokescreen function of "fiscal responsibility" or their dual focus for discourses of museum reform. However, I argue that there are two key aspects which need to be addressed. First, these controversies seem to connect with the shift from expertise to individual citizens and the accountability of state institutions which Rose identifies -- such a move is not unique to the rarefied domain of the art world. Second, each debate involves quite distinct issues, particularly that the stakes around *Vanitas* have more to do with identity and belonging than with contemporary art.

The discussion for and against each piece focused on significantly different aspects: the *Voice of Fire* debate hinged on artistic skill, aesthetic judgement, and the validity of professional art expertise as well as Canadian nationalism whereas the *Vanitas* debate hinged almost solely on social politics.<sup>3</sup> Basically, the argument against Newman claims that too much money had been spent on a dead American artist for an ugly painting that any child could make with paint from Home Hardware and that the gallery staff live in an ivory tower and have no idea what the Canadian people want out of their national gallery. In support, art experts, such as gallery directors or professional art critics, argue that it is a beautiful object that represents a major artistic period and that for a gallery to have status, it needs to collect major international artists. The NGC staff argue that learning more about art would increase appreciation while the pro-art journalists state that opponents are ignorant pig farmers incapable of ever entering such a debate.<sup>4</sup> For *Vanitas*, there was some of the attack on the idiocy of art professionals, but given that Sterbak is a living Canadian artist, the whole issue of Canadian culture and the status of the artist was not raised. The negative arguments boiled down to: the money should be spent to feed the homeless and we should give poor people the steak to eat instead of wasting it inside the gallery. Proponents pointed out that artistic materials such as paint cost as much or more than steak. More importantly, both pro and con sides overtly acknowledge that *Vanitas* is meant to be a feminist critique of the fashion and diet industry and of societal expectations for women's appearance. However, they disagreed over their support for funding these issues and the validity of its presence in the NGC.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix D1.

<sup>4</sup> The pro-NGC side loved the fact that MP Felix Holtmann, who lead both the 1990 and 1991 attacks, is a pig farmer.

The interconnection of the opposing teams that underlies the *Voice of Fire* affair becomes more apparent in the *Vanitas* debate. The arguments made by John Bentley Mays, art critic for *The Globe and Mail*, exemplify this point. Dowler focuses his analysis of media coverage on Bentley Mays' reviews. He cites the article "National Gallery should tune out static over painting" in which Bentley Mays strongly supports the purchase of *Voice of Fire* and condemns the attacks for lacking professional art expertise (86-87). Bentley Mays' pompous indignation that members of the great unwashed should dare question the judgement of the NGC staff fits perfectly into Dowler's argument. The critic's opinions appear to support both the mismatch of art and the social as well as the increasing irrelevance of contemporary art to the everyday life of the general public. Dowler points to the aspects of Bentley Mays' article in which he argues how the NGC could better handle their public relations and convince the masses to appreciate the importance of the Newman purchase.

Dowler then analyses Bentley Mays' opinion on the *Vanitas* controversy. He is mystified as to why the art critic seems to shift his position concerning the superiority of art expertise over the opinion of everyone else. Dowler cites Bentley Mays' article "Beefs about 'flesh dress' must not fall on deaf ears" and quotes the art critic's agreement that "these steaks could feed hungry people" (qtd. in Dowler 88). Dowler writes that Bentley Mays "advises that the NGC . . . 'must not attempt in any way to trivialize or ignore the protests . . . the art world should pay close attention to what's being said about it on the streets,' thus neatly reversing his previous position with regard to the opposition to the purchase of *Voice of Fire*" (88). Dowler suggests that Bentley Mays' seeming reversal is "symptomatic of the different ways that these two works engage the viewer, and the kinds of aesthetic experiences that arise from these engagements" (88). In other words, Dowler locates the explanation in the two

specific art objects themselves and advocates aesthetic theory as the route to understanding these art works. He does mention that *Vanitas*, unlike *Voice of Fire*, provokes discussion "over the social implications of what it represents" (88) but he does not pursue what are the specific connotations of the work and how these might affect the debate generated around it.

I argue that a 300 dollar art work<sup>5</sup> generated similar hue and cry to a 1.8 million dollar piece because feminist work, art that overtly addresses notions of gender, is seen as contentious both within and outside art institutions. I disagree that Bentley Mays contradicts or changes his position from one review of a controversy to the next. Bentley Mays consistently supports a specific position across various articles on public and art. He celebrates the macho myths of American Modernist artists and derides feminist and socially active work.<sup>6</sup> For example, in an opinion piece titled "Me and my museum," Bentley Mays discusses a trip in which he introduced a friend's daughter to the great museums of Europe. Prior to the journey, he describes the young woman as "a teen feminist terrorist from hell, with a loud, smart mouth to match. I didn't like her." ("Me and my" E1). As well, in a second article on the Sterbak affair, "Fashioning moral messages from cultural indignities," Bentley Mays aims to place the work back in the context of the NGC exhibition. Thus, he reviews the work itself, and concludes that Sterbak's exhibit has "the moralizing, prim look of an old sex manual I recall seeing long ago, in which adolescent boys were supposedly warned off careless tom-cattin by being shown graphic medical photographs of

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<sup>5</sup> *Vanitas*, unlike the purchase of the Newman and Rothko works, was only exhibited at the NGC thus the gallery only had to spend 300 hundred dollars to buy meat for the installation.

<sup>6</sup> The centrality of machismo to Modernist art practice has been exhaustively critiqued by feminist art historians. For example, refer to Carol Duncan, "Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting," *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) 293-314.



how VD can ruin your fun" ("Fashioning" C6). In short, Bentley Mays' position on dreary and annoying feminism solves the seeming riddle of his lack of loyalty to the cause of contemporary art. As well, this example suggests that the feminist characteristic of Sterbak's work is central to the ensuing controversy and analysis of this event.

In the article on Newman, Bentley Mays in fact deploys the same tactic as Dowler, raising the trope of siding with the man on the street going about his everyday life outside the art gallery. Bentley Mays opens the article with "Barnett Newman always loved a good fight. Growing up in New York's Bronx . . . the U.S. painter learned how to use his fists in street slugouts between local Jewish kids (his gang) and Irish kids" ("National Gallery" C9). He goes on to say that, as a fan of boxing matches, Newman would have been "bored to death" by the wimpy flap over the NGC. In his critique of Sterbak, Bentley Mays remains consistent in his support of the big boys of art. He again sides with the people, concluding that "the art world should pay close attention to what's being said about it on the streets" ("Beefs about" C13). Dowler does quote this line; however, he does not connect it to Bentley Mays' effort to associate Newman with "the street."

Furthermore, Dowler notes that the attacks on Sterbak tended not to question the work's existence as art. Unlike *Voice of Fire*, which was resoundingly mocked for lacking artistic skill or worth by its opponents, the fuss over *Vanitas* did not primarily address its sculptural presence. However, Bentley Mays, clearly a supporter of the general notion of contemporary art, argues that *Vanitas* is not art: "But Sterbak's misreadings of art history aside, her [response to the attacks] also overlooks one very stubborn truth at the heart of the current criticism: her piece is not a depiction of meat, it *is* meat" ("Beefs about" C13). This is not some bizarre lapse on the *Globe and Mail* art critic's part. He does

not momentarily slip into similar art ignorance as the pig farmer politician he so despises, thereby evoking the same trope of having a direct connection to the working man on the street and using this reference to disprove the claim of some objects to be art. Quite simply, his rush to dismiss the artistic value of *Vanitas* corresponds with his general derision of feminist work.

The correspondence of arguments by adversaries such as Bentley Mays and Holtmann are indicative of the contradictions and elisions which occur in controversies over public art. In mainstream media items, art magazines, gallery catalogues, and academic essays, the opponents and supporters of a particular debate deploy the same sets of tropes. As I outlined in the previous section, a map of the tropes and trends in these kinds of debates demonstrates that the mutual evocation of outsider status by the opposing sides in a single debate, as well as the seeming shift of positions for different controversies, are actually the rule, not the exception.

Making matters more complex, controversy is also a measure of success for public art or art that addresses public issues. Critics and bureaucrats who support public-site work favour projects which could be seen to cause controversy and celebrate those that actually generate some sort of fight. For example, in a newspaper article on the goals for the new Vancouver public art program, Bryan Newson, the program manager, praises Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds' signage project outside the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG) (McLellan E13, E20). The writer quotes Newson's statement that "I think the installation is calculated to push people's perceptions" and that "On the one hand, it is open and accessible, and on the other, it leaves people with a lot of questions" (McLellan E13). Newson supports this installation because it fits his belief that Vancouver's public art should address "public issues" and have a multicultural appeal.

The article explains that Heap of Birds' temporary project, installed adjacent to the VAG, consists of a series of signs which

look like street signs - or something left over from a past demonstration. The signs are white, with red lettering. The first line of each one says British Columbia. But the words are spelled backward. This is the first clue that these signs are more than leftovers. They are public art. (McLellan E13)

The second line, printed correctly, reads "Today your host is" followed by the name of a different B.C. First Nations band such as Musqueam. The article, which focuses on Newson's job and the public art program rather than this art project, does not explain that Heap of Birds' signs, titled "Native Hosts," were one component in *Lost Illusions: Recent Landscape Art*, a group exhibition at the VAG. The other eight projects, a mixture of multi-media installation and photography, were located inside the gallery. Heap of Birds also had a different text panel installation inside the VAG.

In contrast to Newson's support, two newspaper reviews panned the exhibition. Ann Rosenberg, an art critic for *The Vancouver Sun*, wrote that *Lost Illusions* "is a disappointing show that features pessimistic visions of nature by nine artists" ("Power" D11). In this brief review, she does not critique any of the individual pieces and describes Heap of Birds two projects as "indoor and outdoor political signs" ("Power" D11). The *Sun* critic concludes that the nine works in this exhibition "will be lost on all but the most sophisticated art viewers" ("Power" D11). As well, Bentley Mays resoundingly bashed the exhibition, claiming that *Lost Illusions* brought no "memorable art to Vancouver" ("Lost Illusions" C13). He sees the exhibition as an example of a recent "kind of museum show" and "an expression of the barren confusions into which politically motivated art and artists have recently fallen" ("Lost Illusions" C13).

The two art critics clearly do not agree with Newson's support of "Native Hosts" and, in particular, disagree with his claim that the works are "open and accessible." Why does Newson have such a different response to this project? The key variation between the two opinions arises from their distinct assumptions about the work's context. Rosenberg and Bentley Mays both explicitly rate the exhibit in terms of the show's title, the curator's essay, and the context of art for galleries. In other words, they measure the exhibition against other landscape art work and against trends within museums. They see "Native Hosts" as one part of the exhibition that happens to be installed on the grounds of the VAG instead of inside the gallery. In short, for them Heap of Birds' signs are not public art, they are gallery art.

In comparison, the city bureaucrat does not comment on the whole show, he is only interested in the outdoor installation. He sees "Native Hosts" as a discrete public art project that relates to his area of work rather than to the other components of the exhibition or to trends in museum practices. One of Newson's goals as public art program manager is to introduce some variety into Vancouver.<sup>7</sup> Because there was no official process for the installation of art in city owned spaces prior to the introduction in 1991 of Vancouver's public art program, the majority of existing works are traditional monuments placed in city parks. Newson measures "Native Hosts" against the kind of public art that pre-exists his program. As well, he positions the work in relation to notions of Vancouver's identity as a city, particularly in terms of fostering works for "urban areas" (McLellan E13).

Newson and the two art critics look at the same art project, yet reach disparate conclusions, because they situate the work differently in relation to the

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<sup>7</sup> Newson, personal interview.

gallery as an institution. From one perspective, it is a museum show; from the other, it is public art. However, they all pick up on the same point within the work. For both arguments, the crucial stake is the question of the political qualities and identity issues raised by the signs. Rosenberg and Bentley Mays each argue that the identity politics in all of the *Lost Illusions* work renders the pieces unsuccessful as art. Bentley Mays states "The guiding principle involved in selecting each work appears to have been the content of its political message, not its artistic accomplishment" ("*Lost Illusions*" C13). It is precisely this supposed narrowness of vision, this attention to First Nations' issues and the land, which provides the basis for the claim that the art is only relevant to a small cadre of art world sophisticates. Newson's praise of Heap of Birds' work also keys on the cultural identity and political issues addressed by the piece. His references are more oblique, as the article focuses on the issue of Vancouver public art in general rather than reviewing this installation. Newson references the political intent when he claims that "Native Hosts" pushes "people's perceptions" and supports the First Nations stakes raised by the work when he associates the work with "multicultural" qualities (McLellan E13).

The link between Bentley Mays and Rosenberg's claim that *Lost Illusions* fails as art, because it is too political and too identity based, distinctly resembles Bentley Mays' earlier dismissal of Sterbak's *Vanitas* on those same grounds. And, similar to Bentley Mays' alignment with the anti-contemporary art arguments, an attack on the VAG and *Lost Illusions* picks up on the art critics' condemnation. Dave Cunningham, in an article for the *B.C. Report* (a voice for the ultra conservative), gleefully quotes both art reviews to support his claim that the VAG ignores "the common-sense views of the public" in favour of "the tight-knit cabal of art theorists, critics and artists" (30). He further gloats that "Mr. Mays' comments have sparked debate among critics over the accessibility of

contemporary art to the public. By using abstract means to champion political causes, artists appear to be distancing themselves from the tastes of the public" (30).

Standing alone, the poor quality of Cunningham's argument undermines his position. For starters, the only spark generated by Bentley Mays seems to be the *B.C. Report* article as there are no other published reviews of the exhibition except the two which Cunningham quotes (Rosenberg and Bentley Mays). In short, all three of the reviews agree with each other. And, by taking *The Globe and Mail* writer as the voice of public taste, Cunningham grants Bentley Mays' wish that when it comes to pesky political art, the art critic wants to be on the side of the people, not the art world know-it-alls. However, seen within the larger perspective of a map of trends within public art, as with the NGC debate, the article demonstrates the circular quality of discussions about public and art. As soon as one looks at more than one of these controversies, it is clear that the same seeming contradictions as well as the same tropes and agendas appear over and over, in a self-sustaining trap similar to the two principles which Bennett argues characterise debates about museum reform.

Within recent controversies, identity issues such as gender and sexuality as well as race, ethnicity and nationalism are commonly the focus. Seen from this perspective, as with the Sterbak case, there is no surprise that Bentley Mays ends up on the same side as the anti-contemporary art position. This happens because of mutual opinion about the political and identity quality of the work, not its aesthetic value. It is obvious that by the "public" for whom he claims to speak, Cunningham does not mean First Nations peoples nor those who critique the effects of colonialism. Furthermore, Cunningham states that beyond the landscape theme, the exhibition involves artists who weave "themes into their works like native Indian land claims, pacifism and feminism" (30). Why include

feminism in this list? The nine works focus on landscape in terms of environment or in terms of First Nations' land rights while there is only an oblique reference to feminist critique in the catalogue essay. The *B.C. Report* writer over emphasises the role of feminism in this exhibition to add support to his condemnation of *Lost Illusions* and the VAG. The hullabaloo over 300 dollars worth of meat in Sterbak's work suggests that one can make a much bigger mountain out of an issue if the stakes involve gender.

. There seems to be a contradiction in the appraisal of Heap of Birds' signs because the very same issues around First Nations' identity that causes the art critics to condemn the work, provide the basis for Newson's support of the work. One can hardly call him more radical, or more of an art world elitist, than the *Sun* or *Globe and Mail* writers given that he advocates the installation as part of an interview concerning his position as a civic bureaucrat. Newson's different assessment relates to his attention to "Native Hosts" alone and his perception that it is public art. This perspective conjures up a different set of assumptions than an installation intended for an art gallery. As public art, the work is supposed to be provocative because critics, journalists, and gallery or public programs staff -- regardless of their own political position -- expect art outside the gallery to address social issues and cause confrontation. In short, the supposed dividing line of inside and outside the gallery profoundly affects expectations about an art project's political qualities, in general, and attention to issues of identity and belonging, in particular.

## Chapter 4 Inside and Outside the Gallery

### 1) Significance of spatial relations

Art theorists who embrace projects outside of the gallery, and in public space, tend to be those who desire to support larger movements for social change. They are not satisfied with the current potential for practices within galleries in terms of enabling political art projects and in terms of including audiences from a diversity of communities. Theorists within the area of museum studies have exhaustively detailed the constructed quality of the exhibition space and resulting limitations for meaning production and gender, sexual, racial, and class identity.<sup>1</sup> A key point from museum studies is that art institutions do not actually produce connections with a general public. As well, both supporters and opponents of contemporary art claim that the "art world" is a separate sphere from social and political realms. As a result, it is tempting to abandon the whole mess and lay claim to a fresh, new territory in which visual representation can function with social activism.

It is clear that there is a strong motivation driving art theorists' deployment of the designation public as a means to support art projects installed outside of gallery walls. However, in order to effectively engage with art practice located in public space, or art practice that traverses spaces inside and outside of the gallery, art theory needs to question the core assumption of a necessary and absolute division between the gallery and public space. Discussions of public

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), and Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: The Lapis Press, 1986).



and art give grossly unequal attention to spatial relations when they pose the space outside as free and open in comparison to the structured and structuring space inside. I argue that one cannot assess the meaning production of art practices in public sites, or addressing public issues, without analysing the complexity of public locations in terms of social practices, institutional relations, and the artists' strategies in connection with these.

The gap between complex public-site art projects and the discussion of such work indicates the limitations of existing theoretical approaches. As well, a few artists and theorists have outlined the need for reconsideration of the space of public art practices and assumptions about the move outside the gallery. In his article for *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots: Questioning the Public in Art and Architecture*, Mark Lewis identifies the trend to pose a simple opposition between gallery space and all other spaces. He sums up arguments about the role of public art and states that

The first imperative is that this art, a public art outside the museum, must function differently. Why? Because it must answer to the expectations of those for whom the experience of the work of art is an alien concern (they do not, for instance, visit museums regularly). But then do we not run the risk of simply reaffirming that very alienation, assenting to the division of labour that allows some to engage (and others not to engage) with art's essential propositions? At the very least it underlines the difference between the museum and its other, indeed designating an "out there," the public realm as *being* the other of the museum. ("Public Interest" 40)

Lewis' statement sums up the pattern within art analysis of public art projects: theorists do not examine the locations of such projects as a distinct location or type of location, but rather, they describe that space as not-the-gallery. As such, they deploy the "out there" as the solution to the spatial, institutional, and other gallery relations and deploy various designations in combination with this binary opposition. For example, Lewis describes the association of improved

"accountability" with the public realm as a supposedly new approach to the production and discussion of art projects ("Public Interest" 40). He points out that in fact, notions of accountability have long been applied to the public monument as a form of democratic representation. In this way, Lewis demonstrates that the simplistic comparison of public space as the other of the gallery functions to recirculate theoretical approaches.

Defining public space in opposition to the gallery is clearly specific to the area of art and museum theory, but identifying public space as a site of contestation is not. The interest by artists and arts organisations to produce work for and about various aspects of public space connects to this larger focus on such spaces as key areas for a myriad of social and political stakes including struggles over cultural identity and belonging. In several articles, Rosalyn Deutsche explores the specific area of art practice that addresses conflicts around the nexus in New York of urban space, civic policy, private development, and homelessness. She draws on various urban studies sources to analyse these projects in relation to "the social production of urban space" ("Alternative Space" 55). In addition to describing the artists' strategies to work with other areas of social activism, Deutsche also outlines the importance of such practice to neoconservative art critics who zealously strive to dismiss this work. Despite differences in their feats of logic, Deutsche argues that neoconservative responses share the strategy of separating art and aesthetics from social and political realms ("Alternative Space" 48-49). Thus, they support public art that appears to only relate to aesthetic concerns as part of a refusal to engage with the leftist political concerns of the activist type of public and art projects.

Analysis of recent public monuments that represent racial, gendered, or sexual identity tends to primarily focus on the monument in relationship to public or urban space. In the anthology *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context,*

*and Controversy*, Donna Graves discusses the controversy around the representational form of Detroit's monument to Joe Louis and Joseph Disponzio discusses the controversy over the installation of George Segal's monument to gay and lesbian liberation in New York. Each writer strongly supports engagement with the identity stakes within their respective debates and focuses on the events as moments which exemplify struggle concerning those stakes.<sup>2</sup>

Graves frames the response to Detroit's monument as part of larger arguments relating to "racial ideology and racial tensions in urban America" (215). She relates the controversy to other contemporary memorial commissions and argues that "Analyzing the planning, design, and reception of the Louis monument is illuminating, not only in terms of the politics of public art but also for what it can tell us about the politics of representation and race when they enter the arena of the urban built environment" (215). Graves selects this event for analysis because it condenses conflicts concerning racial identity and belonging in a major U.S. city and she frames her discussion as an investigation of various kinds of politics. However, her statement that these politics "enter the arena" of urban space seems to suggest that the opposition of public space to the gallery underlies her approach despite her strong framing of the event as an issue about the representation of racial politics in Detroit and in American cities.

Disponzio identifies that the creation of a monument to gay and lesbian rights and its installation in public, city space are the key factors in the debate over Segal's sculpture. The project aims to represent the movement for definition and liberation of gay and lesbian identity as part of public space and public

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<sup>2</sup> I discuss the controversy over each event and the writer's responses to these in greater depth in Chapter 5. For the New York project, homophobes opposed the installation in a public park while gay and lesbian groups debated the form of the monument and whether a permanent monument was even appropriate at all. In Detroit, the city made the bizarre choice of a giant clenched fist as the form of the Louis monument thereby evoking Black Power imagery instead of an individual reference to Louis and sparking criticism from a variety of quarters.

consciousness. Thus, the installation in a city park is integral to the conception of the project, rather than an opposition to gallery practices and representations. Similarly, the co-ordinating committee for the Vancouver Women's Monument Project selected the public memorial form precisely because they wished to address, and redress, women's experience of violence in public spaces. In the statement of purpose, the organisers claim that the project "is intended as a model for remembrance . . . , promoting change by bringing what is repressed and denied permanently to the surface of our collective consciousness" (Women's Monument Project N. pag.). As well, they state the monument's role includes making "a unique, permanent public statement that women's lives are valuable and at risk" and providing "a gathering place for annual memorials on December 6th, as well as other ceremonies and public awareness campaigns on violence against women" (Women's Monument Project N. pag.). In short, the location is important as a physical site at which feminist organisations can rally, groups can gather, and individuals can mourn. Furthermore, the creation of a public monument functions as part of strategies to change discourses concerning violence against women such as the trend to individualise each case or to remember the name of the perpetrator instead of the women.

The proposals for both the Vancouver Women's Monument Project and the monument to gay liberation generated volumes of response. This interest, its controversial quality, and the repetition of this type of tumult, suggests that the pressure on public and art events which pertain to gender and sexuality derives from the connection between such projects and their public location. Describing this location as simply not-the-gallery restricts the potential to analyse such projects and to follow through on questions about their representational strategies and discursive connections. As a result, absolutist inside/outside the gallery

assumptions also restrict art theorists' ability to engage with the activist components of a project or the ramifications of an event for social change.

### **1.1) Public and Modernism as binary opposites**

Many of the proponents for moving outside the gallery as a form of critique of gallery practices, and a solution for the problems with such practices, clearly address the gallery as specifically the Modernist form. They align a number of associated binaries with the division of inside and outside the Modernist institutional space including high culture and popular culture as well as private and public. Suzanne Lacy encapsulates this construction of political, public art through direct comparison to Modernist practices. She concludes that

What do public artists do? Inevitably we must come to understand this work's relationship to what is called 'real life.' Art as a profession, taught in art schools and displayed in museums, has created a paradoxical division between its practice and its public locus. The confrontational framing that figures prominently in recent art controversies is in part a product of the modernist model of the artist. Alone in her studio, the artist creates through a struggle that, at various times, pits the individual against nature, culture, society, or the art world itself. It could be argued that this heroic tradition serves the integrity of an intensely private studio practice, which might still have some value in maintaining the pure, individualist expression that enables artists to serve society from a vantage point of outside observer. But in the studio of the public sector, in the culture of visibility, such conventions of artistic practice are challenged. ("Debated" 184)

She states that it is only partially the "modernist model of the artist" against which she constructs the place of public artists, however, it seems clear that she defines her position against the whole Modernist set of practices including assumptions concerning the individual artist, private dealership, standards for criticism, and exhibitionary practices. Lacy, and other similar theorists, describe public projects as binary opposites of this set of relations. Thus, throughout her

essays in *Mapping the Terrain* she asserts the value of public art projects and artists by creating an overly simple division between, on the one hand, solo artists in their studio who produce for an art market which is separate from the world and who thereby perform the role of external commentator and, on the other hand, community-connected artists who produce for and about local, social issues and who thereby create relevant art work that is part of "real life."

Discussing public response rather than public art, Kevin Dowler evokes a similar notion of public as defined against specifically Modernist art practices in his analysis of the NGC controversies. He argues that the Newman and Sterbak fusses provide two rare moments that raise the question of the social function of art. Dowler claims that

Members of the art "world" have not, until recently, been called upon to explain the value of the work of art, or its function. Within the condition of relative autonomy that the sphere of art has enjoyed for some time, the shared assumptions of aesthetic worth that act as the price of admission to the art world prevented the possibility of asking such a question. However, once this status of autonomy is brought into question in the name of the public, which does not necessarily share those assumptions, a response becomes mandatory. (81-82)

The absolute separation of art and life with art as an autonomous, purely aesthetic realm is a Modernist conceit that has only ever functioned to such a monolithic degree in the myth-making texts of Modernist supporters. For example, John O'Brian, in *Voices of Fire*, focuses on the imbrication of controversy and avant-garde practices throughout the twentieth century in his analysis of the NGC affairs and thereby touches on the history of various responses to the value and function of such work.

The public versus Modernist position ignores long standing critiques of Modernism within various areas of art practice and art theory. Galleries are not necessarily Modernist: as Bennett discusses in *The Birth of the Museum*, the

history and development of public galleries precedes the specific incarnation of Modernism as a dominant approach. As well, other practices have co-existed with this set of practices and continue to co-exist, subvert, or oppose them. For example, Martha Rosler's *If You Lived Here . . .* project demonstrates the possibility of art for social change and of collaboration by artists with each other and with non-artists within a gallery as well as attention to specific audiences as part of the gallery audience. Rosler explains that

Throughout the project there was an effort to blur "inside" and "outside," to abolish the distinction between the gallery space as a large, squarish room and as a world apart, a zone of aestheticism. Couches and rugs face video monitors in various places in each exhibition, and billboards and other oversized works originally installed "in the street" were hung on the gallery wall. A reading room provided a wide variety of material, from flyers for demonstrations and protests to organisational brochures for tenants and homeless people, activists, and volunteers. ("Fragments" 36)

In short, there are strategies for challenging and deconstructing the specific relations of the Modernist gallery space and thereby producing other approaches for working within the gallery space.

Primarily, the specific construction of inside/outside as Modernist/public appears within arguments by American art theorists who position the gallery as the private, dealer system and public work as community, political, and not-for-profit.<sup>3</sup> They thereby either downplay or completely omit the public gallery from the equation. Lucy R. Lippard sums up this assumption with her statement "I would define public art as accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment. The other stuff is still private art" (121). She details nine existing genres that "deserve the name" public art: one of these is "works prepared for conventional indoor exhibition . . . that refer to local

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix A2 and Appendix B2.

communities, history, or environmental issues" (121) and the other eight involve either "indoor" or "outdoor" non-gallery locations (such as public-site work in parks or murals in post offices). For the first category, she focuses on the project itself as the key factor in defining its public quotient -- the work represents supposedly non-gallery issues -- and the location is irrelevant; for the remaining categories, she defines the genres in terms of the interaction of art projects and eight types of non-gallery location and non-commercial activity. In this way, Lippard skips over any connection of public with the gallery and creates a gallery (private) compared to everywhere else (public) binary.

Theorists who oppose public to Modernist practices frequently evoke popularism on the side of public in this comparison. After the passage I quote at the beginning of this section, Lacy associates the notion of the popular with the terrain outside of Modernist practice when she claims that her dad, an amateur landscape painter, knows that "the studio of the public sector" challenges artistic conventions. She asserts that "The audience for his work - family, neighbors, and friends - is intimately connected to his communicative and expressive intentions" ("Debated" 184). The move to align the popular against Modernist practice ignores how this designation functions within support for Modernism. For example, John Bentley Mays invokes the popularist designation of the street and Newman's boyhood gangs in his assertion of Modernist aesthetic autonomy within the controversy at the NGC ("National Gallery" C9) and also attempts to shore up the boundaries of this autonomy against Sterbak's work by siding with the supposedly popular critique of her work ("Beefs about" C13).

The mutability of the popular in relation to the Modernist/public opposition further demonstrates that this restricted comparison is not useful for addressing the combination of public and art. Attention to Modernist practice can be examined within the larger pattern of assumptions concerning inside and outside



the gallery. For example, in "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline," Mark Lewis focuses on the designation popular in terms of the political history of public monuments. Damning to those who wish to lay claim to the notion of popularity and art, he quotes Adolf Hitler's view that "Art must not only be good but it must be popularly grounded. Only that art which draws its inspiration from the body of the people can be good art in the last analysis and mean something to the people for whom it has been created" ("Some Notes" 40). By addressing the supposed connection of public art and popular culture, Martha Rosler also addresses the invocation of the popular and suggests a productive route for analysing the interaction of work inside and outside of a gallery. Instead of assuming that art practice outside the gallery automatically connects to popular culture, she argues for examining such practice as "art *in the space of* popular culture" ("Birth and Death" 13). In short, even if sites outside the gallery are related to popular culture, artists and theorists still need to examine and question that notion of space rather than posing it as simply not-the-gallery or not-the-Modernist-gallery.

## **1.2) Spatial relations**

In the article "Speaking up in a Public Space: The Strange Case of Rachel Whiteread's *House*" Nick Couldry produces an unusually complex discussion of the controversy around a public-site art project. He describes the installation of, and response to, *House* as an event which combines several discursive layers and he sorts through the contradictions and overlaps in the competing perspectives. At one level, Couldry's approach marks an effective move in terms of theorising an artist's public project which received a great deal of press, local, and art world attention. Because he develops a productive approach to such a complex event, it makes the specific problems with the assumptions of inside and

outside the gallery all the more clear as well as demonstrating the degree to which this notion is embedded and accepted. In this way, the article also points out common traps within analysis of public and art. Couldry admits his inability to reach a conclusion about this one event. He begins his final section with the statement that "I seem to have answered scepticism by scepticism" (111). I argue that the impasse which Couldry reaches can be explained by his reliance on the assumption of a distinct difference between inside and outside the gallery while simultaneously posing the public-site project as part of the art world. Furthermore, despite his attention to public space, as is evident in the title, Couldry does not question the designation public nor does he situate this one event in relation to other public and art events.

Couldry focuses on the flap around Rachel Whiteread's installation in Bow, a suburb of London, England in 1993. Whiteread produced a concrete cast of the inside of one house in a row of Victorian terraces. Whiteread and the sponsoring group The Artangel Trust (Artangel) selected the building because it was slated for demolition (Artangel commissioned a work, Whiteread designed it, and then they searched for an appropriate site). Couldry explains that the project was "endorsed by prominent arts bodies" and funded by Beck's Beer (99). *House* generated interest on a number of levels including gentrification of working class neighbourhoods, potential permanent installation of the temporary project, discussion of government arts funding, and evaluation of business sponsorship. The media and art world attention increased exponentially when the Tate Gallery nominated Whiteread and *House* for the prestigious Turner Prize -- an annual prize to a young British artist for an outstanding exhibition -- and then selected the project. Furthermore, the project also won a high profile spoof prize from the K Foundation which selects the worst of the Turner nominees as part of their

critique of the elitism and of the connection to capitalism and private dealership which they believe the Turner Prize symbolises.

Couldry develops components that are potentially beneficial to sorting through problems within discussions of public and art. First, he comes at *House* from the perspective of media theory rather than art theory. He states that a main goal of his article is developing media theory through an examination of how the event challenges notions of textual analysis. He asks in his introduction "But how do we understand what happens when multiple textual and other practices *confront each other* in a public space that is also a site in media narratives? . . . When media space and public space *overlap*, the answers must lie beyond media-centred theories - but where?" (96). Thus, Couldry works with a complex notion of media discourses in his approach to the *House* controversy. He separates categories of media response and identifies patterns within each type and across the whole body of response. He points out that the arts correspondents in broadsheet newspapers universally praise the project and increase their support as the controversy grows (100). He also explains that opposition to *House* is more complex and appears in three forms:

- (i) reviews by arts correspondents of some conservative tabloids;
- (ii) comment by *non-art* columnists in both those tabloids and also some broadsheets (in the latter case, conflicting with those papers' own arts correspondents); and (iii) indirectly, through news items about the sculpture which emphasised negative local reaction. (101)

In short, arts critics both support and oppose the project while non-art responses tend only to condemn the work. As well, the arts professionals in "highbrow" broadsheets align with the Tate Gallery, Artangel, and general art world endorsement of Whiteread and *House* whereas the "lowbrow" tabloids and "non-art" writers share an anti-professional critique of the art world.

Second, Couldry questions assumptions about space, which are taken for granted within art theory, as part of his examination of the public-site project. He cites Sharon Zukin's discussion of New York's loft scene and argues that although Zukin aims to discuss the loft scene as "a space, a symbol and a site under contention" (qtd. in Couldry 96), she ultimately limits the role of the art projects in this notion of space. Couldry argues that unlike Zukin, he wants to leave open the possibility that "art itself is a strand in debates about those very social conditions" (96). As well, he references Doreen Massey's article "Politics and Space/Time" and quotes her definition of the spatial as "the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local to the most global" (qtd. in Couldry 108).<sup>4</sup>

In his attention to space and to the messy, contradictory overlaps of discourses, Couldry demonstrates a productive approach to the event. However, the one designation he does not address is public. His goal of including art as one of the strands in the debate runs aground on the combination of public, art, and space. He describes *House* as existing in "open public space beyond the museum" (104) and he concludes that "The attempt to understand what happens when art intervenes in public space can, then, help us understand those other textualizing processes (the media in general) which offer accounts of 'the world'" (113). In the same passage he discusses "events in public space" (113). For Couldry, art "intervenes" in public space whereas media or other events simply are part of public space. In other words, he maintains the special, separate quality of art in comparison to mass media or the social: art does not normally fit within public space, it must come from somewhere else (the gallery), and, due to this outsider status and this transfer of context, art can intercede in public affairs.

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<sup>4</sup> I work with Massey's article in greater detail later in this chapter.

The assumption of the division between inside and outside the gallery prevents Couldry from properly including the aspects of *House* that relate to art institutions as a component in the controversy and in his analysis. He deploys unequal notions concerning the complexity of media institutions in comparison to art institutions and, as a result, he cannot explain certain contradictions which he identifies within the event. On one level, he references media theory concerning the role of standard journalistic narratives and practices in the representation of media events which involve contestation.<sup>5</sup> From these sources, he nicely untangles the different categories of response which are present in the *House* controversy as well as establishing in detail how *House* is not a static text, but rather, part of a process.

On another level, in his discussion of the specific art aspects of the event, Couldry refers only to public art. He answers his own question as to "the background" of "the artistic conception of *House*" by describing two crucial points in the "history of art in public spaces" (99). First, he relates his discussion to Rosalind Krauss' work in order to argue that the most influential ideas within public art are "the search for art's wider public function; increasing dissatisfaction with the limitations of the painting frame and gallery space; and a critique through artistic intervention of conventions of public space and architecture" (99).<sup>6</sup> Second, he refers to an article by Michael North, from W.J.T. Mitchell's anthology *Art and the Public Sphere*, to reinforce his assertion that since the late 1970s,

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<sup>5</sup> In particular, he refers to work by Stuart Hall and by D. Dayan and E. Katz, qtd. in Couldry 106.

<sup>6</sup> Subsequent to Couldry's article, Krauss wrote an essay for a catalogue of a Whiteread exhibition. Her article, like the others in the catalogue, reinforces the lack of attention to spatial relations involved with Whiteread's practice by discussing all the work (including *House*) as sculpture regardless of installation inside or outside a gallery. Fiona Bradley, ed., *Rachel Whiteread: Shedding Life* (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1997).

"new questions about how art interacts with its public became central" (99).<sup>7</sup> In short, he deploys public as an unproblematic mark of the characteristics of the art project and assumes, like the art theory sources upon which he draws, that analysis of gallery institutions need not apply.

Couldry admits that there are contradictions within the categories of response that he cannot explain. He identifies that the local versus outside and popular versus elitist narratives are not neat and tidy because local and non-art people switched sides during the event and began to support the project. As well, both the pro-art and anti-art sides claimed to speak for popular opinion and misrepresented each other in their respective moves to do so. I argue that these contradictions are not anomalies, but rather, part of the pattern of discussions which combine public and art. The odd seeming switch of sides, particularly around the popular and the elite, in fact follows the on-going disjuncture in modern museum discourses that Bennett describes in *The Birth of the Museum*. As well, if one considers a number of public and art events, rather than solely focusing on a single case such as *House*, it becomes clear that the dual claim of public affiliation is a common trend in such debates.

*House* is a public-site project, but, in many ways the event is part of gallery institutions. The project came about because an arts group, Artangel, commissioned it and they worked with Whiteread for the duration of the installation and the furore. Furthermore, the Tate Gallery had no problem perceiving the work as an "exhibition" and awarding the Turner Prize accordingly. As well, the art critics and theorists that Couldry quotes posit the work as unquestionably within their domain, as does Couldry in his distinction between art world responses and other types of responses. Given these many connections,

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<sup>7</sup> Couldry provides the incorrect title for the anthology citation: he confuses Mitchell's title with Ariene Raven's *Art in the Public Interest*.

institutional analysis of art practices can provide a suitable approach for theorising the art institutional aspects related to *House* as part of the various levels and contradictions within the controversy.

As I discuss in the introduction to this section, Bennett produces a detailed discussion of the mismatch between "the rhetorics which govern the stated aims of museums" and "the political rationality embodied in the actual modes of their functioning" throughout the development of modern museums (*Birth* 90). He specifically explains how disciplinary technologies that regulate behaviour and differentiate populations are integral to the political rationality of museums. The dissonance between these functions and the democratic rhetoric which governs public museums produces and sustains the discourse of public rights. Bennett focuses on the repetition of demands for museum reform as a prevalent type of this discourse. I argue that the mismatch in function and rhetoric concerning museum or gallery relations can apply to art practice which is not physically located within the gallery walls but which is part of art institutional relations and discourse. This affiliation is part of *House*, as an event, along with other institutional relations such as the media practices and the location within a specific city and neighbourhood. Couldry recognises the latter two, but he does not examine the specific valences of the discourse of public rights in combination with art.

Extending Bennett's argument, public-site projects as well as galleries are supposed to address an undifferentiated general public. This rhetoric allows the critique of a given project or type of project on the grounds that it is not accessible to all. Without the democratic base, the existence of elitist qualities within a project, or the need for specific knowledge and expertise to understand a project, would be irrelevant as a means for critiquing an art project or type of art practice. The physical location in public space and outside of the gallery clouds

this issue. With placement external to the walls, the rules appear to shift; with the added incentive of escaping the structure of the exhibitionary complex, theorists and critics tend to emphasise this shift to the exclusion of other possible relations. The correspondence of public space with the same general notion of democratic access further supports the illusion of vast difference between projects that are inside and outside the gallery. As a result, arguments about factors such as relevancy to people on the street or allocation of public funds can appear to derive solely from the designation public space. Yet, the very articles and reviews which place public projects entirely outside the gallery refute their own argument by emphasising the connection of public projects to the gallery and to art practice. The responses to projects -- whether for or against and whether identifying within or outside the art world -- commonly evoke the gallery as either the domain of a given project or the other against which that project exists.

Couldry's article encapsulates both the contradictory relationship between the gallery and public space within public and art analysis as well as the problems that this contradiction creates for such analysis. Even though Couldry only draws on art theory sources which discuss public art, he still assumes that *House* exists "beyond the museum" and thereby maintains the museum as the space which defines the public-site project. In addition, he focuses on the single event as a special case that is separate from other art controversies both within and outside galleries. Addressing assumptions about inside and outside the gallery within Couldry's approach suggests that aspects of museum studies, such as Bennett's work, apply to analysis of this type of project.

The volume and vehemence of the fuss over *House* certainly encourages the belief in the unprecedented singularity of this project. Yet, other public and art controversies also seem to produce a similar justification for special status. For example, the stubborn endurance of the Newman dispute at the NGC, and its



permutation to include Sterbak and Rothko, lend credence to the role of the NGC arguments as a unique moment and therefore as a watermark in public and art debates. By comparing analysis of several recent public and art events, one can begin to distinguish between the specifics of each project and the discursive trends which traverse the overall terrain. One of these patterns is that critics insist on the new-ness and unique-ness of the particular event under discussion.<sup>8</sup> Another pattern is that they reach an impasse concerning the contradiction of similarities across opposing arguments and the apparently random switching of sides by a particular respondent. For instance, as I discuss in the introduction to this section, Dowler runs into similar problems with Bentley Mays' shifts in responses to the NGC disputes as Couldry does with the debate over *House*. However, one can make sense of these contradictions if one considers these responses as part of patterns within the discourses of museum reform. Bennett outlines the stakes which are involved in the calls for representation and access. Initially, these are based on exclusions around class, but they shift to include other aspects of identity and social experience, such as gender and race, throughout the existence of modern public museums. Class issues involved with the gentrification of working class neighbourhoods is one such stake implied in Couldry's description of *House*. For Dowler, Sterbak's attention to social constructions of gender is the stake he does not address in Bentley Mays' apparent switch of positions.

By examining several public and art events, one can identify that, within analysis of such events, there is a pattern of simultaneously evoking and disavowing the connection between inside and outside the gallery. As well, the repetition of assumptions concerning this strong division appears to limit the

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix E1.

analysis of these events. Questioning the assumptions about inside and outside the gallery, while also addressing the notion of public space, provides a way to escape dead ends in analysis of public art projects and also in discussions of other designations which combine public and art. Doreen Massey's work can be extended to support this combined attention to art institutional relations along with spatial relations.

In "Politics and Space/Time," Massey addresses the strong interest in the concept of space across a number of academic areas during the 1990s. She draws on her background in geography to point out the lack of examination of the term space in these other disciplines and provides an overview of the development of a complex formulation of space within political geography. Massey explains that political geographers work from the basis that "space is socially constructed" and that "the social is spatially constructed too" (70). Furthermore, she explains that "space is not absolute, it is relational" (77). She argues that while the first two points have received varying degrees of attention outside geography, the third point has had little impact on social and political theories. Thus, Massey argues that "we need to conceptualize space as constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local to the most global" (80).

Massey makes a fairly general assertion, but this attention can be focused for specific areas of analysis. In terms of public art, attention to the spatial relations of a project or type of project thereby includes factors such as identity of the neighbourhood, civic policy, and business or other practices at the location. This attention should also include art institutional factors as an aspect of the interrelations. Furthermore, the perspective that space is relational assists in understanding the reason for the prevalence of the gallery as the other against

which public art exists as well as allowing discussion of the connection between the space outside the gallery and the space inside the gallery.

As I quoted earlier in this section, Couldry in fact cites the same passage from Massey concerning the coexistence of interrelations (108). He draws on this assertion to support his attention to neighbourhood and media relations involved in the *House* controversy, but does not extend this analysis to the theories of public art on which he draws nor the art institutional aspects of Whiteread's project. In addition to the limited inclusion of types of relations, Couldry also restricts the potential of his analysis by framing his discussion of *House* with the notion of context. The point of Massey's article is to explain the complexity of space -- both as an object of study and as a designation which various theorists deploy in their analysis. The designation context works against Massey's description of space as relational and as a site of interrelations. Using context as a general term replicates the notion of space as absolute and as a backdrop for events. Couldry describes the main "contexts" in which *House*, as an event, can be understood: "Public and Private Space," "Local/Global," "Memory," and "Gender" (108-111). His categorisation implies that each type of context is separate and distinct from the others, rather than imbricated and interrelated as Massey's assertion would propose. The assumptions which support his use of context also underlie his conclusion that *House* is a case whereby "art intervenes in public space" (113). In short, it matters whether one frames attention to public space as a context for a public art project or as a nexus of social and institutional relations.

For public art, part of looking at interrelations in public space involves addressing art institutional factors. In this way, Bennett's approach works well with Massey's proposals. In *The Birth of the Museum* and in the article "Useful Culture," Bennett includes attention to cultural policy and to power as part of his

cultural analysis by working with the notion of governmentality. In "Useful Culture," Bennett specifically outlines the benefits of this combination and describes a revised cultural theory which addresses particular practices as well as the governmental structures in which those practices operate. He explains that, "By 'governmental' . . . I do not mean 'of or pertaining to the state.' Rather, I have in mind the much broader conception of the governmentalization of social relations - that is, the management of populations by means of specific knowledges, programmes and technologies" ("Useful Culture" 70). From this, he focuses on the discourses and practices related to the formation of recreational institutions in general and museums in particular. He states that

[visitor] contact was planned to take place in a technologized environment - the museum or the concert hall, for example - in which the desired behavioural effect was to result not from contact with 'culture' in itself but rather from the deployment of cultural objects within a specific field of social and technological relations. ("Useful Culture" 73)

Bennett's approach enables attention to discourses and practices specific to art galleries or museums such as Modernist conventions of exhibition and art production or the construction of audience relations within gallery space. At the same time, this perspective also includes analysis of larger social movements and institutional relations which relate to art galleries or museums.

The attention to the deployment of cultural objects within a field, or nexus, of social and technological relations is not limited to the confines of the gallery. As I discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to monuments, such an approach also functions for analysis of art practice situated outside the gallery. Beyond the attention to specific types of public art work, Bennett's approach can also support a revaluation of the assumed division between inside and outside the gallery. By working with the notion of governmentality, there is no longer an assumption that

the gallery is an inherently special and necessarily separate type of space. In this way, Bennett's work is particularly helpful for redressing the problematic assumptions within art theory concerning the division of inside and outside the gallery and for examining the interconnection between public-site and gallery art practice. In short, Bennett provides a more specific approach that can support cultural theory that attempts to engage with the kind of complex notion of space that Massey describes. For public art, the coexisting interrelations includes art institutional factors as well as mass media, civic, or community concerns (the areas that Couldry examines) and other relations evoked by a given project, type of project, or designation.

The need for such a revision for analysis of public art, and for other combinations of public and art, partly arises from the limitations within existing art theory. As well, I derive this approach from the complex attention to specific spatial relations which is evident in many public-site projects. Artists who produce such projects identify the imbrication of multiple relations for public space in general, or the specific location in which they install their project, and construct strategies of visual representation accordingly. In order to engage with this type of public-site practice, I argue for corresponding attention to various levels of institutional, locational, and representational relations.

## **2) Events and designations**

### **2.1) *Benchmarks***

The artists involved with The Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture (the Non) provide a strong example of the creation of representational strategies that engage with the specific location of a project and with the goals for

supporting larger movements for social change. The Non was an artist's group that produced site-specific work outside of galleries from 1986 to 1995.<sup>9</sup> For their last major project, *Benchmarks*, the Non rented the two-foot by eight-foot advertising space on the back rests of bus stop benches throughout Vancouver between December 1993 and November 1994. Individual members of the Non each produced their own images and selected the specific location of the bench. As well, the Non invited several artists that were not members to create their own work.<sup>10</sup>

There are two articles written on this particular project. Both authors primarily focus on *Benchmarks* in terms of its location in public space and base their analysis on the assumed comparison between inside and outside the gallery. Jacqueline Larson opens her essay by claiming that "when artists use the surfaces of bus stop benches instead of any other media that appears in a gallery space, they are bringing art literally to the streets, to the non-gallery public, with social or political consequences" (9).<sup>11</sup> In this way, she founds her discussion on the notion that the physical location of *Benchmarks* necessarily improves connections with ordinary people and with social issues. At the same time, Larson still approaches the project as "art." In other words, moving outside the gallery defines the effect of the work, and yet the work remains art and does not

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<sup>9</sup> The name of the organisation derives from their earlier incarnation as an artist-run centre with an exhibition space located on Commercial Drive in Vancouver.

<sup>10</sup> The artists could select any bus stop in Vancouver for rental of advertising space on a bench. Some artists chose to collaborate with other Non members or with invited artists.

<sup>11</sup> In my personal interview with Leila Armstrong, a member of the Non during the *Benchmarks* project, she explained that the Non commissioned Larson's essay and arranged for its publication as a supplement in *Border/Lines*. They wanted to ensure that there would be published analysis of the project that would continue the discussion initiated by the project. To balance the Non's requests for attention to all of the works and Larson's desire to pursue her own assessment, Larson wrote two components: she provided a brief engagement with each image and produced an essay in which she decided the focus of her argument and selected a few images for greater discussion.

need the physical gallery to provide this definition. Thus, this analysis does not question how the recognition of the *Benchmarks* project as art transcends the gallery nor examine the connection between this definition and the notion of improved audience relations and political effect.

Similarly, in "Benched Art: Negotiating the Rhetorics of Taste," Lisa Robertson deploys a contradictory approach to the relationship between *Benchmarks* as a public-site project and the space of gallery practices. Robertson focuses her article around Larissa Lai's "Between a Rock and a Hard Place." For her piece, Lai chose a bus bench that was situated in front of a Red Hot Video Store (an infamous Vancouver porn video chain) immediately beside a bridal shop. The piece consists of a photograph of the site behind the actual bench with text written over it:

She did not want to pay for the hypocrisy inherent in his family values.  
Between a Rock and a Hard Place, or the Virgin Whore Stores.

In order to avoid potential legal action, the advertising company which owns the bus benches insisted that Lai obtain prior approval from the two stores and when the bridal shop refused, Lai's project was not installed.

Robertson focuses her analysis of *Benchmarks* as an entire project around the one bench panel that never actually appeared on a city street. She argues that "the piece exists as one more small erasure from that contested and highly charged site, 'the public'" (26). The two-foot by eight-foot panel that would have gone on the bus bench was exhibited at Grunt, a Vancouver artist-run centre, and was reproduced in *Front*, an art magazine produced by another artist-run centre. Robertson discusses the gallery incarnation of the project without addressing the contradiction between her positioning of "the public" as outside the gallery and her argument that Lai's work still challenges this public when it was only shown within art domains. In other words, Robertson assumes that "Between a rock and

a hard place" achieves its social and political affect due to its intended location outside gallery walls even though Lai's project easily moved inside a gallery and never appeared outside of one.

Both Larson and Robertson present a sophisticated analysis of the goals of, and the representational strategies deployed in, the various *Benchmarks* examples which they discuss. They each aim to support the critical effect of the project and its specificity as a public-site work. However, the potential of their analysis to work with *Benchmarks'* strategies is limited by the assumption of a clear separation between inside and outside the gallery and the unquestioned belief that *Benchmarks* is still art, despite the difference in location. Robertson can only maintain her emphasis on "Between a Rock and a Hard Place" if gallery practices are her primary consideration: how else could she position the piece as successful, meaningful, and key to *Benchmarks* even though it never appeared in its public site? Robertson's article posits "the public" as outside the gallery and yet she still assumes that Lai's work challenged this public when it was only shown within art domains. Those who saw it in *Grunt* or *Front* were told that it was "censored" from "the street" by the advertising company and the bridal shop. But, what meaning would this piece have produced if it *had* been installed? Would the audience relations have been altered? Would the challenge to notions of publics, public space, or patriarchal hypocrisy and consumer relations have been different than the result of the piece only appearing in art domains?

I argue that Lai's piece primarily exists in art discourses right from conception: the content and representational technique worked inside a gallery whether or not the piece existed as a bench and the location of the bench only mattered in terms of what could be seen in the image anyway -- the proximity of two stores that Lai identified as contradictory. This is not to say that it is not an interesting, thought provoking project deserving of critical analysis. I am asking,



how would it have worked on that bus bench on Hastings Street for the people waiting for the bus or walking by? Would the viewers who used the directions available through the publicity and who saw the project installed on the street have read something different than seeing the panel in Grunt?

There is a body of art practice which brings debates about public and publics into the gallery and that uses similar representational strategies to those of "Between a rock and a hard place." For example Ana Chang and Allyson Clay each produced projects for the exhibition *Urban Fictions* (Presentation House, North Vancouver, 1996) that involve photographing a meaningful public site and presenting these images within the gallery. In "Move," Chang installed three light boxes with colour photographs of various people riding the Skytrain transit system in Vancouver. She focuses attention on assumptions about the gender, sexual, and racial identity of the commuters by adding an audio component. There is a head set accompanying each light box and the visitor can listen to three different conversations staged for, and taped on, the Skytrain. In one, two women first discuss dressing for success at work and then debate whether or not a man is harassing a woman and whether or not they should intervene. Clay also focuses on urban experience but creates a more ambiguous and poetic piece with "A day like the kind of day that always follows the day before." The work consists of two light boxes with colour duratrans images of bleak urban views of the area under a freeway overpass interspersed between text printed directly on the wall. The work reads as follows:

Day after day [image] an invisible unfolding of seasons like constant traffic. I dream of smell and touch, burnt sienna and limes, sweat and water [image] again and again.

Chang and Clay both address a type of public site and experience associated with that site through the presentation of images and text or audio

within a gallery. Lai's "Between a rock and a hard place" fits within this same strategy of art practice. For all three, the work does not require public-site installation in order to produce meaning. The resonance between the two *Urban Fictions* works and Lai's piece demonstrates the need to expand analysis of the relationship between spaces inside and outside the gallery in terms of projects that combine public and art. At one level, the difference between public-site and gallery work is not necessarily so vast given that there are projects intended for installation within a gallery that do address public issues in complex ways. Thus, it is clear that escape from the gallery walls is not the only solution to the conventions of exhibitionary practices. At another level, intended or actual placement outside the gallery walls by no means guarantees a radical shift away from those gallery conventions and associated audience relations or political effect.

It is tempting to focus on Lai's piece because it did produce a measurable reaction. As with Couldry's attention to *House* or the many discussions of the NGC tumult, single public and art events appear as unique and particularly deserving of analysis until one compares a few of these moments and sees the repetition of the same traps in their analysis. For discussion of *Benchmarks*, following the apparent controversy around one work displaces analysis from the engagement with spatial relations that the project as a whole produces. An examination of the strategies for working with several layers of location and discourses within these works suggests possible routes for redressing assumptions concerning the relationship between art practice inside and outside the gallery.

I agree with Larson and Robertson that *Benchmarks* addresses pressing social issues and potentially produces interesting audience relations; I disagree that these factors derive from a necessary division of public-site practice and

gallery institutions. *Benchmarks* and the Non artists are still connected to art institutions and the project also engages with specific spaces outside the gallery. The *Benchmarks* projects are part of the terrain of advertising because the artists worked with advertising space and they are specifically part of transit space because the projects worked with their locations along city bus routes. Furthermore, the artists engage with certain communities in their selection of either downtown bus benches or sites in particular residential neighbourhoods. Many artists deployed representational strategies that engaged with all of these institutional and discursive layers in terms of their overlap. In this way, they neither created an opposition of inside/outside the gallery nor posed the space outside the gallery as unrestricted and unspecific.

*Benchmarks* is part of Canadian arts organisations given that the Non received core funding from the Canada Council. As such, they had to be able to justify and situate their projects within the field of contemporary art practice in their applications and final reports to continue that funding. Even if such applications and reports do not directly correspond to the projects produced, they have an effect both in terms of the production of the work and in terms of how that work is understood by viewers and by theorists. In accordance with Council regulations, acknowledgement of this funding must appear on all promotional material. As well, the Non publicised *Benchmarks* with fliers and posters, released for each set of benches, which include the statement "The Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture is a coalition of artists that work in non-traditional sites. The *Benchmarks* project runs on a rotating basis on selected bus benches throughout [Vancouver]" (*Benchmarks* N. pag.). This material also states the title of the project, the titles of each bench for that time period, the names of the artist(s) responsible, and the location of each bench. They were distributed in art galleries as well as locations that advertise various cultural

events and placed as ads in art magazines such as *Front*. In this way, viewers could first encounter the project through the publicity which marked and explained the project as art and then search for the benches. Viewers could also see the work, then encounter the publicity which would mark the projects, after the fact, as art.

Furthermore, the advertising company insisted that panels include a statement of authorship and a phone number so that the *Benchmarks* images would not be attached to the company's logo and phone number which appears under the space reserved for advertising. As a result, the works included the statement "A Project for the Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture" and thus, even without contact with the fliers, the art projects were marked differently than the usual advertising on the benches. The artists involved with *Benchmarks* had deliberately chosen to avoid such an authorial statement because they felt this text altered the potential affect of the work.<sup>12</sup> In short, rather than a physical connection, a project like *Benchmarks* is very much imbricated with gallery practices through the "arm's length" funding framework in which Canadian galleries, artist-run centres, and individual artists are inscribed.

Yet, at the same time, *Benchmarks* exists within the space of advertising. The bus benches are a low-cost, urban, advertising form. All the other benches advertise companies, products, and services. As such, the expectation for a viewer going past a given bus bench is that company slogans, logos, and advertising campaigns would occupy the space on the back rest. Marking the usual use of the rental space, the company's name, Goodwill Advertising, and

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<sup>12</sup> In my personal interview with Armstrong, she explained that initially the advertising company proposed requiring the authorial statement on the panels which concerned them. The Non members decided they did not want the ad representative to make distinctions between the works and they wanted the works to be similar in status. As a result, they decided to put the statement on all the panels.

their phone number is printed along the edge of every bus seat (visible beneath the image on the back rest). It was due to this label that Goodwill insisted on a separate authorial statement and phone number, in a font at least as large as the company's, so that it was clear that they were not responsible for the image.

*Benchmarks* simultaneously connects with art and with advertising discourses: through installation in the rental spots, the panels do not simply become advertising; rather, the artists engage with, and work from, that location.

One component of the bus bench advertising space is that these sites are associated with public transit because they are located at bus stops. The connection is clear for viewers whether they are waiting at the stop or passing by. In this way, the advertising space has a different resonance from other public advertising forms such as billboards beside freeways or light boxes at commercial car parks. The latter are directed at, and associated with, car owners in comparison to the public transit user at a bus stop. As well, the bus stop benches are located on residential and downtown streets and can be read by pedestrians who live or work nearby, by transit users at the bus stop, and by passing traffic whereas billboards tend to be placed near busy roads or in industrial parks and directed primarily at passing traffic. For analysis of an art project that works with public advertising, it can be significant that there are differences amongst such forms in terms of type of audience, the probable activity of those people, and relationship to specific city location.

Many of the *Benchmarks* artists engaged with the connection between a given bus bench and its immediate surroundings. The majority of the *Benchmarks* projects were located in downtown Vancouver, on Robson Street, which is a main shopping street that is heavily used by pedestrians, traffic, and transit. Robson Street anchors the business and commercial districts of the city. For these projects, there is a close correlation between the location of the work in

advertising space and the location of the benches/art projects in the downtown core commercial district. As well, the representational strategies of these projects emphasises and speaks to the surrounding advertising and commercial discursive practices by mimicking their standard techniques. Designed to be easy to read when passing quickly or while scanning the shop fronts, these projects involved short statements, large font, simple imagery, and attention grabbing messages or images. As such, they look like ads and they also look like other imagery downtown such as store window displays and awnings. Furthermore, these projects address issues that related to the commercial and business discourses associated with the downtown area: they address consumerism, corporate ideology, and assumptions about the neutrality or universal inclusion of the downtown space -- such as the belief that downtown belongs to, or is open to, "all of us."

For example, Leila Armstrong's lesbian visibility projects, "Season's Greetings" and "Passion is a Fruit," play on the disembodied voice of authority that appears in advertising and downtown signage and present questions to the passing viewers. Situated on Robson Street from December 1993 through January 1994, the first piece, in white text on a black background, states "Season's Greetings" in gothic script, flanked by sprigs of holly, with "Your God Loves Lesbians" in plain font underneath. The second piece appeared at the same location from June through August 1994. All in bright green lettering on black, the panel reads "Passion is a Fruit," flanked by icons of a strawberry and a half-peeled banana, over "How Passionate are You?"

These two panels directly address a "you" and reference a specific identity, but they reference this position through their play on the objective voice. This is a different strategy than marking that difference with personal or subjective means such as ACT UP's posters and T-shirts that read "we're here, we're queer, get

used to it." Armstrong's projects work with the invisible us/them dichotomy which underlies the supposedly neutral, universal discourses of advertising and which underlies the practices and identities present in downtown corporate and consumerist space. Armstrong points out the "them" by taking over the disembodied voice of authority and using this voice to ask questions about that which is ignored or marginalised in the discourses and space in which the bus benches are located -- that which is excluded from the us in our public space. At the same time, these projects affirm those who already notice this exclusion and thus, Armstrong's work can function as an in-joke. Installed during the Christmas (shopping) season, Armstrong's "Season's Greetings" specifically references Christian homophobic views. Imagining how annoying this message would be to homophobes might give particular pleasure and amusement to lesbian and lesbian-positive passers-by.

Specific community neighbourhoods constitute the second main choice by the *Benchmarks* artists for physical location. These projects tend to address the identities and practices associated with, and dominant in, that physical location and often address that particular street or intersection as well as its immediate neighbourhood. The representational strategies for these projects draw on feminist and people of colour's strategies for explaining and evoking complex identity and political issues within cultural production, especially exploring and critiquing what is involved with the construction of race, sexuality, and gender around "Otherness." These strategies include the use of marking personal or specific positions, such as self-portraits and "I" or "she" in texts; story-telling texts instead of the authoritative statement of official signs and advertising; and deliberately open-ended or ambiguous messages from which the viewer has to puzzle or add their own conclusions/questions.

Melinda Mollineaux's "Lime," installed at Commercial Drive and Charles Street from April through May 1994, consists of a dark background with, on the left, a photograph of a black woman, from the waist up, in a plain white T-shirt holding out a luminously green lime in her open hand. She is turned toward the outside frame of the panel leaving room on the space to the panel's right for the following text in orange script:

Lime, she said,  
is the colour neither  
of the Self nor the Other.

The image, the text, and the relation between the two is enigmatic: the text is non-conclusive -- it is not an argument or an answer but neither is it a question; is the woman offering the gorgeous piece of fruit or is she studying it?

Part of the direction for interacting with this piece comes from its location. The bench is at a bus stop a few feet away from a row of popular fruit stands on Commercial Drive, a street that is known for its produce and for "ethnic diversity." The consumerism on Commercial Drive is distinctly different from that of Robson Street. In addition to being popular with lesbians and artists (due to the relatively low rent), Caribbean, Italian, Central American, Vietnamese and many other communities live and sell food, spices and other goods along street. It is home for many, but it is also an attraction for the rest of Vancouver and the produce stands do a brisk business to the shoppers who drive there from wealthier districts. Much less of a challenge to the visiting grocery buyers, Mollineaux's project addresses the people who live in the area, who own businesses, or who work in the shops. It offers a recognition of the ambivalence and contradictions around the products which define and nourish the habitual passers-by of that bus bench. Furthermore, the image is a self-portrait, and the bench was located around the corner from Mollineaux's apartment at that time: she would have been



known to some viewers and recognisable to many others who had seen her around the neighbourhood.

The representational strategies constructed by the majority of the artists involved with *Benchmarks* are not based in assumptions that the bus bench panels are primarily an escape from the gallery nor that the benches exist in free space. They complexly evoke and engage with the interrelation of discourses and representations related to the physical location of the bench in a neighbourhood, to the panels as advertising and as connected to the public transit system, as well as to strategies developed in socially active art projects. It greatly restricts the ability to analyse and work from such an event if the analysis re-frames the project as an opposition to gallery practice.

## **2.2) *Artropolis 93* and *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991***

Assumptions concerning the clear division of inside and outside the gallery are further destabilised by events which involve the installation of work both in and out of exhibition space. *Artropolis 93* (Vancouver) and *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* (Montreal) were two temporary projects that aimed to address the combination of public and art. Entitled "Public Art and Art About Public Issues," the majority of works in *Artropolis 93* were exhibited in the empty Woodward's department store building while *Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* had the theme of "Art et espace public" and used existing galleries. In addition, both events included public-site work. Thus, through the special topic for the given year of the event as well as the various options in installation, the two events work from an interaction between art projects for inside and outside a gallery and assume that art can address public space and public issues from either location.

As I discuss in Chapter 2, *Artropolis 93* was the fifth in a series of interdisciplinary, artist-run exhibitions started in 1983 and designed to showcase art in British Columbia. Organisers selected a particular theme for the 1993 incarnation and divided accepted submissions into six sub-themes each with its own curatorial team: The Unbuilt Public Environment, Living Art, Temporary Outdoor Projects, Bridgeworks, Home/Identity/Hybridity, and Art about Public Issues. In the catalogue essays, rather than privileging a celebratory notion of escape from the gallery -- with installation in Stanley Park, under the Burrard Street bridge, in Gastown alleys, and in the abandoned department store -- the majority of the writers and organisers tend to focus on the issues addressed by the overall project and given sub-theme as well as on the social or political intent of the art works in that section.

Furthermore, the catalogue contributors assume that *Artropolis 93* is an art event which interacts with the discourses raised by the works. In the introduction, Lorne Greenberg states that

*Artropolis 93* seeks to address the new artistic, cultural, economic and political landscape . . . . The theme of *Artropolis 93* - Public Art and Art about Public Issues - is not only a topical subject for a Vancouver exhibition in the 90's [sic], but also a critical matter for artists' participation, public debate and information-giving documentation. (6)

As well, in "Public Subjects," artist Susan Schuppli relates *Artropolis 93* to the general area of public art practice that works with social and political concerns. She begins her article with a list of "some 'public' art activities in and around Vancouver 1990 to 1993" (10). The list includes a variety of forms of, and strategical approaches to, public art including Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds' "Native Hosts;" several projects by the Non; Kathryn Walter's text installation "Unlimited Growth Increases the Divide" on the outside of the building which

houses the Contemporary Art Gallery (an artist-run centre); Jamelie Hassan's "Baghdad Commemorative Billboard;" the Guerrilla Gardening Project; Eric Bontogon's (unfunded, unsanctioned) "Asian ≠ Gang" sidewalk plaques; and Schuppli's own "CPR Station Site banner project." Schuppli simply lists the artist or group and the project title without differentiating the type of installation, funding, organisation, or other relations. The list functions to demonstrate the plethora of Vancouver public-site production in the period 1990-1993 and to tie the *Artropolis 93* event in with this diversity of projects.

Schuppli identifies several key questions that arise from public art practice in relation to different notions of activism and politics. One of these questions is "What happens when the art object leaves the gallery space and moves out into the city streets? What are the implications of this activity?" (10). Thus, she does raise the notion of inside and outside the gallery, but does not pose this as the single, all-defining relation. Instead, Schuppli places the gallery/public-site shift as part of a series of issues. She opens the article by identifying the problems with assessing the kinds of projects in her list. She states that

Because of the temporal and often anonymous nature of many of these works, it becomes extremely difficult to gauge their impact upon the spectator. Who saw it? What did they think? How did they recognize or decide that it was art? How did the work interact with its site? (10)

As well, she describes the "public arena" in its own terms rather than as not-the-gallery when she asserts that such projects "not only compete with a number of already dominant systems of representation, such as those associated with advertising and media publicity, but [are] also subject to the same spatial and social relations which are continuously reproduced by the city" (10).

Another strength in Schuppli's text is that instead of assuming that public-site projects automatically achieve radical political effects, she states that "what

can make public art really exciting [is] its direct physical relationship and response to its location" (11). In other words, interaction with public, city, or neighbourhood discourses and representations potentially, but not necessarily, produces the connection between public-site art projects and larger movements for social change. As well, she frames the political strategy and potential effect of these projects as deriving from their interaction with a nexus of relations rather than as an opposition to gallery structures and practices.

Greenberg's and Schuppli's essays in the *Artropolis 93* catalogue are short (one or two pages each) and thus the writers do not investigate any points in detail. Despite their brevity, the texts – Schuppli's in particular -- suggest possibilities for working with the prevalent designations and assumptions in analysis of public and art. They pose the *Artropolis 93* event as a complex mix of approaches to installation and issues. Neither writer addresses the institutional structure of the event, but they also do not deploy the problematic assumptions about art institutions because they do not base their discussion on an escape from the gallery and they identify that spaces outside the gallery have specific and particular relations. As well, Schuppli's and Greenberg's texts each frame *Artropolis 93* as part of a series of projects and discussions within Vancouver during the early 1990s, such as those around the newly formed civic public art policy and program, rather than as a singular moment.

For other public-site events, organisers can become caught up in the appearance of significant institutional change. In a 1998 talk at the Vancouver Art Gallery, curator Mary Jane Jacob describes the type of art projects she has curated during the 1990s, such as the 1991 Spoleto Festival that she organised in Charleston, South Carolina. Jacob explains that she left employment as a staff curator of museums in 1990 and began "working outside museums" (Lecture). Her goal during the past decade has been to "seek means of engagement with

the public that also stand outside those physical and ideological boundaries of arts institutions" (Lecture). Partly, Jacob works with institutions that usually do not deal with contemporary art and partly she "began what [she] would now call public exhibitions, that might engage an audience that doesn't usually go to museums . . . but also in their conception had removed the frames of aesthetic and cultural categories by which museums traditionally determine what is art and how we think about art" (Lecture). In order to effect these goals for each project, such as the Spoleto Festival, she argues that the organisation and administration "still have to get done in actual ways and so in each case it was about creating a temporary institution" (Lecture). Jacob claims that by merely making the exhibitionary institution temporary, rather than permanent and attached to a physical building, "the art and the audience were at the centre of the projects rather than the institutional organization" and that she and the artists could produce "a kind of critique of the presentation of art in museums."<sup>13</sup>

Jacob's statements stand in stark contrast to the catalogue contributors and organisers of *Artropolis* 93. By obsessing about her relationship to the institution, she only further demonstrates the interconnection between practices within and outside the physical walls and regular organisation of a gallery. *Artropolis* is a temporary institution which reappears on an irregular basis and makes use of non-gallery space with the aim of presenting the diversity of British Columbia art production.<sup>14</sup> The 1993 incarnation focused on public and art

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<sup>13</sup> Further undermining Jacob's "freedom" from the museum, she gave the talk as the curator of the exhibition *Changing Spaces: Artists' Projects from the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia* (VAG, 1998). In her opening remarks, she makes a joke about being "inside" on that day, but this does not affect her arguments about her practice.

<sup>14</sup> Formed in 1988, the A.T. Eight Artropolis Society is the legal entity responsible for the Artropolis exhibitions. It has neither office space nor permanent members. For a brief overview of this organisation, see Paula Gustafson, "Artists, Activists Hope to Resurrect Artropolis in 2000," *Georgia Straight* [Vancouver] 28 Jan. - 4 Feb. 1999: 69.

through the issues addressed by the works in terms of representational strategies, location, and social or political intent, but not through the temporary quality of the organisation and administration. The event is very much part of the larger sense of art institutions rather than part of the limited notion of a physical building or administrative body. For example, the exhibition included artists who regularly exhibit within galleries, studied at arts schools, and receive grants; the project was divided into curatorial areas and curated by people who regularly work with arts organisations; and one of the curators, Robin Laurence, is a *Vancouver Sun* art critic. Both *Artropolis 93* and Jacob's protestations otherwise demonstrate the interconnection of art projects inside and outside the gallery. Such a perspective does not undermine the political and institutional possibility of these kinds of projects because this view explains how these projects could potentially "critique" gallery structure and audience practices and enables attention to the nexus of institutional and discursive relations for projects that traverse the boundaries of the gallery.

Jacob's statements concerning the necessary and new radical quality of her temporary exhibition approach ignores other examples of similar practices such as Vancouver's *Artropolis* or Montreal's *Cent jours d'art contemporain*. Kate Taylor describes that the annual Montreal project is "the brainchild of Claude Gosselin and his independent Centre international d'art contemporain de Montreal [CIAC]" ("When the whole" C6). The 1991 incarnation took the special topic of "art et espace public" and involved four separate exhibitions and a discussion series with artists, architects, and critics on the event's topic. Three of the exhibitions followed standard gallery practice (with curators for each component and display in existing gallery space) and the fourth consisted of two public-site installations by Gilbert Boyer.

The gallery exhibition "JES" consisted of work by Ludger Gerdes, Dan Graham, and Jeff Wall that all address notions of public and private and of spatial relations through art work intended for gallery exhibition. "Visions," curated by Sylvie Parent, consisted of ten emerging artists and has a loose connection to the theme and the third featured a thirty-year retrospective of the work of French artist Jean-Pierre Raynaud and did not connect to the theme. Boyer created a new work "La montagne des jours" which consists of five granite discs installed around Mont Royal and engraved with fragments of conversation he overheard while visiting the park. Boyer's section also included "Comme un poisson dans la ville" which consists of a dozen official-appearing, marble plaques installed on walls around Montreal in 1988. In short, two of the four projects, plus the discussion series, specifically focused on the combination of public and art while the other two exhibitions fit within the general goal for *Cent jours* of showcasing a combination of international and local contemporary art.

Neither the independent organisation nor the topic guarantees a rupture in gallery institutions and a radical political effect. As with *Artropolis*, *Cent jours* very much connects with art institutions and practices through relations such as support from various Québec and Federal cultural funding bodies, use of existing gallery space, curatorial organisation, inclusion of established artists, and the distribution of guide maps for Boyer's projects.<sup>15</sup> As well, the theme of art and public space applies in distinctly varying degrees to the event. Yet, the critical response foregrounds the notion of public in discussion of the project and, in the rush to embrace the theme, many use Boyer's installations, the anomaly, to sum up the whole.<sup>16</sup> The *Ottawa Citizen* introduces Nancy Baele's review with "Public

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<sup>15</sup> Maps to locate Boyer's projects were available at the CIAC gallery location and most reviewers promote these in their reviews.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Appendix D2.

art, such as Gilbert Boyer's granite discs in Mount Royal Park . . . is the theme of a special exhibition in Montreal" and they use an installation shot of one disc (Baele "100 days" E6). As well, one of Jean Dumont's reviews in *Le Devoir* focuses on Boyer and assumes that the theme relates to movement inside and outside of gallery walls. Dumont states that "C'est une chose d'aller voir des oeuvres dans un musée . . . c'en est une autre d'être confronté à elles au détour d'une de nos rues ou de nos places publiques" ("*Jour*" 10). Both Baele and Dumont discuss other work in the event, but subsume these under the notion of public art or art in the streets and public places.

The theme of "art et espace public" causes Athena Paradissis to pull out all the stops: she quotes Richard Serra on the *Tilted Arc* debate to open her article, she cites the NGC fuss over Sterbak's work, she references the dismantling of Lenin's and Stalin's monuments in Eastern Europe, and claims that "exhibited in the public sphere, art subjects itself to public response" (10). This description of existing in the public sphere seems to apply to Sterbak in the NGC, to the gallery-based components, and to Boyer. Quite the opposite in approach, Ann Duncan firmly sticks the theme to the physical realm of public space. She states that two of the exhibitions in *Cent jours* relate to public art -- Boyer's and "JES" -- and she claims that Boyer's work "is what good public art is all about" while the location of "JES" in CIAC's gallery headquarters constitutes "something of a contradiction. Public art should be just that - in a public place, not tucked away in private exhibition space" ("Public Works" J1-J2). For Paradissis, the theme produces an assumption that everything in the show automatically connects to public in the same way that the controversy over Sterbak links that event with public monuments and public art. In comparison, for Duncan, only work physically outside the gallery can be public or relate to public issues. In this



way she, like Baele, interprets the theme "art et espace public" as simply "public art."

The approaches of either over-celebration or of over-restriction each prevent detailed analysis of the event and the components. For discussion of *Cent jours* as an event, responses take the theme as a given. Partly this indicates the general support for public and art as a worthwhile topic for art projects and as a suitable framework for discussion of art. However, in the rush to agree with the choice of a theme which combines public and art, critics pass over the relationship of the theme to the event and to the various component parts. The unquestioned notions of public art or art and public space operate as standards against which the projects can be measured. In particular, responses deploy the designations of politics and audience in association with inside and outside the gallery.

More complex than simply collapsing the gallery exhibitions into the goals and effects of Boyer's projects, Taylor rates each component against that theme of public and finds that Boyer's work is the most successful. She gauges the various gallery exhibitions for their "accessibility" and relation to "audience:" for "JES," she argues that Gerde's work fails because it "is really about *art*, with little consciousness of its audience;" for "Visions," she lauds several of the works that are "installations in which the viewer has a role to play" and singles out Lani Maestro's work in particular because it is "accessible and intelligent" ("When the whole" C6). Taylor concludes her review by stating "Not least because it is a fully realized outdoor installation in a public place, Boyer's pleasant work is the fullest statement on the theme of public art that the *Cent jours* produces. The other works are generally of high quality, but the whole seems lifeless" (C6). Similar to Duncan and Baele, Taylor reduces the notion of "art et espace public" onto the narrower concept of public art and location outdoors. According to Taylor, artists

can discuss such an issue inside the gallery but the result is "lifeless" compared to real public art.

Related to Taylor's assumption that the public-site project has more life than the gallery-based projects, Kathryn Hixson assumes that the location in a public park requires a search for signs of political activity in Boyer's work. In her article, Hixson strives to go against the general consensus that Boyer's works are "pleasant" (Taylor "When the whole" C6), "playful" and "poignant" (Duncan "Public Works" J1), or "simple" and "unaffected" (Paradissis 11). Instead, she claims the granite discs are political. She cites Boyer's use of colloquial French and his play between the personal voice and the authoritative stone material in order to assert that the artist "seems to champion a personal identity that can have a political effect" and that "Boyer simply encourages the freedom of the public sphere" (87).

Some of the catalogue entries for *Artropolis 93* demonstrate a similar tendency to push for a general notion of political and democratic effect based on the combination of public and art. Lance Berelowitz discusses the importance of the various incarnations of *Artropolis*, and the particularity of the 1993 theme, stating that

The artist . . . emerging from the rarefied and unaccountable confines of the studio into the public eye, finds him/herself confronted with a host of challenges and responsibilities, not least of which is the artist's responsibility to the public realm. As a collective expression of community and place, the public realm is the great urban project. (8)

Robin Laurence specifically describes *Artropolis 93* as political and focused on cultural identity. She argues that there is strong opposition to "the highly politicized art of our day" and that this hostility "comes from middle-aged, middle-class, straight white guys . . . . And there are lots of them, lots of advocates, it

seems, of art that is purely absorbed with aesthetic matters, art having no social, cultural, or political agenda whatsoever . . . *Artropolis 93* is not for them" (12). She concludes that *Artropolis 93* is about "the artist's social accountability" and "the viewer's response" (13).

Berelowitz and Laurence, like certain of the responses to *Cent jours*, do not engage with specific aspects of the event and the components. All of these writers assume that outside a gallery is more accessible and more political than inside and that this effect occurs due to the combination of public and art -- whether that is "public art and art about public issues" or "art and public space." As part of this approach, they raise common designations associated with inside and outside the gallery: accountability to audience, connection to community, and production of political effects. The problem for art theorists who wish to engage in social change is that these important designations become meaningless when tossed around with abandon. As well, the ease with which each designation slips and slides indicates a need for greater specificity in attention to designations. Addressing areas concerned with the public(s) for a gallery or project provides a means to engage with the entanglement of audience, community, and politics in relation to inside and outside the gallery.

### **2.3) Public(s) for galleries**

Concern for audience, viewers, or other designations for the public(s) for art and galleries are generally not central to art theory, but rather found within the domain of art education and public programming. Art critics and theorists look at institutional relations or strategies of visual representation and discourse analysis, textual analysis, or institutional analysis are generally accepted approaches. However, in specific attention to public and art, the expectations shift. The designation public art seems to imply that both the art projects and their analysis

produce a higher degree of accounting for "the man on the street." Theorists argue that public art is more authentic, has a stronger connection to its viewers than gallery art practice, and therefore provides an excellent arena for social activism.<sup>17</sup> A variety of cultural and communications theories have made the problems with this assumption abundantly clear. Studies of mass media and advertising have long been haunted by a desire to find a way to quantifiably measure audience reactions to representations and to prove a relationship between intentions for representations and effects on the viewers. Cultural theorists concerned with audience relations discuss the problems with these approaches and propose alternative routes for discussing audience practices.<sup>18</sup>

Donald Goodes addresses the desire to increase accessibility for a diversity of audiences as a means to decrease the separation between the art world and social spheres in his Master's thesis. In the preface he states that his study was initially

motivated by my own interest in possibilities of having the art which has both enriched and distressed my own life over the past decade become less cut off from those, outside the milieu, who might contribute to or benefit from its offerings. I quickly realized, however, that the "how-to" mechanics of increased accessibility were not, at the core, what compelled me to take on this topic. (iii)

In short, Goodes began his project intending to focus on the designation audience, but identified that discourses and institutional practices which assume the separation of art from everything else was actually the area that drove his interest. As a result, he rapidly concluded that it was not productive to focus his study on a search for means to change access for the non-gallery goer or non-member of an art audience.

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to Appendix A1 and Appendix A2.

<sup>18</sup> See Martin Allor, "Relocating the Site of the Audience," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5 (1988): 217-233 for an overview of various approaches to audience studies.

In art theory that addresses public and art, it can seem like a major shift to simply include attention to audience given that art theory has tended to have little to no concern for that area. Such an assumption is central to the combined deployment of audience, community, and politics in connection with the division of inside and outside the gallery. Compared to the supposed lack of attention for audience and community inside the gallery, public art -- or other combinations of public and art -- are necessarily more political because artists outside the gallery work with communities and connect directly to non-gallery going audiences. Yet, the wealth of attempts to measure and rate audience reaction to mass media suggests that it is impossible to make such an assertion about the effect of representation on people or groups. Secondly, discussion of shifts toward putatively audience-centred types of projects, and interest by art theorists in attempting to address such concerns, frequently confuses gallery change with social change. Projects might involve a new or altered set of practices for gallery institutions, but that is not necessarily the same as production of political effects and creation of social change.

From my own position as working both as an art theorist and also within gallery education and public programming, I agree that art theory has tended not to consider the levels of visitor experience nor the relation of art production and exhibition to viewers.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, this experience also indicates that embracing audience and working with communities is not as easy nor necessarily radical as many proponents of public and art projects would hope. These discussions assume that the art projects can effect such change all on their own.

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<sup>19</sup> I was the programming chair on the board of two artist-run centres -- The Photographers Gallery, Saskatoon (1989-1990) and Video Vérité, Saskatoon (1989-1991). I worked in the Education Program at the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, during 1990 and 1991 and have been employed on contract in Public Programs at the VAG since 1997.

However, that ignores the structural, spatial, and governmental relations of art institutions which function to contain excess of meaning and to discipline visitors interaction with art projects. During her career in public programming for galleries, Cheryl Meszaros has focused specifically on the problem of expanding the restricted experience of a standard gallery visit and providing access to the content of specific exhibitions as well as to prevailing trends within art practice.<sup>20</sup>

In an interview with Meszaros, she describes why the practical deployment of the designation community and the notion of community consultation is problematic. Meszaros cites the example of *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver, 1938 - 1963* (VAG, 1997) and says

We do that show. We work with the architecture community. . . . That is a fully-formed sort of eco-system of its own with all of . . . those things that constitute a complex community. And then we just move on. We just move on to the next community. I'm of two minds. One I see that's not a deeply profound way to work with people. On the other hand, I think so what? It doesn't have to be deeply profound. That's their vested interest, they got an architecture show. That's fine, we will move on.

Meszaros points out that gallery consultation with a given community only functions with a community organisation that fits a structure that works with the gallery institution -- recognisable leaders, set goals, and clear parameters to that specific community. Although theorists and critics deploy the designation community to refer to cultural identity and a desire to effect social change around the representation of a diversity of publics, in practice the designation community actually includes other definitions such as professional groups or business associations. Furthermore, even if that community is based on a specific cultural identity, the practice of community consultation tends to limit access to the parameters of a single, related project. In other words, community connection

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<sup>20</sup> Meszaros was the Educator at the Mendel Art Gallery during my employment there and is currently the Head of Public Programs at the VAG.

can be a simplistic process that involves moving from one group to another without shifting the institutional practice. As a result, deploying the designation community does not guarantee gallery change let alone social change.

In relation to the notion of connecting with audiences that are non-gallery goers, Meszaros refers to suggestions from others that Public Programs could deal with critiques that the gallery does not relate to diverse communities by putting on programs for the various communities defined by distinct racial identities or for the street kids who hang out in the downtown area that surrounds the VAG. She states that "But to just bring them in . . . is a really superficial notion of what . . . audience is. And so if they are identifiable, if they have a club of their own, then we can work with them." Meszaros argues that such an approach erases the complex overlaps of multiple identities that describes most people's experience.

Meszaros bases her approach to enhancing visitor experiences of the gallery, and perhaps shifting the constitution of regular gallery-goers, on the construction of specific technologies in the gallery. She works from many levels of museum analysis including theories of cultural institutions and meaning production such as Bennett's theories of museums as disciplinary spaces or Andreas Huyssen's<sup>21</sup> attention to how museum processes contain excess of meaning as well as attempts at quantifiable analysis of museum experiences through exit interviews or visitor analysis. She focuses the Public Programs strategies around three areas of concern and related technologies. One, in response to the variation in background knowledge concerning different art practices, public programs has "gallery *animateurs*" in the exhibition space who provide information through gallery talks and who are also available to answer

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<sup>21</sup> In the interview, Meszaros cites Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: marking time in a culture of amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

questions and engage in discussion with interested visitors. Two, because the gallery structure and prescribed behaviour erases the body from gallery experiences, public programs operates an "open studio" with various interactive activities run by a "studio *animateur*" and also has hands-on sites adjacent to exhibitions. Three, working with the claims of visitor analysis that most visitors perceive or desire the gallery to be a social space, public programs designs the open studio to allow time and room for socialising and also includes basic items such as chairs and conversation areas inside the exhibition space.<sup>22</sup>

None of these three strategies sounds particularly radical, and yet, all three have required lengthy negotiation with the other departments of the VAG and copious documentation throughout the time of their implementation. Meszaros admits it seems ludicrous that the simple act of including seating areas should cause so much contention. However, once installed in a gallery that has four floors of exhibition space, visitors can pause for a rest before moving onto higher floors and this can enable them to simply spend more time looking at the work. If people find the gallery physically uncomfortable or unpleasant, they are less likely to be willing to engage in meaning production with the exhibitions and art projects. In addition, there are various levels of knowledge required to interact with different forms of art practice. The standard technology of text panels can provide an introduction and connection to the work, but having a live person allows a second route of access as well as the potential for answering questions or in-depth discussion of a specific point. Furthermore, there are regular talks in Japanese, Cantonese, and Mandarin on all of the exhibitions. The interactive sites provide a third route that includes hands-on forms of learning.

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<sup>22</sup> Meszaros has discussed these programs in detail in several articles and conference papers, including: Cheryl Meszaros, "The Dialectic of Innovation," *Muse*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1998 and Cheryl Meszaros, "Matrix, Meaning and Meta Cognition," *Interspan*, vol. 25, no. 2, Winter 1998.



The *animateurs* and the interactive sites form the basis of a strategy to increase access to basic content and meaning for visitors with little gallery experience as well as more in-depth meaning for those with greater experience. During the time of writing this dissertation, I worked at the VAG as one of the gallery *animateurs* for a variety of exhibitions. Following Meszaros' and Public Programs' guidelines, my gallery talks include many levels of information for each exhibition such as biography, description of technique, introduction of style, but also competing views on content and significant points from different theorists who have analysed the work. For example, with the exhibition *The Symbolist Prints of Edvard Munch* (1998), I discussed Munch's imagery of women in relation to the accepted view of his biography and also in relation to feminist analysis of the use of women as a sign within avant-garde art practice. However, this approach does not necessarily guarantee a radical shift in viewers' readings of the work. At some times, visitors pick up on a feminist or more politically engaged view on a given exhibition by either thanking *animateurs* for including that perspective or engaging in debate about it; but, in relation to the same exhibition, other visitors do not engage with that view and connect to a celebratory perspective on the work. With *Munch*, some visitors would discuss the notion of women as sign while others would discuss Munch's relationship with his mother and the resulting melancholy that drove him to make art.

Rather than trying to figure out how to better present a feminist perspective to viewers who do not engage, my experience as a gallery *animateur* suggests that it is significant to present that perspective as support for those in the space who are also feminist. At another level, the gallery *animateurs* play the key role of revealing the codes, assumptions, and other foundational information that arts professionals and experienced art audiences possess. For example, with *Changing Spaces: Artists' Projects from The Fabric Workshop and Museum*,

*Philadelphia* (VAG, 1998), the *animateur* talks outline some basic precepts of installation practice through the example of the strategies used in the projects by Carrie Mae Weems, Glenn Ligon, and other artists in the exhibition. Ligon's work involves multiple quotations and images of American boxers printed onto punching bags while Weems' installation consists of a combination of texts that alter the Adam and Eve story, photographs of African architecture, *trompe l'oeil* design on wall paper, and texts and images on a free standing screen. In order for viewers to engage with the artists' complex attention to gender, race, and sexuality, visitors need to move past feeling insecure about how to read and interact with such work. Rather than solely explaining the intention of the installations or the way critics have responded to these artists, the *animateurs* can also provide tools for the viewer to decode for themselves and also to have access to future installation work that they encounter.

Beyond the potential to alter a visitor's experience, the various Public Programs' technologies also shift the appearance of the gallery space. The gallery represents itself as less exclusive and authoritarian if there are chairs with chatting visitors, a staff person available to answer questions and hear concerns, *animateurs* speaking more than English, and areas where both children and adults engage in art-making activities related to the exhibition.

Furthermore, Meszaros states that arts professionals tend to assume that the "only allowable or valid experience" in the gallery or with art is a "deep, profound revelation." The physical space of the gallery and the exhibitionary structure is devised to fit this ideal. In short, one approach to altering the accessibility of the gallery for various groups who are not regular gallery goers is to recognise and enable the presence of other kinds of experiences in addition to the deep revelation by including space for a socialising experience. However, supporting gallery interaction other than intense engagement is antithetical to the

assumptions underlying the goal that the combination of public and art can or should work with larger movements for social change. Meszaros clearly states that she does not see her work as social activism. She believes such an effect could come out of Public Programs' strategies and technologies if the art project or exhibition raised those issues. In general, she describes her role as attempting to encourage visitors who do come to the gallery to come back, to spend more time in each space, and to have various levels of experience when there. In contrast, when theorists and critics discuss the notion of connection with audience in relation to the combination of public and art, they assume that a viewer will, or should, have the experience of being deeply affected by the art project and therefore become moved to understand the critique or perspective put forward by the project.

Discussions of public and art include attention to the public or publics for a project and for galleries as part of assumptions about public art or art that engages with public issues. Yet, these responses tend to mix strategies for gallery change with strategies for engaging with social change. Meszaros and the VAG Public Programs demonstrate the difference between these approaches. Much of the hyperbole concerning escaping the gallery walls and finding an audience bears closer resemblance to the general calls for reform of standard gallery practices and the critique of the disciplinary, exclusionary, and containing space of exhibitionary practices. Sorting through the difference between gallery change and social change allows art theory both to pay greater attention to specific technologies for shifting the exhibitionary complex and also to engage with, and support, art projects that address particular social or political concerns.

Meszaros admits that there are limitations to the extent which Public Programs can shift the constitution of the visitors to the VAG given that their strategies are aimed at working with someone who comes to the gallery in the

first place. On the other hand, if a person with little or no art experience visits the gallery willing to be a member of an art audience, then these strategies should encourage them during that visit and interest them in making return trips. The notion of the viewer's willingness to engage is almost completely unaddressed in theories of public and art. One exception, Martha Rosler makes the point that for public art projects, there are many examples in which "the passing audience refuses to constitute itself as [the work's] public" ("Birth and Death" 13).

Discussions which celebrate the notion of escape from the gallery assume that there are all those people out there who do not go to the gallery and that artists can reach them simply by moving outside and forcing their project into the face of the person on the street. At one level, this form of approach seems less, rather than more, democratic in comparison to gallery practices. As well, if the outdoor public is unwilling or unprepared to engage, then location outside the gallery walls is not necessarily more productive in connecting with audiences than installation inside the gallery.

Rather than being a complete lost cause, working inside the gallery has particular potential around the possibility that those who go to the gallery are consenting to interact with the work.<sup>23</sup> Attention to audience relations within the area of public programs also suggests that their attention to specific technologies within the gallery space could be productive for interaction with projects installed outside the gallery space. As produced within the *Benchmarks* projects, art theory can engage with the representational and discursive strategies of immediate location and issues. The division of inside and outside the gallery can

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<sup>23</sup> Art educator Kirstie Lang focuses on the notion of consent in relation to visitor engagement with art works and with educational programming. In relation to exhibitions of sexual imagery, she argues that activities such as participating on tours involves obtaining the trust and consent of the visitor. See Kirstie Lang, "Sexual Imagery in the Gallery and Classroom: Teaching with 'Private Pictures' in the Public Realm," *BCATA: Journal for Art Teachers* 38.2 (Fall 1998): 24-33.

be significant, but it is not necessarily productive of different audience relations, community connections, or political effects. One role for analysis of public and art projects is to sort through the permutations of public and art in order to discuss the difference between projects that have a desire to engage with public issues and locations compared to projects that actually succeed in producing such engagements.

## **Chapter 5    Controversy**

### **1) Public and art is necessarily political**

Art theory tends to posit that all combinations of public and art automatically invoke the notion of politics or produce political effects. These assumptions often function to position a given event or project as meaningless. One pattern repeats the belief that tumult and strife are inherent to the pairing of public and art, thus any specific moment is just another example of that phenomenon. In this approach, writers use a particular controversy or discussion of political stakes to generalise about the designations public, art, and political. As a result, the discussion of all three becomes superficial. The trend works against the goals of many critics and theorists who specifically focus on one or more combinations of public and art in order to engage with larger movements for social change. But even within analysis that supports social activism and projects around cultural identity, art theorists tend to deploy an inadequate definition of politics and an unquestioned faith in the intrinsic political quality of public plus art.

In his introduction to the anthology *The Phantom Public Sphere*, Bruce Robbins argues that "the formula 'everything is political' is a blunt instrument" (xv). Art theory that aims to validate, encourage, and develop activist projects needs to focus on specific areas of political goals and strategies in order to expand from the insights and critiques produced by this work instead of re-circulating existing assumptions and patterns. Producing such a sharpening of critical tools involves both examining the deployment of the designation political in a variety of discussions of public and art as well as questioning the supposedly intrinsic political quality of public and art. This assumption currently functions to limit the possibilities of art theory because writers use the designation political as

a guarantee of value or worth and do not examine the specific political qualities and strategies of a project.

Art theorists and critics frequently position politics as a simple, unified quality which can be applied across a wide area of interests and issues. This pattern equates public with political and assumes that the combination of public and art conjures up associations beyond aesthetics and decoration. As well, discussions of the area often interchange the designation public with the designation public sphere and thus associate democracy, debate, and citizens' participation with the pairing of public and art. In particular, these texts presume that, in the twentieth century, the mass media are the public sphere. This belief manifests itself in two connected forms: 1) public art should seek to garner attention from news media and any press attention is a measure of success; and 2) public art should seek to cause controversy and any sign of dispute is also a gauge of success. In short, the most effective and most political project causes debate which is reported in mass news media.

Partly the interlocking confluences around public, art, and political (along with the emphasis on press attention) derives from the spectre of the inability of cultural theory to measure proof of audience reactions or the effects of representation. Theorists and critics who wish to engage with movements for social change, and thereby choose attention to public and art, can carry a chip on their shoulders in relation to other areas of activism and activist theory. As seen in critiques of projects such as the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, many claim that visual representation is not real, necessary, or effective, but rather, a waste of money that could go to the "front lines" of the action.<sup>1</sup> The important work happens around the work place, government institutions, or direct aid

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix C3 and to items such as Stephen Hume, "Dispatches."

services while artists serve only to make posters and T-shirts for rallies. Haunted by the desire to prove the value of the area of public art practice and art that addresses public issues, supporters of these projects deploy the notion of political as associated with real people in real places, as inherent to public and art, and as a measure of success.

The stakes are more complex than debating whether or not a given project is or is not political. Before art theorists can engage with the desire to connect with activist projects, one has to examine the effect for the possibilities of art theory when this discipline freely applies a shallow notion of being political. The sharing of similar problems in Jacqueline Larson's and Lisa Robertson's separate analyses of the Vancouver Association for Noncommercial Culture's public-site project *Benchmarks* demonstrates such limitations.<sup>2</sup> Larson and Robertson each highlight the political quality of the project and they each introduce their articles by describing a controversy over one particular work. Written half way through the period in which benches were installed, Larson's article emphasises the fuss which occurred in relation to Leila Armstrong's work. Installed over the Christmas holidays, the panel featured the text "Season's Greetings: Your God Loves Lesbians." Larson describes in detail how the advertising company which owns the benches, and leased the space to the artist group, balked when they saw Armstrong's completed work. She quotes the advertising representative's fear of "dangerous" or "controversial" work that might incite vandalism (10). As well, she reports on the advertising company's requirement that this bench include a phone number for the artist group.

Larson admits that only news media and a few artists called the number. However, she spends by far the most attention on this one work. The other

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<sup>2</sup> In relation to the implication of a notion of politics with the division of inside and outside the gallery, I discuss these two articles, and the *Benchmarks* project, in detail in Chapter 4.



works all dealt with equally contentious, difficult issues such as Vancouver attitudes towards immigration policies, First Nation's identity, and other projects addressing lesbian identity. For Larson, Armstrong's work gets the greatest attention because it was the only piece that got a rise out of the advertising company and a modicum of interest from news media. Subsequently, the advertising company prevented the installation of Larissa Lai's piece "Between a rock and a hard place" in which the artist addresses gender norms and pornography. Written at the conclusion of the event, Robertson focuses primarily on Lai's work and connects it to the advertising company's fears about "Season's Greetings."

In both cases, the writers take the objection by the advertising company alone as a measure of success for particular images within the *Benchmarks* series. They assume that this response is equal to political debate, that it demonstrates an actual effect on people and beliefs, and that it proves the significance of *Benchmarks* as an art project. Neither critic examines the visual and locational strategies used by the artists nor the connections between the images themselves. Instead, the opinion of the advertising representative is the link between the work. I do agree with Larson and Robertson that this was a great project, and I support Armstrong's particular image. However, I argue that Larson and Robertson undermine the strong points within their articles by assuming that the fuss from the advertising company is necessarily, inherently significant and that this form of response is the most important factor concerning the social or political relevance of the work. In this way, neither Larson nor Robertson can follow through on the complexity of the strategies deployed by the artists involved with *Benchmarks*.

Some public art projects are conceived from the outset as news media projects. With "Homophobia is Killing Us," the artist group Average Good Looks

created a billboard as a direct response to the lack of reporting by mainstream media of a series of gay bashings and a murder that had recently occurred in Winnipeg.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the *Benchmarks* artists who were forced to include a phone number by the advertising company, Average Good Looks always intended to have a response line as an integral component of the project. They wanted the media and homophobes to call in and they wanted to report back to the press about the responses generated by the billboard.

Average Good Looks launched the work with a press conference and in the two weeks immediately after, the phone line received a barrage of hate filled, threatening calls. The artist group then turned the answering tapes over to the police as well as reporting the police interest in the calls to the media. Wayne Baerwaldt enthusiastically describes the goals and tactics which the artist group deployed. His analysis details a successful queer activist project. Average Good Looks had identified an appalling lack of interest by police and news media in a series of homophobic, violent crimes. The direct result of their billboard was the arrest of three gay bashers who repeatedly phoned the billboard's number as well as increased visibility within Winnipeg concerning the extent of homophobic beliefs and violence. From this assessment, Baerwaldt then argues that the project tested "public sentiment in reaction to queer imagery" and thereby "effectively tested political and legal support for an emerging queer culture" and for the possibilities of public art (194).

In short, Baerwaldt asserts that the billboard project affected major social structures and expanded the visibility of queer identity. Baerwaldt founds his generalisation on the assumption that the mass media are the public sphere. He states that, by courting "media reporters on a first-name basis," the artists were

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<sup>3</sup> I describe the "Homophobia is Killing Us" project on pages 71-72.

able to "take advantage of . . . media avenues for access into thousands of living rooms to begin to question existing social and cultural institutions" (194). I disagree with this conclusion about the project. If one does not simply assume that the mass media are an effective arena of participatory democracy, then one cannot conclude that the act of using news media automatically guarantees a connection with a mass audience or an impact on social institutions. Art theorists need to recognise that we can no more measure the effect on the average Winnipeg television news viewer than we can gauge the effect on a person seeing a work of art in a gallery or on a billboard.

Instead, I argue that the strength of *Average Good Looks* is their focus on the specific issue of homophobia within Winnipeg at a particular moment. The group constructed an intervention within local press and city policy in order to produce immediate change about the recent rash of gay bashings. They provided a take on the topic which interested the news media and used this press attention to add pressure to other critiques of the police and the city. However, their tactic of creating a press project does not necessarily indicate that all public art projects must use mainstream media nor does their work demonstrate the construction of queer identity. The text "homophobia is killing us" directly related to the context of an unsolved murder of a gay man. Without the press conference and the follow up reports, the billboard comes across as oppressive and desolate given that it consists of a threatening message written beneath the image of two gay lovers. In other words, the combination of the image and the text does not produce nuanced or complex notions of gay identity. To attempt to argue this misses the activist strategies of the project.

In comparison, Armstrong's bench, and many of the other works in the *Benchmarks* series, were designed to produce subtle notions of cultural identity.

These works were created to intervene in the particular neighbourhoods in which the artists chose to rent advertising space. Armstrong selected a bus stop in the heart of Vancouver's chic downtown shopping district. She created the work specifically to relate to the mixture of religion, commercialism, and notions of family which occur over the Christmas holidays. Armstrong describes the work as "A seasonal message for both lesbians and homophobes, designed to brighten the hearts of some and question the assumptions of others" (*Benchmarks* N. pag.).

Armstrong and the other *Benchmarks* artists objected to the inclusion of the phone number because they never intended the work to create a journalistic style "two sides to every story" debate. When members of the media called the group, Armstrong refused to be interviewed. She did not want the work attached to a single, individual artist nor did she want to be forced into a confrontation with some homophobic zealot.<sup>3</sup> In short, *Benchmarks* is not a news media project. The artists did not believe in the notion that the mass media are the public sphere and that if several thousand television viewers heard about the project, that would mean their work has value. Instead, the *Benchmarks* strategy was to catch the interest of a few of the passing shoppers or commuters, encourage them to pause for a moment, and then maybe to pay closer attention to the cultural identities which are included, and excluded, in the visual images and texts in their environment.

Both Average Good Looks and the *Benchmarks* artists produced political public art projects. However, the kind of politics they engage in are substantially different. The Winnipeg group intervened in civic policy around a specific problem at a certain moment. They made visible both a series of hate crimes and

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<sup>3</sup> Leila Armstrong, personal interview.

the systematic dismissal of these events. The *Benchmarks* artists did not strive to cause controversy. Their project functions to produce moments of cultural identity which rupture the prevailing visual environment of advertising and signage on Vancouver's streets. They did use a form of mass media, but that does not necessarily mean they assumed their work would connect with thousands of passers-by. They were aware that most people go past bus stop ads without ever noticing them. In this way, a putative connection to hordes of people, or a response from news media, are not relevant measures of success. In fact, basing analysis on such assumptions precludes analysis of *Benchmarks'* subtle and complex strategies around visual representation and location. The problems with Baerwaldt's, Larson's, and Robertson's texts demonstrate that it is not enough to passionately support a given art project. Art theorists need to sort through the various notions of politics, and associated designations, that are raised by projects and within analysis of these.

### **1.1) The public sphere**

In "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy," Rosalyn Deutsche responds to the conflation of interests involved with discussion of public art or art in public space and details an argument that theories of such practices should deploy the category of the public sphere. Deutsche asserts that the increasing references to public space in art theory and criticism, as well as the growth in public art commissions, demonstrates that the relationship between art and public space is a hot topic in the art world. She describes that in their approach to the area, various arts professionals

routinely employ a vocabulary that invokes, albeit loosely, the tenets of both direct and representative democracy: Are the artworks for "the people?" do they encourage "participation?" Do they serve

their "constituencies?" Public art terminology frequently promises a commitment not only to democracy as a form of government but to a general democratic spirit of equality as well: Do the works relinquish "elitism?" Are they "accessible?" ("Art and Public" 34)

Deutsche also points out that these analyses contain many contradictions such as the mutual invocation of notions of democracy by opposing sides in debates which was evident in the removal of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*. In short, despite the strong interest in the notion of public space and art as well as the prevailing use of democratic designations, public art debates do not interrogate the definitions of these terms. Deutsche argues that ignoring the current functions of terms such as public space, and their implication within structures of urban transformation, is "perilous for democracy" ("Art and Public" 37).

In order to sort through this type of analysis and better engage with the political ideas raised, Deutsche supports bringing a refined notion of the public sphere into art theoretical discourse. She describes a trend whereby "artists and critics eager to counteract the power exercised through neutralizing ideas of the public have sought to reappropriate the concept by defining public space as a realm of political debate and public art as work that helps create such a space" ("Art and Public" 39). Within this strategy, such activist artists and writers deploy the category of the public sphere and its associated definition as an arena of debate through which state institutions are held accountable to the citizens. In addition to honing the artists' political strategies, this approach also shifts the viewers' place in relation to art projects because "'The public,' in contrast to . . . an art audience, does not exist prior to but emerges in the course of the debate" ("Art and Public" 39).

Deutsche presents the category of the public sphere as integral to the ability of artists and critics to address civic, state, and other relations involved

with public space and integral to the interaction between art projects and audiences. She claims that

Introduced into art discourse, the concept of the public sphere shatters mainstream categorizations of public art and also circumvents the confusions plaguing some critical discussions of public art. Transgressing the boundaries that conventionally divide public from nonpublic art - divisions, for instance, between artworks placed indoors versus those that are outdoors or between state-sponsored versus privately funded art - it excavates other distinctions which, neutralized by prevailing definitions of public space, are essential to democratic practice. The public sphere idea replaces definitions of public art as art that occupies or designs physical spaces and addresses independently formed audiences with a definition of public art as a practice that constitutes a public by engaging people in political debate. ("Art and Public" 39)

In this passage, Deutsche refers to many of the problematic patterns that I too describe in this dissertation: the inability to address inside and outside the gallery, the conflation of designations, the deployment of superficial definitions, and the resulting limitations for theorists who wish to engage with larger movements for social change. However, she attempts to provide an effective strategy by collapsing a range of public and art combinations and issues onto the single area of public art and onto the particular focus of politically engaged practice. Furthermore, she deploys the designation public as a solution to problematic concepts of space and repeats the move to identify a congruence between the designation audience and the definition of (politically motivated) public art.

Rather than invoking the category of the public sphere for all combinations of public and art, and for the whole problematic set of patterns, Deutsche's arguments make sense if related to the particular area of practice that she discusses in detail in this article and in her body of work. Her enthusiasm for deploying a complex attention to the category of the public sphere derives from her focus on civic policy, gentrification, homelessness, and art projects around

these issues which she analyses in several articles. As well, in "Art and Public Space," she examines the importance of feminist projects around subjectivity for the production of critical notions of public-ness and argues that this work has tended to be excluded from attention to public space, urban theory, and debates about public art. These aspects of theories and practices concerning public and art do indeed invoke the model of the public sphere and suggest the potential to work with developments from Jürgen Habermas' theory. The projects Deutsche discusses deploy strategies of critiquing such relations through generating debate -- much like the strategies of Average Good Looks with the "Homophobia is killing us" billboard and press project. In her theorising of these types of projects, Deutsche engages with subjects which the artists wish to debate and thus her work primarily addresses state and civic governmental institutions or policy and experiences in relation to these.

Further supporting a focused version of Deutsche's argument, the prevalence of art theorists using inadequate, contradictory, and tokenistic notions of the public sphere and democratic politics suggests the need for a complex consideration of the area. Deutsche draws on social theory such as Nancy Fraser<sup>5</sup> and Bruce Robbins in order to detail the connections between these theories and activist art practice. Partly her work posits a new approach for art theory and partly it aligns with interests within social theory to develop from Habermas' insights while redressing problematic or ignored areas from his texts.

In the introduction to his anthology *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Craig Calhoun describes the possibilities for social theorists in continuing to work with Habermas' ideas by separating the strengths and weaknesses of the German

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<sup>5</sup> Deutsche refers to Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, vol. 25/26 (1990): 56-80.



theorist's approach to the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> Calhoun emphasises that, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas does describe the public sphere as an historically specific category with particular institutional locations and thus the text is "an inquiry at once into normative ideals and actual history" (1). Central to the structures and the ideal, members of the public engage in rational-critical discourse and thus Habermas argues that a well-functioning public sphere is based on a "culture-debating public." For example, in the section "Social Structures of the Public Sphere," Habermas describes that, during the eighteenth century, cultural products start to constitute a "domain of 'common concern'" which participants in coffee houses and salons could discuss and that these people would determine the meaning of such items "by way of rational communication with one another" (36-37).

Culture is at the core of the public sphere's structural transformation and also at the core of the problems with Habermas' text. Calhoun asserts that

A central weakness is that *Structural Transformation* does not treat the "classical" bourgeois public sphere and the postransformation public sphere of "organized" or "late" capitalism symmetrically. Habermas tends to judge the eighteenth century by Locke and Kant, the nineteenth century by Marx and Mill, and the twentieth century by the typical suburban television viewer. (33)

In short, Calhoun explains that Habermas fails to give a similar in-depth attention to the intellectual history of the twentieth century as he does to the earlier periods in his work and also ignores popular culture and "other less than altogether rational-critical branches of the press" in those earlier periods (Calhoun 33). As a result, Habermas overestimates the degeneration of the public sphere. In the section "From a Culture-Debating Public to a Culture-Consuming Public,"

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<sup>5</sup> The anthology includes a recent article by Habermas, "Further Reflections of the Public Sphere," in which he responds to some of the main points raised since the first publication of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*.

Habermas lays blame on the rise of mass media and the culture industry which produce a formalised construction of "critical debate" consisting of the "presentation of positions and counterpositions" and thereby create "a tranquilizing substitute for action" (Habermas 164).

Calhoun argues that, as evidenced by articles in his anthology, theorists can bring a more complex notion of culture and thereby work with Habermas' attention to specific institutional locations and also engage with a complex intellectual history in order to develop theories concerning both the historical and the contemporary function of the ideal of the public sphere. For theories addressing public and art, Calhoun's and other's arguments demonstrate that twentieth century relations do not involve the collapse of the public sphere with mass media and thus neither a mass mediated pseudo-public sphere nor a direct pipeline to the people through mass media. Along with Deutsche's points, these theories also support detailed attention to how art projects engage with particular policies and decision making structures. In short, the category of the public sphere cannot be interchanged with public space nor automatically attached to the designation public. However, deploying Doreen Massey's attention to space "as constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales" (80), art theorists can address how structures related to the category of the public sphere function as part of those interrelations.

In her description of the role of attention to the public sphere, Deutsche repeats the pattern of conflating multiple designations and approaches. She argues that ideas derived from Habermas have three main benefits for analysis of public art: 1) the category of the public sphere enables an explanation of the interest in accessibility, elitism, and public participation in relation to public art; 2) it shifts art world audience relations; and 3) it helps define public art as work that

functions to create public space as an arena of political debate. In terms of the first point, rather than assisting with sorting out the confusions plaguing attention to projects inside and outside the gallery, Deutsche reinforces that simplistic division. Notions of access and elitism do not only relate to democratic politics and decision making. As I discuss in Chapter 4, debates over accessibility are part of the self-sustaining traps built into the structure of the modern museum. Analysis of public and art commonly confuses these discourses of museum reform with discourses of civic access or other subjects addressed by certain activist projects. As seen in Deutsche's work, discussions of the area assume that any attention to accessibility is related to political structures external to the gallery rather than exploring the possibility of connections between such discourses and the functioning of art institutions both inside and outside the walls of the gallery. Theorists need to differentiate between these discourses in order to effectively engage with those projects that do focus on, or aim to participate in, larger critiques of civic policy, state institutions, or other aspects of belonging and access.

With the second point, Deutsche repeats assumptions of inside and outside the gallery through her notion of audience. She claims that art audiences are "independently formed" and constituted prior to a given work whereas with political debate, "the public" emerges in the course of that debate. I fail to see how the audience for a particular gallery exhibition is necessarily homogenous, autonomous, and extant over time whereas those involved in a debate over New York's policy on homelessness, for example, fleetingly exist only in the course of the installation of a project concerning the issue. This kind of superficial reliance on audience detracts from the potential to work with Deutsche's third point that activist public artists work with projects in public space in order to constitute, or engage with, public space as an arena of debate. The strength of Deutsche's

article is that she focuses on the trend within art theory to deploy the category of the public sphere, states the motivations for this approach, and suggests the need to examine the designation. If her proposals are re-framed as attention to a specific area of public art practice rather than to all combinations of public and art, she opens a route to focus on the specific notions of politics raised within activist projects that aim to spark controversy and to engage with existing debates over policies, laws, or opinions represented in mass media.

The effectiveness of Deutsche's arguments are particularly apparent in comparison to other American art theory. This area commonly deploys notions of the public sphere in analysis of public and art projects.<sup>6</sup> For example, "The Cultural Public Sphere" is the title of a 1987 DIA foundation panel and subsequent publication while W.J.T. Mitchell called his widely cited anthology *Art and the Public Sphere*. As well, numerous articles and magazine items discuss projects in relation to the public realm or domain, the town square, democratic participation, and rational debate. In some cases, this framing works with the strategies and issues of the project in question, but often this attention functions to erase specificity and displace discussion from cultural identity towards a generalising notion of politics and an abstract description of the public sphere.

In his introduction, Mitchell claims that there has been a shift in the attention to public art. The items in his anthology do not focus on

public art in the traditional sense - that is, art that is commissioned, paid for, and owned by the state. Instead, the contributors to this volume have addressed themselves to a set of issues that seem at once more enduring and more timely: the problem of artistic production and spectatorship in relation to changing and contested notions of the public sphere. ("Introduction" 2)

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to Appendices A2 and B2 in relation to Appendix E10.

In short, art theorists bring in the category of the public sphere in order to address the repetition of controversy in relation to various designations of public and art. The projects and events themselves, as well as the topics which they raise and address, appear to be under tremendous pressure. He does not frame the focus as the debate for its own sake, but rather assumes that art projects engage with debates about issues and relations. In Mitchell's framing, the pressure derives from the fact that these projects intersect with larger social conflicts -- "changing and contested notions of the public sphere" -- and thereby his deployment of the public sphere can allow attention to specific discussions of cultural identity and belonging.

In other texts, the notion of the public sphere loses this specificity and becomes either a free-floating concept without institutional location, more akin to a buzz word than to anything that Habermas or Calhoun discuss, or it becomes the other-of-the-gallery. Virginia Maksymowicz, in her article published in *Art and the Public Sphere*, collapses the public sphere onto the binary of inside and outside the gallery in her configuration of audience. She opens with

The artist without an audience would be a contradiction in terms. The type of audience an artist seeks relates to his or her aspirations . . . . Some direct their efforts towards other artists; some address collectors. Still others believe they have something to say to a wider, public audience. How to address that wider audience - an audience that may or may not know anything about art (or even care to know anything) - is an issue for artists who want to work in the public sphere. (147)

Maksymowicz clearly posits the public sphere as equivalent to an unproblematised notion of public space: the public sphere is everything outside the gallery and it is the place where the public (not the art world audience) can be found.

As with other interests in this category, she bases her arguments on a desire to engage with activist projects. Her introduction outlines the difficulties with definitions of public art and separates the traditional practices of monuments or modernist sculpture from "public art . . . that directly engages people who do not regularly visit galleries and museums with the sociopolitical issues that affect their communities" (148). Following this definition, Maksymowicz describes that through her incorporation of the public sphere, she aims to counteract trends within art criticism to claim that such practice is not art, or at least, that it is not good art. However, her approach does not further a goal of detailed engagement with the projects nor with the issues that they raise because she deploys a superficial notion of the public sphere. In this way, Maksymowicz fits a trend whereby theorists who wish to support activist projects, or focus on political relations within events, actually obscure the issues they purport to address by using non-specific notions of politics and the public sphere. For example, Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster start off their introduction to the anthology *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*, by claiming that "Public art with its built-in social focus would seem to be an ideal genre for a democracy" ("Introduction" xi). Like Maksymowicz, they assume that art located outside of the gallery possesses an automatic and inherent quality which, rather than requiring investigation, functions to guarantee the value and worth of public art in general or of certain types of this practice.

Senie and Webster frame their anthology around the notion of controversy rather than the stated category of the public sphere. Following their opening line, quoted above, they state that "Yet, since [public art's] inception, issues surrounding its appropriate form and placement, as well as its funding, have made public art an object of controversy more often than consensus or celebration" ("Introduction" xi). The categories of the anthology address different

"critical issues" in the area and one section focuses on "Public Art and Public Response." Several of the articles within that section mobilise concepts associated with the public sphere, such as the public arena or public domain, in relation to specific controversies over projects. Joseph Disponzio discusses the debate over the proposed installation of a New York monument to gay and lesbian liberation while Donna Graves analyses Detroit's installation of a monument to African American boxer Joe Louis. Disponzio and Graves each focus on the dispute about a project directly related to cultural identity (sexuality and race respectively).

Disponzio examines a ten year long conflict over George Segal's proposal of a two-part monument to gay and lesbian liberation for a park in New York.<sup>7</sup> Opposition came from various levels including homophobes protesting anything gay and lesbian as well as gay and lesbian groups who critiqued the form of this monument or the basic idea of a monument. Disponzio examines the debate through the proposals submitted to the Parks Department, responses from residents near the intended site, the decisions by the Parks Department, and the media coverage of this process. Thus, when he refers to "the public arena," he is addressing the "legally mandated approvals process for public art" through the Parks Department in New York (204). At this level, his invocation of a concept associated with the public sphere functions with the area of his focus. However, Disponzio's article runs aground on the notion of controversy and politics. He presents the specific area of dispute over civic policy as equal to all of the political factors involved in the event and thereby ignores the stakes around the imaging of sexual identity.

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of Disponzio's publication, the monument had not been installed.

Disponzio refuses to question the representational strategies of the monument and to engage with the grounds for opposition from various gay and lesbian perspectives. In general, he defends the importance of cultural work against the position that a monument is not necessary and is a waste of money by stating that the proponents of this view lack "a serious understanding of the importance and power of representational art" (207). Yet, despite this assessment, he dismisses critiques from drag queens who argued that a monument to gay liberation, slated for installation near the site of the Stonewall riot, should focus on the specifics of that pivotal moment by acknowledging their central role in that event and including representations of drag queens. Disponzio asserts that "the hairsplitting demands for equal representation for sub-groups within the minority presented a *reductio ad absurdum* [sic] program that no artist or work could satisfy" (207). Instead, he whole-heartedly supports Segal's work which consists of a pair of realistic sculptures, one showing two white men standing and flirting, the other showing two white women sitting in conversation (one touches the other's knee which could be construed as erotic if the viewer deploys that active, read-against-the-grain imagination for which lesbians are so famous).

Disponzio presumes that it is not necessary to get into the specifics of the sexual identity produced by these works because the prolonged controversy, and inability to have them installed at the time of the article's publication, is proof of their value. As well, he claims an intrinsic "importance and power" to representational art yet simultaneously refuses to question this approach and its relationship to other monuments and sculptures. The style he supports includes work such as Lea Vivot's "unofficial" installations in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa -- a style which art critics call sentimental shlock and which voice-of-the-people writers, such as Bronwyn Drainie, adore. Rather than splitting hairs, it is



significant to consider the correlation between Segal's work and other realistic sculptures depicting family values sexuality. Such an acknowledgement supports the opposition from drag queens to a work that fails to connect with activism for gay and lesbian rights, visibility, and social change because it mimics monuments to normative heterosexuality. Disponzio collapses the byzantium bureaucracy of a major city's policies, the battles over homophobia, the differing views on the value of monuments, and the competing opinions within gay and lesbian groups all into the paired notions of controversy and the public arena. As such, his two key designations function to impede his analysis of the various strands of contention involved in the Segal monument event and to exclude consideration of sexual cultural identity.

Donna Graves also focuses on a controversy around a monument related to a specific cultural identity, but she develops a more nuanced approach to politics. Her article details the interrelation of race, economics, civic policies, and cultural policies in Detroit as aspects of the controversy over Robert Graham's *Monument to Joe Louis*. In 1986, as part of attempts at urban renewal, the city decided to erect a public monument in the downtown area. Instead of his usual style of realistic portraits, Graham produced a "24-foot-long forearm with clenched fist suspended within a 24-foot-high pyramid of four steel beams" (218). Graves discusses the controversy around the representational strategies of the work, the perceived effect of this form, and the connection of that focus to various relations involved for the city of Detroit in the late 1980s. She states that "Although it was conceived as a gift to the city that might lend a badly needed boost to the public image of its sponsors, the monument instead became a focus for debate about appropriate methods of memorialization and, on a deeper level, about racial ideology and racial tensions in urban America" (215). By analysing the controversy over the planning, design, and reception, Graves aims to

illuminate "the politics of public art" and "the politics of representation and race when they enter the arena of the urban built environment" (215).

Opposition to Graham's work came from many quarters. Some argued that the work does not memorialise the individual boxer nor refer to his achievements (the fist does not even wear a boxing glove). Instead, the monument invokes the 1960s Black Power salute and thereby projects a kind of political activism separate from Louis' time period onto a person who did not agitate for African American rights. Other critiques focused on the process and site. There was restricted deliberation over the initial idea to create a monument which included the airing of popular support for Louis as the subject and for the selection of Graham based on his previous monuments to sports heroes. However, the actual form and placement of the work was done without consultation and most did not even know the form of the monument until its unveiling. Once seen, Graves sums up concern from various groups and individuals that the fist is inappropriate because it suggests "racial tensions and urban violence in a city often referred to as the Murder Capitol of America" (220).

In examining the media response after the unveiling, Graves points out that "Few of the journalistic accounts of the monument's reception described respondents by race, so racial identity is difficult to link with position on the monument. Yet it is equally clear that race has been a central factor in the controversy surrounding the monument" (220). In this way, she locates her attention to the politics and controversy involved with the Louis monument as the representation of race in relation to its situation within a major American city. Although she still poses an inside and outside the gallery division within her approach, she primarily addresses stakes of racial identity as core to the contestation over the monument and its civic location. The controversy is not simply a product of the public sphere and nor is it an unproblematic guarantee of

the significance of Graham's monument. Graves recognises that various groups and individuals took umbrage with the work because, at one level, the form and site of the Louis monument mattered to the meaning produced as much as the idea of creating a monument to that particular figure. At another level, the Louis monument functioned as a site for debate over various concerns such as civic consultation for public art and tensions about race and economics within Detroit and within America. As a result, unlike Disponzio, Graves is able to outline the various strands of contestation and also how they function in combination.

### **1.2) Cultural identity, controversy, and political effect**

The designation controversy operates as a separate designation in addition to the association of debate with the public sphere. Theories of public and art pose controversy as both a desirable quality which, when achieved, indicates the presence of political effect and as an inherent feature which demonstrates the built-in political value of any aspect of public and art. As a result, writers who wish to support larger movements for social change, specific activist projects, and contentious events tend to emphasise any signs of controversy. This designation functions to guarantee their arguments. Yet, this unproblematised deployment often works against the goals of the projects in question and the analysis of those projects. If controversy is inevitable, then the stakes involved with any specific instance are not significant because the fracas is simply a repetition of the character of public plus art. In short, art theorists and critics tend not to question what are the pressures involved with various sites, what is under contestation, and what is the effect of deploying the designation of controversy in their texts and in texts which oppose activist projects. Senie and Webster suggest a resistance to this trend in their description of the section on "Public Art and Public Response" in their anthology: they claim that the various

articles address "the critical issue of public art controversy by isolating some of the many factors that prompt it" ("Introduction" xi). The actual articles might produce this goal to varying degrees, but Senie and Webster hint at the potential to work with the repetition of this designation while still sorting through the strands and stakes involved in those uses.

Theorists and critics who discuss activist goals within combinations of public and art frequently deploy the designation of controversy as a given quality and thus tend not to question, discuss, or analyse it. For example, Maksymowicz spends the bulk of her article identifying types of "alternative approaches to public art," listing examples of each type, and providing a concluding remark concerning those examples. Each of the types fit some notion of activist work and she separates them by categories such as "using commercial spaces" or "using the media" (153). For the media category, she assesses each project with the same standard: one list of projects "provoked their share of controversy" and another set of artists "have repeatedly caused controversy by their use of transit posters, bus benches, and billboards to make art about local political issues" (154). Maksymowicz does not describe the nature of the controversy such as who was involved, what was discussed, or where this occurred. She assumes that analysis of controversy is not required because it is the quality which demonstrates the success and political value of the projects.

As part of the deployment of controversy as a given quality, theorists and critics refer to major touchstones of tumult. Maksymowicz closes her article by citing her position as an arts professional who testified at the *Tilted Arc* hearings. Similarly, in an editorial for *Public Art Review*, Jack Becker states that "It seems that much of the world's greatest public art is also its most controversial" and then lists "the *Eiffel Tower*, the *Washington Monument*, the *Statue of Liberty*, *La Grande Vitesse*, the *Gateway Arch*, the *Vietnam Memorial* [sic], and *Tilted Arc*"

without bothering to sort through these various works and their (supposed) controversies (3). The connection to well-known contestations works to emphasise the political worth of the project under discussion. Addressing the "Culture in Action" program in Chicago, Allison Gamble claims

Few would disagree with assertions that public art is and always has been an inherently political form, or, particularly since the controversies surrounding Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* and Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, that there is a difference between art in public places - no matter how site specific - and public art. (19)

In short, controversy and political effect are supposedly inextricably linked and this pairing defines public art and other combinations of public and art. Gamble rests her support for "Culture in Action" on this assumption. Following the above quotation, she argues that the project consists of "a convergence of interest on the part of curator, artists, and funders in producing art which explores the process of social change" (19).

The attention to political effect and controversy can focus specifically on the designation of audience as the site of debate and the proof of that political effect. Discussing her Spoleto Festival, Mary Jane Jacob states

The controversial newspaper coverage and the general on-the-street conversations brought a lot of Charlestonians out to see what the fuss was about. And when people not versed in high culture went out to see this work, they didn't laugh, because they recognized themselves very quickly and it was very meaningful to them. (qtd. in Gablik 17)

She never explains this "controversial newspaper coverage." However, she does claim that "we're shifting who gets access" to the art world and art ideas and that "this has proved to be extremely confrontational for the art world" (qtd. in Gablik 17). In this way, she confuses debates about museum change, concerning access for diverse audiences, with disputes over social change and applies the label controversial to this conflation.

### 1.2.1) The Vancouver Women's Monument Project – *Marker of Change*

When first conceived in 1992, the Vancouver memorial to the fourteen students killed at Université de Montréal was meant to provide a space for the grief felt by women on the West Coast and to ensure that the victims' names would be remembered. As I discuss in Chapter 2, the relatively simple goals quickly became much more complex when both anti-art feminists and anti-feminists raised a plethora of objections to the project. Even though other smaller memorials were erected without much fuss, this one project turned into a major event concerning the interaction of gendered cultural identity and the monument form. The Vancouver Women's Monument Project demonstrates that once a project earns the reputation of being controversial, that quality becomes the single most important aspect. As soon as a Reform MP and a few journalists complained about aspects of the early stages of the proposal, then descriptions and overviews routinely describe it as controversial throughout the process of planning, selecting, and installing the final work.

For example, Linda Kay's article on the winning maquette for *Marker of Change*, by Toronto artist Beth Alber, includes comments from Anne-Marie Laplante Edward (a mother of one of the fourteen students) that the planned "monument is so beautiful and so conducive to thinking" (qtd. in Kay A2). Kay tempers the complex sentiments expressed in this quotation by adding that "Yet the monument is also controversial" (A2). As well, Paula Gustafson opens her article on Alber's proposal by stating that "In Vancouver the most hotly-debated issues are trees and whales, not public sculptures. But in the case of the Women's Monument Project the uproar began almost as soon as plans for the national memorial were conceived" (19). She links the "controversy" to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* and states that by the time of Alber's selection, "the Women's monument had been vilified in the press in over 90 articles" (19). In this

way, Gustaphson emphasises the controversy, in its news media incarnation, as the framework for, and most significant point about, the proposed *Marker of Change*.<sup>8</sup>

One position on the prolonged debate over the project references the ideal of the public sphere and argues that controversy is good for its own sake. For example, an editorial in the *Vancouver Province* states that "The controversy surrounding the proposed Women's Monument in Vancouver is showing us the value of discussion" ("Let's talk" A24). The editorial asserts that even though various people are "offended" by the work, "this sort of discussion is good" because "it gets us thinking about the issues" and because "it is through this type of controversy and discussion that we educate ourselves and our children" (A24). As well, Kelly Philips and Cate Jones, two organising committee members, wrote a response to the controversy and presented several points including that "the media coverage of this important national project has generated welcome attention on the problem of violence against women" (A11). In addition, in a *Globe and Mail* article, Chris Dafoe interviews Jones and states that the organiser "takes some consolation in the fact that the controversy has helped increase donations for the monument and that it has brought the issue of violence against women . . . into the public eye" ("Misreading" C1).

Another approach to the event locates controversy as solely or primarily connected to the inscription rather than to the whole project. The inscription reads

The fourteen women named here were murdered December 6,  
1989, University of Montreal. We, their sisters and brothers,  
remember and work for a better world. In memory and in grief for

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<sup>8</sup> In fact only a portion of the news items collected in the Vancouver Women's Monument Project press archive actually "vilify" the monument; the remainder either overview the debate, describe various stages of the process, or support the project. (The majority of items in Appendix C3 came from this archive.)

all women who have been murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours.<sup>9</sup>

The entire approval, site selection, and proposal process was covered in detail in several Vancouver area and other Canadian newspapers, but items emphasise the link between controversy and the inscription. For example, Dafoe's article is titled "Misreading the meaning of a monument" and has the sub-heading "B.C. Controversy/The inscription planned for a proposed Vancouver memorial to women victims of violence has stirred up strong feelings on the part of opponents who claim it incites hatred toward men" ("Misreading" C1). As well, Doug Ward's article on the selection of Alber's design describes her proposal and then begins an overview of the project with "The phrase 'women murdered by men' has sparked controversy" (A8). Similarly, Al Sheehan's report on the final Parks Board approval states that "the controversial wording . . . will be altered to reflect criticisms expressed when the project was first proposed" (A2).

Whether it is the whole project or isolated to the inscription, discussions of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project and Alber's actual design of *Marker of Change* tend not to question the meaning of the designation controversy. Some writers assume dispute is a natural feature of public art and thus should neither come as a surprise nor be taken too seriously – even though it is still a defining factor of the project. Other writers posit that the fuss demonstrates the need for the project and thus validates the issues raised. For the latter position, the art or monument qualities of the project are irrelevant to the controversy: the debate is about gender and violence. For the former position, the controversy is located within the notion of public art and has little or nothing to do with gender and violence. Confusing the discussion of the project all the more, several writers

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<sup>9</sup> This is the final inscription as it appears on the monument. This version was confirmed in November 1993, but prior to that, different versions had been proposed and appear in some articles. However, the most noticed phrase – "women murdered by men" – is part of every version.



mix and match these two trends. Common to all the analysis, controversy is taken for granted and either functions as a superficial designation or is dismissed entirely.

In relation to the Vancouver Women's Monument Project as an event, the designation of controversy cannot be ignored because it is prevalent throughout the various stages involved. In my review of the final installation for *Parachute*, I too open with a description of the fracas. However, I argue that a core stake in the whole affair is the representation of gendered cultural identity and that this stake is denied within the majority of responses.<sup>10</sup> Neither dismissing nor embracing, art theory needs to question the desire to deploy the designation controversial, the effects on the possibilities for analysis of a given event or type of event, and the different levels of the particular controversy in question. In some cases, such as the opposition to Armstrong's *Benchmarks* panel consisting mainly of fears by one advertising representative, controversy is not the appropriate conclusion. In other cases, such as the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, controversy has multiple levels and the unproblematised deployment of that designation can function against the goals of activist writers by erasing the stakes under contention at that site.

A few of the respondents to the Vancouver Women's Monument Project argue that the fuss is out of proportion, external to the memorial, and thus not meaningful. Elizabeth Aird sums up this position in two different articles. In the first, "Only one group of creatures murders the vast majority of women," she writes

What's the sound of knees jerking? The backlash against Vancouver's proposed monument to murdered women. "Reverse

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<sup>10</sup> My arguments in the *Parachute* review are a brief version of my discussion of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project in Chapter 2 concerning the continued significance of the monument.

sexism!" some are already crying. "You're calling us all murderers!" "Just another kick in the groin from you man-hating lesbo-dyke-commies!" Puh-leeze. First of all Vancouver isn't exactly breaking new ground on this one. Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg all have monuments or plaques to murdered women. ("Only one group" B1)

Aird wants to support a feminist perspective and point out the ludicrousness of the claim that the inscription slanders all men and that the monument is an affront to nice guys across Canada. She cites the lack of opposition to other memorials, mocks the complaints to the Vancouver version, and presents the Vancouver memorial as a rather ordinary idea.

In a later article, she specifically dismisses the controversy by presenting it as an inherent quality of public art. Aird reports on the nasty letters she got after she attacked the Reform MP who campaigned against a grant for the organising committee. She argues "that's the deal with public art. You can't please all the people, and all that" ("Lots of public art" A3). She backs up this position by paraphrasing the head of Seattle's Art Management Services statement that "Public art - not just how it looks, but what it represents - always gets people riled" ("Lots of public art" A3). Instead of addressing the specific stakes raised by the Vancouver Women's Monument Project and its opponents, she links the project to other public art in the city. Aird asserts that

Any of us can make our own list of public art that we think is a waste of money. Right at the top of mine is the Terry Fox monument at B.C. Place Stadium, a pink-tiled abomination that sits awkwardly in that awful concrete plaza. I don't like the crab in front of the Vancouver Museum, either. And how about the idiotic concrete "100" that sits beside Fourth Avenue just east of Fir? It can't even claim to be art, but someone decided it belonged in the public eye. ("Lots of public art" A3)

By diluting the focus on the Vancouver Women's Monument Project to include such items as a crab sculpture, Aird undermines her closing comment in the article that "The fact is, a lot of people just can't abide a project created by

women for women, about women" ("Lots of public art" A3). This emphasis on gender has no purchase after Aird has argued both that all public art causes a fuss and that she does not like the aesthetics of lots of public art anyway.

Aird succinctly demonstrates that dismissing the whole controversy is not an appropriate response. However, recognising that the dispute involved with the project is meaningful is not the same as accepting that designation at face value. At the unveiling of *Marker of Change*, openly gay Vancouver Parks Board commissioner Duncan Wilson stated his support for the project and his recognition of the importance of the debate with his assertion that "if there were no controversy, there would be no need for this work" (*Newshour*). The crowd responded to this comment with enthusiastic applause.<sup>11</sup> Some might interpret this statement as a recognition of the need for attention to gendered violence. I argue that the interrelation of a public memorial that recognises systemic violence by men against women, and provides a public site for feminist contemplation, constitutes a contested area which stoked the debate over this one project.

The inscription alone is not the cause of contention. The fact that most critics of the inscription quickly lose touch with the actual wording and start embellishing demonstrates the secondary role of this text. Jeani Read goes through contortions that would impress the most flexible acrobat in her article "Words that divide: Women's Monument inscription playing by rules of a very bad game" (A14). Read omits the inclusion of "brothers" alongside "sisters" and only mentions the short phrase "murdered by men" (A14). She then imagines sitting in Thornton Park and asks how the words would make a person feel --

"Overwhelmed by the victimization of women, perhaps: A bad feeling. Angry at men who kill women? Bad again. If you are a man, you will really feel bad. You

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<sup>11</sup> I was present at the unveiling ceremony on 30 Sept. 1997.

will feel left out, or worse: Like a murderer. That, of course, is the intent: To make men feel bad, so we'll feel better" (A14). Read's main point in the article is that Alber's design could be seen as a happy place for universal bonding, but the pesky inscription ruins all that. But given her anti-feminist position, and that of the opposition from others like the Reform MP, why should supporters of the monument buy into the separation of the inscription and the memorial?

Some respond directly to the illogical conclusions reached in this kind of condemnation of the inscription. A letter to the *Province* argues Read's article is "ridiculous" and asks "Does this mean that if I drive a car and read about car accidents caused by drunk drivers, I will feel like a drunk driver? Is there really a man who can't make the distinction between shooting 14 women to death, or any woman to death - and not" (Timmins A23). Others who support the monument agree with a distinction between the monument as a proposal, or later Alber's actual design, and the inscription as the locus of controversy. Dafoe opens his article "Life and death in pink granite" with

Some time in the next year, 14 benches, each made of pink Quebec granite and each engraved with a name, are to be set in a circle 89 feet in diameter in Thornton Park on Vancouver's Main Street. Each bench will have a small hollow, allowing rainwater to collect, and the circle will be surrounded by another circle of tiles, upon which will be stamped several thousand names of donors to the project.

From that description, you wouldn't expect the work in question to be one of the most controversial and hotly debated pieces of public art in recent years. But it is. ("Life and death" E4)

He then admits that the debate began well before the selection of Alber's monument and proceeds to describe various controversial aspects to the project: the dedication gets top billing, followed by the women-only competition, and the funding of the work.

Although Dafoe does describe the monument as specifically arising from the Montreal massacre, his opening portrayal carefully omits any reference to Alber's strategy to structure references to the fourteen women and to create a place for mourning and contemplation. In short, it makes a difference to see the monument as simply fourteen benches or to see them as a reference to the fourteen bodies of murdered female Ecole Polytechnique students. From the second perspective, the sum of the parts is much more than an aesthetic description: the deployment of material from Quebec has particular significance as does the dimensions and the number of benches; the hollow for rainwater can be seen as a vessel to collect tears; and the circle can be seen as a reference to feminist approaches to meetings and as the creation of a site for reflection. Thus, from this viewpoint, the monument itself does not seem so separate from the stakes involved with the debates over the inscription or over other aspects of the project.

In the article "Not collective guilt, but collective responsibility," Henry Gale argues that the final form of Alber's design changed his mind about the project.<sup>12</sup> In earlier articles he had objected to the inscription for being "unnecessarily contentious" and had "preferred to pluck the 'male' from 'male violence'" (A24). Gale states that partly seeing the proposal for *Marker of Change* made him realise the importance of the work and that partly he was disturbed by "the sheer virulence of the attacks on the project by several Vancouver newspaper columnists" (A24). These two factors prompt him to conclude that "It isn't news when a public work of art causes controversy. After all, art is supposed to light a fire in the mind. The vigorous debate over the Women's Monument Project in

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<sup>12</sup> Gale also describes his change of mind in a shorter, different article: "No way to dodge 'violence by men,'" *Vancouver Sun* 21 Oct. 1994: A23. In this article, he does not describe his reaction to *Marker of Change*, but does refer to it as a "beautiful memorial." He emphasises the role of the opposition to the monument in shifting his position.

Vancouver, however, is not so much about art as about violence and what to do about it" (A24). Thus, for Gale the feminist strategies and the attention to gender and violence is central to the project, and in fact, he did not fully grasp that until he saw the actual form of the proposal for *Marker of Change*. Yet, he still separates this one monument from the general area of strife over public and art.

The virulent attacks also influenced Gale's opinion. There were plenty of vicious and hyperbolic responses including Trevor Lautens often quoted column called "The Feminine Mistake" (A15). Lautens sees a world-wide plot come to roost in Vancouver which produced "the blatant sexism behind the in-men's faces monument, approved unanimously by a gutless, brainless, and/or complicit Vancouver park board [sic], proposed by a local subsidiary of the female sexists" (A15). He, like Read, the Reform MP, and other opposition all appear to latch onto the single phrase "women murdered by men" as the focus of their arguments.

The combination of attention to the inscription alone, and the glaring lack of logic (often combined with appalling grammar), does make it tempting to mock, dismiss, or downplay the actual attacks themselves. In the concern with responding to such criticism, the idea of the monument (and later Alber's work) become side-lined from the debate. Even when responses argue for the centrality of gendered violence to the controversy and the project, these supporters still omit or dismiss the monument as a form. Thus the imbrication of a public representation with the stakes of systemic violence against women, and the representational strategies deployed by Alber, are never examined in relation to the opposition.

As analysts of the area love to claim, public and art does often spark controversy or become the focus of debate. Sometimes this assertion is over-emphasised in order to support the value of a project even though it does not

address a particularly tense area. Othertimes the work addresses painful, contentious, and radical issues, but there is no significant response to prove this quality (debate did not actually appear in some form of documentation but the theorists believe the project is worthy of causing an argument). In addition, projects can address pressures around identity, belonging, and other relations of social power while also being the focus of dispute. The Vancouver Women's Monument Project fits the last description. However, as the discussion of this project demonstrates, the presence of controversy does not guarantee attention to the complexity of the stakes involved. A few responses associate the dispute with public art, more with the inscription, and the rest with gendered violence in society. None of these locate the contention as the combination of all these factors.

If there is attention to gendered identity, it is separated from representation. Gale wants to make a strong point by using his own change of mind as proof of the need for attention to male violence against women. He argues that along with opposition to the project, the comprehension of Alber's plans helped create that shift and recognition; yet, he argues that the importance of the project has nothing to do with it being art, it has to do with gender and violence. I argue that it is not possible to separate the two. One does not need a few nasty news attacks to perceive the pervasive resilience of misogyny and anti-feminism: there are the fourteen dead women and so many others. Feminist social activism around gender and violence involves such strategies as lobbying for changes to police practice and law or insisting on the systemic link between individual acts. The Vancouver Women's Monument Project adds a new approach. The work arises from the specific focus on gendered violence, but through its form as a public monument, and through the strategies of *Marker of Change*, it alters the sense of belonging within a public space.

The anti-feminist opposition recognises the challenge the work presents to the inclusion and exclusion of various cultural identities within notions of the public. The inscription is not the sole affront to misogynists. It had already been drafted by the time the Reform MP blocked a small staffing grant; the funding was to carry out the project, not write the text panel. Read is able to make enormous leaps based on that one line, not in spite of the lovely memorial, but because of it. Supporters of the monument could dismiss one or two badly written, illogical tirades, but not the pattern of these approaches nor the intensity of response. The neo-conservative position takes representation seriously and perceives an effect on public space or notions of belonging. The supporters of feminism do not recognise the same level of power to the technologies of a memorial or other representation. By repeating tropes that dismiss public art, Aird undercuts her assertion that the stake which provokes complaint is that this one monument is by, for, and about women. The opposition tries to shift attention back to men: many quote Lautens argument that "The monument's purpose is not to honor slain women but to dishonor living men" (A15). The attacks on the monument try to deny women's experiences, perspectives, identities, and strategies of social activism as these are produced through the monument.

Those who would support a feminist position, and specifically working to eradicate gendered violence, undermine the potential power of visual representation by agreeing that the inscription is the key or by arguing that a monument is a waste of money compared to funding direct aid services. The organisers were clear about their goals in creating this monument . As Phillips and Jones reiterate

we will seek a design that is conceptually new, a "living" monument with which the public can interact in a meaningful way. Public art can be a powerful emotional force. The Vietnam War Memorial [sic] in Washington has helped veterans to heal from war trauma and



has brought home to the public the huge scale of loss involved in that conflict. (A11)

The selection of Alber's *Marker of Change* works with those goals and draws on the technologies of a public monument to create a new kind of public art project -- a feminist gathering place with specific attention to gendered violence.

As with so much analysis of a single public and art project, Phillips and Jones associate their subject with a well-known work. However, they do not link the two through the designation of controversy, they link them through a shared dual purpose of representing a large, complex issue, but also creating a site where those concerned can visit and contemplate individual moments as well as the social placement of those moments. The deployment of the unproblematised designation controversy in discussion of the Vancouver Women's Monument Project works to impede this kind of insight and demonstrates the limitation of this approach within art theory that addresses activist events and projects. The dismissal of art by some social activist groups and individuals does make it tempting to resort to relying on designations that appear to guarantee the value and contribution of an art project or type of art project. Yet, in the newspaper statement, Phillips and Jones mention this opposition, along with the other major strands, and respond by describing the effect of the monument at the level of meeting site and of public representation. The reliance on controversy which characterises discussions of public and art results in an analytical dead end. Because theorists assume that dispute is a sign of intrinsic political effect, they close off the possibility of sorting through the various strands and stakes in a given project and assessing what are the political strategies and effects.

### 1.2.2) Gilbert Boyer's *Mémoire ardente*

The assumption of the inherent controversial quality of public and art produces a pattern of event in which writers deploy the designation for work that is neither activist nor related to contentious stakes. In this way, responses to such a project have more to do with trends in discourses concerning public and art than with analysis of that work. In 1994, Gilbert Boyer's proposal for *Mémoire ardente*, a monument for Montreal's 350th anniversary, generated a great deal of interest. The monument does mark the history of Montreal and the relation to civic and national identities could potentially be a contentious relation for this work, however, the responses overwhelmingly focus on the standard points in public and art controversies and not the specifics of this monument or what it is supposed to memorialise.<sup>13</sup> Opponents focused on the funding and cost (the vast majority of articles on the event mention the 70, 000 dollar cost), the selection process, the aesthetics in relation to appreciation by ordinary people, as well as the appropriateness to site. The form mainly drew ire because many saw it as just "a two-metre square granite cube, covered with holes" (Duncan, "Maybe" 15) and, as a result, accounts commonly use the mocking label "Le Cube."

The role of the designation controversy has a distinctly different effect in *Mémoire ardente* as an event than in the Vancouver Women's Monument Project. For the Vancouver memorial, the over emphasis of controversy functions to displace attention from the imbrication of belonging, gender, and public representation whereas for the Montreal monument, controversy exaggerates the effect on, and significance for, the public. In both cases, the bulk of the fuss occurred over the proposal with the reputation of being controversial then carrying over to discussion of each project after installation. For Boyer's work,

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to Appendix C2.

the central component of the dispute was the form of the monument. After installation, some still argue "Le Cube" is dull while others change their position once they see and interact with the actual work. Henry Lehman argues the work is "oddly innocuous" and that "it sits - awkward, shy - a squat counterpoint" to another nearby monument ("Controversial" 8). Ann Duncan claims she appreciates the actual installation because

The cube is a lot more visually interesting than one would have expected. Its chunkily chiselled surfaces echo those of the surrounding limestone buildings and are a lot warmer and less monolithic than a solid, smooth surface would have been. Its color reflects the pinks in the cobblestones only a few feet away. ("Maybe" 15)

She also describes the child-like fun of peering into the holes, side-by-side with strangers, to read brief texts on moments throughout the city's history.

Although Duncan spends the majority of her article describing the installation and her reaction, she cites the controversy to open her article and describes it as a "media-fuelled flap" ("Maybe" 15). Lehman takes a different approach and continues to focus on the work as contentious. He spends the majority of his article on the fuss and sees no big difference between the final work and the maquette. Lehman calls *Mémoire ardente* "the infamous cube," claims it is an "anti-climax," and describes that "This public sculpture, costing as much as \$100,000 - money left over from the birthday - has been the object of persistent public outcry ever since the city unveiled a model of it in April. Radio call-in show audiences angrily condemned it as wasteful - even before it was placed on site" ("Controversial" 8). In short, Lehman condemns the work because it does not fit the controversy around it whereas Duncan explains the dissonance between the fuss and the monument by blaming the media for generating the flap.

I agree with both that Boyer's visual strategies and the dispute are largely unconnected. However, this is not the artist's fault nor is it as simple as a "media-fuelled" debate. The pattern of controversy over this event relates to the trends within discourses concerning public and art and not just to journalistic practice; these assumptions and approaches appear in news media, but also art theory and criticism. The tangible presence of articles, letters, and editorials on just one event can appear to support the view that the controversy only happens in the media, or happens because of the media. As I discuss in Chapter 4, Nick Couldry identifies that analysis of the *House* event is in dire need of media theories. Art theories tend to posit simplistic and inadequate approaches to mass media such as the belief that a news response constitutes controversy and demonstrates significance. Yet, Couldry's discussion of *House* also demonstrates the problems with separating news responses from art magazine, journal, or other art theoretical responses. His analysis becomes stymied by assumptions concerning the separation of the art world from everything else. Partly this separation appears in the division of work inside and outside a gallery, partly it appears in the division between levels of response.

Art theorists also make a division between news events and theoretical reference and analysis. In "Which Public? Whose Art?" John K. Grande discusses a number of temporary projects and monuments in Montreal. In his discussion of *Mémoire ardente*, he does not mention the fuss over its proposal. Instead, he discusses the work in relation to Boyer's work in *Les Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991* and as an example of the distinction he wishes to make between inconsequential official public art and exciting temporary projects. Grande argues

The piece reads as a politically correct kind of tourist sculpture, fearful of true self-expression, and yet faultless. *Mémoire ardente* is

as de-contextualized and container-like as Boyer's *La Montagne des Jours* (1991) was environmental and open . . . yet [the monument] is truly public in the official sense. It is a succinct example of the dilemma inherent to public sculpture - the gap between life and art. (8)

The media response and the supposed rush of public opinion has no relevance to Grande's position on public and art nor to Boyer's work even though he subsequently cites the "conflict of public taste and civic interests" seen with *Tilted Arc* and with another controversy in San Francisco (8). Even for these, he does not mention sources outside of art theorists, artists, and particular art works.

In addition to denial of responses outside the realm of art, the blatant efforts to stoke controversy within newspaper articles or reviews can also support the notion that controversy derives from this forum. Lehman goes to great effort to keep the embers burning and to emphasise the fuss over the monument itself. In the short passage I cite above, he uses public twice ("public sculpture" and "public outcry"), cites a cost of 30, 000 dollars more than other articles, refers to audience, and associates the dispute with opinion derived from a radio call-in show -- that favourite conduit to the people-on-the-street. As well, before installation, the *Montreal Gazette* published a duelling staff writers piece in which Mark Abley argued for contemporary art and Brian Kappler argued against (Abley A1, A13 and Kappler A1, A13). Despite the total lack of connection, and perhaps assuming the maquette for a boring cube could not stoke enough interest on its own, the newspaper printed an image of "Voice of Fire" to accompany the article. Between the editorial framing and the two writers, the piece manages to cite a veritable plethora of well-known art disputes including: the NGC debacle over Newman's work, the rejection of Emily Carr's opus in 1913, Jan Vermeer's omission from seventeenth century art history books, the Canada Council's budget, taxpayer's funding of art, Andreas Serrano's "Piss Christ," Christo, and Robert Mapplethorpe.

Lehman's and the *Montreal Gazette's* presentations of controversy do indeed encourage the desire to dismiss all fusses about art as simply inherent and not particularly meaningful. Looking beyond a single event, such as "Le Cube" or the Vancouver Women's Monument Project indicates that, rather than conflating categories, art theory needs to sort through the different trends that invoke controversy between events and within the same event. In some cases, this analysis involves sorting through the stakes involved within that debate; in other cases, this requires assessing whether the event is even contentious at all. The reference to taxpayers and the idea of public funding of the arts in the *Montreal Gazette* piece indicates a separate, third category and the need for a specific approach to address questions of funding and policy.

## **2) Funding, policy, and politics**

Deutsche cites a number of confusions that plague discussions of public art, and art in public space, as part of the foundation for her arguments concerning the concept of the public sphere. Although the division "between state-sponsored versus privately funded art" ("Art and Public" 39) is one of these key points, she does not address this area in the body of her article. Deutsche focuses on activist projects and the civic and other state policies which these projects critique, but she does not focus on the funding or policy for the production of the art projects themselves. Variations on this approach are common within discussions of public and art. Art theorists mention either particular funding examples, or the general area, along with other examples of the novelty, the importance, and the problems which characterise the terrain of public and art without discussing this component in any detail. For instance, Mitchell

uses funding to establish a comparison for the kind of work he wants to address. In the passage I cited earlier in relation to his points on the public sphere, he separates "public art in the traditional sense - that is, art that is commissioned, paid for, and owned by the state" from issues connected to "changing and contested notions of the public sphere" ("Introduction" 2). In short, funding and policy frequently appear within definitions of public art or outlines of the significance of the area, yet these concerns remain largely unaddressed and often function to describe the binary opposite of political types of projects.

Public funding of the arts is a common focus in controversies over public and art. Discussions of this area raise the local, federal, and American funding systems, the cost of individual projects, and the structure of civic public art programs as well as the comparison of taxpayers, citizens, or audience against elitist art professionals. The triple fuss at the NGC amply demonstrates these patterns. For example, Bronwyn Drainie argues that "we, as a society, hate [the] red-and-blue striped" Newman painting not because it cost \$1.8 million but because "it is an imposing symbol of one of the haughtiest, most elite art movements in world history" ("Voice of Fire's" C11). Similarly, the title of a *Globe and Mail* article on Rothko's purchase is "Beauty in the eye of the beholder - or the elite?" (Wright A15). As well, a *Toronto Star* item on Sterbak's work describes the "subject of controversy" as "\$300 worth of food" and as "23 kilograms of flank steak the tax-funded gallery bought for Montreal artist Jana Sterbak" ("Dress made" A9).

Items on any of the three NGC events regularly mention their cost, cite that these are tax-payers' and public funds, and separate the art world from society, people, or the audience. Art supporters identify these trends, but often use this recognition to argue that the controversies are meaningless because they are just the same set of ideas. Duncan points out, in the aftermath of fuss number three,

that there "seems to be a deepseated contempt for the opinion of art experts" ("Rothko bashers" I1). Yet, she also states that she was reluctant to even bother to comment on the Rothko version because the issue is "something of a tempest in a teapot, with the same old arguments being trotted out as were for [Newman's painting]" ("Rothko bashers" I1). As well, art supporters often repeat the separation of art and everything else by arguing for the special value of the art expert. Jonathan Bordo supports the Rothko work by stating that "Modern art seems to demand, like modern physics, a highly refined knowledge that transcends common sense" (A23).

The designations and patterns which characterise the NGC events are also common in discussions of the general area of public arts funding and policy. For example, Charles Gordon argues that "The only way the arts can adapt to a drop in government support is to create an increase in audience support. The arts, in other words, have to find a way to create more customers. No one in the arts community would complain if support from the government was replaced by support from the audience" (13). Along the same lines, Andrew Coyne claims that "the case against state funding of the arts is not about 'market forces.' It is not about efficiency, or the deficit, or neo-conservative ideology, whatever that is. It is about the audience" (C1). The title and sub-heading of a *Financial Post* article sums up this argument: "Funds are cut because no one cares: Artists must regain their public audience" (Byfield 22). The author, Ted Byfield, claims that "the voting public" is causing the arts "elite" to change the kind of art they can make and exhibit. As well, in an article on the relevance of analysis of the American National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Canada, Drainie explains the argument that public funds "should now be used to give all citizens access to arts and artists, and let audiences decide what they prefer" ("Art lessons" C1).



Although it is more common for art theorists to focus on public art projects, there are some articles which address the topic of changes to public funding of the arts. These items tend to focus on controversies over arts funding as specific to the art world and to assume that the pressures which drive these debates derive from particular problems within the domain (such as the complexity of contemporary art). Arguing for "artists' self-determination through public arts funding," Robert Labossière states that

In the past four years the neo-conservative attack on public arts funding has done extensive damage. The merit of particular art has been questioned, aspersions have been cast upon the way in which funding decisions are made and public confidence in the concept of government programmes to foster the arts has eroded. . . . The arts community has had difficulty defending itself against even the most obviously ill-thought-out, bombastic, transparently political attacks. This is partly because it is difficult to explain art in non-specialized terms and partly because the rationale for public funding is equally complex and difficult to explain. (15)

There is a glaring flaw in the logic of this type of argument: if art and arts funding are so hard to justify, then how did the Canada Council or regional bodies ever come into existence in the first place? Out of the same kind of frustration that Duncan expresses over the stubborn continuation of aspersions cast by conservative politicians, Labossière assumes that the answer to the inability of arts professionals to effectively deal with these attacks must lie with the unique qualities of art.

Labossière argues that "a crisis of legitimation" that distances artists from the public provides the core of controversies over, and attacks on, arts funding. To demonstrate this point, he sums up a study of the NEA which asserts that "professionalism has not served artists well. The autonomy that professionalism promises will protect artists comes at the cost of a sustained distance from both public funding bodies and the artists' audience or constituents" (15).

Furthermore, he states that these arguments apply to "controversial art" as well in the sense that such practice does not achieve cultural criticism because it is "rooted in notions of artistic freedom as defined and protected by public funding agencies" and thus "it remains alienated from the communities it professes to serve" (15). From these assertions, Labossière claims that a defence of public funding needs to redress "visibility, accessibility, and accountability" (18) through such strategies as publishing lists of jurors, arts officers, and grants recipients as well as including meetings between artists and jurors.

Labossière assumes that the designations which characterise critiques of public funding are sound and argues that by improving the components which commonly appear -- art and arts professionals are inaccessible and separated from the general public -- then arts supporters will be able to sway opinion to restore public arts funding. This kind of engagement with the terms of anti-arts funding forms one pattern of response to controversies and to the whole topic of the erosion of public funding. In "On Cultural Citizenship," American gallery administrator John R. Killacky explains that from working within the arts, he came to wonder "how was it that only a limited constituency could persuasively claim taxpayers' privilege?" (14). He argues that

the only pragmatic solution I saw was to find ways to integrate myself and my concerns more proactively into the political and social fabric of my community - in essence to become a cultural citizen, participating and exercising those democratic rights constitutionally guaranteed. By talking only to ourselves, about ourselves and with ourselves, cultural organizers like myself had withdrawn from true dialog in our communities resulting in an unhealthy and unbalanced isolation from those very audiences and communities that we seek to serve. (14)

Killacky too believes that arts professionals are guilty as charged, that a separation of art from everything else does exist, and that it is the driving force behind the attacks on the funding of the arts. To solve the problem, he argues

that arts professionals should connect to communities and demonstrate the ways that they are also taxpaying citizens.

Another form of engagement with the terms of anti-art attacks focuses on the economic reasoning in cutting cultural funding. Some writers address the bottom line and detail how decreasing this area of public funding actually works against budget reduction. Val Ross reports on a study done that the cuts to Canada Council in 1993 will actually "increase the public debt" due to "lost tax revenue (GST and income tax no longer filed by performers laid off) plus the cost of additional UI payments" (C2). Similarly, Christopher Hume counters the arguments that increased audience will replace the need for public funding. He states "Attendance is up, but revenues are down. The good news is that more people than ever are visiting Canadian museums and art galleries, 17.5 million in 1993-'94. The bad news is that funds for cultural institutions are drying up" ("Some numbers" J5). Other writers in this vein address the claims of the overall economic approach rather than the specific numbers. For example, Robert Crew interviews David Mirvish and states "one of the kingpins of commercial theatre in Toronto believes strongly in state subsidy of the arts. For one thing, he says, it's good for business" (J9).

A different strand of the arguments for arts funding focuses on the stakes involved in many of the examples which are used in attacks. Robert Everett-Green cites that the Progressive Conservative members of parliament who joined committees on communications and culture, with the intent of opposing funds to these areas, changed their position and signed a resolution to support state funding of the arts once they discovered the benefits of the arts. From this, he argues that "the neo-conservative dislike of arts subsidies has less to do with the economics of the thing than with its ideological implications" (C1). Most of this type of argument specifically point out that neo-conservatives select gay and

lesbian, feminist, or people of colour's art projects to assist in larger movements to oppose both cultural funding as well as diverse cultural identity. This approach tends to foreground the notion of politics. For example, *Art in America* ran a two-part item called "Art and Politics." In the first section, Mark Alice Durant discusses three Los Angeles "activist art groups who [use] public art to address the area's racial and economic tensions" (31). In the second part, Maurice Berger asserts that "right-wing groups have attacked Marlon Riggs's [sic] award-winning documentary film of black gay life in an effort to restrict cultural funding" (37). Berger points out that *Tongues Untied* had circulated for three years before it became the subject of debate and argues that conservatives made it into a controversy "as a means to enact certain aspects of their own social agenda" such as attacking gay rights and funding for public television (39). In short, Berger claims that Riggs' film is not controversial in itself and that the debate about the film derives from a neo-conservative strategy. The two-part item frames the activist projects as the political other side of the anti-funding agenda.

The title of an article by Michael Coren demonstrates the pattern of attacks which Berger identifies: "Political and ethnic manoeuvring too prominent in the process: Tighter rein needs to be put on funding of the arts" (9). In the item, Coren lists and derides the project descriptions of several successful Ontario grant recipients who address race and sexuality in order to claim that only applicants who address these issues will receive funding. Similarly, in an article titled "\$200,000 expenditure for AIDS art riles MP," the *Vancouver Sun* reports on the NGC purchase of General Idea's work "One Year of AZT" and cites a Reform MP who said he "doesn't think taxpayers will applaud how the government spent their money" ("\$200,000" A6).

Berger makes a rare argument when he claims that the controversy over *Tongues Untied* has little to do with the film, or with the political value of the film,

and yet does not dismiss the pattern of neo-conservative attack as just more of the same old same. Similar to discussions of public art, theorists who focus on public funding tend to either take controversy at face value and engage with the terms raised in attacks or dismiss the attacks because of the overwhelming repetition of certain patterns and designations. Within either approach, these discussions go along with art as an isolated category and thus posit critiques of arts funding as predominantly specific to the qualities of that domain. Further limiting the discussion, this analysis distinguishes the area of public funding of the arts from attention to public art projects, or public(s) for galleries and art work, even though common designations such as controversy and audience traverse all of the areas of public and art.

Art theorists create another impediment to investigating the effect of prevalent designations when they establish their analysis of a given activist project by comparing it to work produced through civic public art programs. For example, in "Temporary Public Art in Windsor," Ray Cronin assesses a number of public-site projects which had taken place in Windsor. He emphasises their political quality, but instead of defining "political works" on its own, he attempts to establish the value and significance of the projects by comparing this "activist public art" to "the consensus model of art in public plazas" (41-42). Similarly, a special issue of *Public Art Review* focuses on the legacy of percent-for-art programs in America and also compares "unsponsored" projects to these. The introduction to the "unsponsored" section claims that "the inevitable bureaucratic red tape" involved with percent programs "has undoubtedly stifled many well-intentioned efforts" whereas artists who "work outside the system" are able to produce their own personal and public visions ("Unsponsored" 16). Cronin and *Public Art Review* each deploy similar assumptions to the separation of inside and outside the gallery -- inside is structured and limited while outside is activist

and free -- except the division is inside and outside formal regulatory frameworks for public art. This approach examines neither the area of civic policies and the percent-for-art projects nor the governmental relations involved for public projects produced through means other than a civic program.

In addition to the superficial attention to civic programs in relation to political effect, Canadian discussions of controversies over such programs and over arts funding tend to interchange local and American examples without questioning the significance of this conflation. In particular, Canadian writers commonly deploy well-known American controversies such as *Tilted Arc* or the *Vietnam Veteran's Memorial* as well as assaults on the NEA. For example, in "The Politics of Public Art," Christopher Hume aims to address questions around audience and responses to public art in Toronto. Despite the local focus, he generalises that "Given the antagonistic nature of much of today's art, it's not surprising there's a wide gap between it and its intended audience. The removal a year ago of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* from Federal Plaza in Manhattan was a dramatic demonstration of the stand-off between the public and public art" ("politics" M12). As well, Canadian theorists deploy American texts as part of their analysis of local projects. Larson, in her discussion of the response to *Benchmarks*, quotes Maksymowicz's definition of public art from "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Larson concludes that the American theorist's definition "isn't very helpful" (10) but she never considers whether or not the differences in public art structures, and alternatives to these, effect the usefulness of Maksymowicz's ideas for the Canadian event.

Art theorists need to sort through the conflation of American and Canadian events and ideas in order to examine the effect and the applicability of these comparisons. Such a process involves focusing on questions of policy and funding in relation to the designations which characterise public and art. Rather

than posing civic programs as the banal other of activism or mentioning pressures on funding only in passing, discussions of art projects or public(s) for work need to address the area in its specificity but also in relation to the other combinations of public and art. This attention will expand analysis of the particular problems within controversies over funding or the formation of civic art programs while also providing insights about assumptions concerning the overall terrain.

### **2.1) Cultural policy and the analysis of politics**

Tony Bennett's development of governmental analysis for cultural studies provides the basis for an approach to sort through the confluences and contradictions which limit analysis of the implications of public art policy. As I discuss in Chapter 4, Bennett's work assists in redressing the assumptions about inside and outside the gallery in relation to public and art. The inclusion of a governmental approach illuminates the connection between a larger notion of art institutions and projects that are outside gallery walls. In addition, this attention to funding structures can also enhance discussion of different types of public art projects and their related political effect.

In "Useful Culture," Bennett argues for drawing on a policy perspective as a means to expand on the strengths of cultural studies' approaches rather than supplanting this area. He argues that theorists need to pay close attention to

the nuts-and-bolts mechanisms which condition the governmental uses of specific cultural practices in the framework of particular cultural technologies or apparatuses. Take the manifold political issues associated with the relations between nation, culture and identity. It is clear that this nexus of relations has been shaped into being by the activities of modern governments. ("Useful Culture" 81)

It is not just galleries, but also public art practices that are specific to nations based on regulatory frameworks. The connection is not a simple, causal relationship whereby those who hold the purse strings dictate the meaning produced by an art project. Rather, policy activities contribute to a "nexus of relations" which includes the assumptions which operate within the production and analysis of art practice.

Quite different than America, Canadian art production and exhibition arises from federal and regional "arm's-length" funding bodies. The federal government allots a budget to the Canada Council for the Arts which uses peer juries to determine who receives funds. In this way, the government cannot directly decide how those funds are allocated. As well, provinces have their own "arm's-length" bodies, such as the Saskatchewan Arts Board, which support work within their region and also augment federal funds. Federal and provincial funding bodies support multiple layers of visual art organisation and production ranging from individual grants to artists or groups; long-term operational funding; and specific project grants for artist-run centres, civic art galleries, and major galleries. In order for galleries to qualify for such funding, they cannot serve any commercial function. Artists can receive funding to create work that they would later sell, but within Canada, such funding is seen as a means to alleviate the pressure to create marketable items in order to be able to live and produce work.

The combination of the Canada Council and provincial funding bodies are a main form of support for public art projects. Artists and artist groups can receive a grant for a given project while artist-run centres and galleries can apply for support of programs such as billboard exhibitions. This funding framework demonstrates the connection between many Canadian public art projects and art institutions and contributes to the specificity of Canadian art practice. Such a



system enables the existence of artist-run groups, such as the Non, which produce activist projects.

Expanding from Bennett, examination of the "nuts-and-bolts" structure of civic public art policies enables analysis of the nexus of nation, culture, and identity both within specific projects and within analysis of the overall area of public and art. Both Canadian and American art theorists commonly identify that there are new, pressing issues affecting public art. Various levels of discussion argue that artists produce fundamentally different types of public art from the 1980s onwards and that attitudes towards this work, from the people who make, fund, or see such work, have significantly shifted. However, these discussions locate the change only in terms of the work itself. Theorists look at representational strategies, relations to site and to audience but do not consider shifts which might transcend the domain of art production. Attention to the policy framework of public art provides one route for understanding the character of the shift in conceptions of public art, the new pressure on such work, and the specifics of the tension within Canada around different types of public art.

## **2.2) Civic public art policy**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, most major Canadian cities began creating public art programs that manage existing civic art, regulate new civic production, and require private developers to produce public art. For example, in 1990, the Vancouver City Council created a program for civic and private development of public art and an official procedure for accepting and managing gifts of public art. Prior to 1990, Vancouver had no program nor set process for giving works to the city. As well, the city did not regulate how private developers funded and created art projects on their property nor whether they even should support such projects. Art theorists and critics explain these recent entities as yet

more evidence of the new found significance of public art. In an article on the creation of Vancouver's program, Chris Dafoe claims that "these days, public art is a hot topic in Vancouver" ("Going public" E2). He supports this notion with the examples of the VAG publishing a casebook on public art in the city, the controversy over the Vancouver Women's Monument Project, and the focus on art and public issues in *Artropolis* 93.

As with other discussions of these new programs, Dafoe ignores the different quality of the civic policy in comparison to Canada's usual "arm's-length" style of public funding. The main focus of the Vancouver program is the introduction of regulation which forces private developers to fund public art through a consultation process with the Vancouver public art program. Unlike the Canada Council or provincial bodies, the civic program applies private funds to public work and incorporates direct in-put from the developers in the selection process. Creators of the Canadian programs base the justification for, and structure of, these policies on American examples of "percent-for-art" programs. The final version of the Vancouver policy arose from studies by staff and advisory groups of the program in Seattle as the main template as well as consideration of similar programs in Toronto, Portland, and Dallas.

Part of the process of creating Vancouver's program, the city council organised a special council committee on the arts which, in the *Art in Public Places Progress Report*, outline the reasons why Vancouver should create a public art program and recommend its specific structure. As I discuss in Chapter 2, the brief begins with an overview of the issues involved in the terrain:

Conceptions of public art have changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Artists and architects, designers and developers, city leaders and social planners are giving shape to a "new" public art, creating work that is site specific, environmentally integrated, and meaningful to its community. . . . Today, good public art is expected

to be more than a mere set of formal responses to a site. It is seen as a social art with a responsibility to stimulate a multiplicity of levels of response: physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, critical – responses that our urban environments more and more frequently deny. The best works are therefore those that acknowledge that the place is more important than the object. The initial impact of such work upon its audience is not as important as the unfolding that takes place over time. . . . There must be appropriate public process to foster such public art. (*Art in Public* 2)

The key points it identifies correspond with prevailing trends in discussions of public and art. The council committee claims that the connection of public art to social issues, and the interaction of art and site, constitute new, pressing factors involved with this area of art practice. As well, it argues that an up-to-date policy framework is necessary to address and produce public art in relation to these factors.

The council committee, as is common with art theorists, takes the notion of change in public art practice as an accepted truth. As well, its brief locates this shift within the work itself: in this case, it is the relation of public art to site that is new. Obviously in this case, policy is important -- the council committee concludes that a framework is needed to "foster" such practice -- but the newness and significance appears as separate from, and preceding, the creation of the Vancouver program. This acceptance characterises many discussions of public art. Theorists do not question the conditions which might relate to the rash of new Canadian civic programs nor their significantly different constitution from "arm's-length" bodies dispensing state funds. They explain these programs in terms of public art practice, debates about such practice, and the history of art production and reception. Instead, I argue that the example of the creation of a Vancouver public art program, the attention to selection process within this program, and the constitution of the selection committees, all relate to larger shifts in governmentality and social organisation.

The particular pressures within various areas which combine public and art -- such as public art, public funding of art, and public audiences for art -- can be seen as connected to shifts in "formulas of rule." As I discuss in earlier sections, Nikolas Rose describes the association of early twentieth century liberalism and "the state of welfare." He explains that previously "the truth claims of expertise" provided the crucial basis for "arms-length" governmental strategies. Within this approach, the state itself does not describe the norms of individual conduct, but instead empowers a variety of professionals to "act as experts in the devices of social rule" (285). From this perspective, rather than being a specific art world policy, the Canadian "arm's-length" arts funding framework can be understood as part of a larger rationality of rule. Invested with authority by federal or provincial government, the staff of the Canada Council or the Saskatchewan Arts Board consists of arts professionals who arrange for other arts professionals to serve on juries that determine the allocation of funds.

Rose's main point is that the strategies of liberal democracy have changed considerably in the latter half of the twentieth century. He argues

A new formula of rule is taking shape, one that we can perhaps best term 'advanced liberal'. Advanced liberal rule depends upon expertise in a different way, and articulates experts differently into the apparatus of rule. It does not seek to govern through 'society', but through the regulated choices of individual citizens. And it seeks to detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule, relocating experts within a market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand. (285)

The major alteration of the relationship between government and the authority of expertise describes a significant aspect of the tension and change within combinations of public and art. Throughout the late 1980s and the 1990s, there has been a concerted attack on the Canadian "arm's-length" funding system. Opposition to granting agencies, individual artists' projects, or gallery acquisitions

all cite the same arguments of respecting citizen's opinions, producing accountability to taxpayers, including room for the consumer demands of audiences, and dismissing the opinions of arts professionals. Repeatedly, art experts inadequately respond by turning to their authority as professionals and attempting to reassert the superiority of their truth claims. In order to produce a more effective response, arts professionals need to understand the ways that debates about public and art connect to discourses which transcend the Canadian situation and the art realm. Certainly there is specificity to this domain, but there are also connections to governmental practices.

Adding attention to larger social and political patterns can assist in recognising which are the new factors that are involved with the combination of public and art. For public art production in Canada, there is a direct contradiction between the older form of "arm's-length" bodies and the new civic public art programs. The structure of Vancouver's public art program provides strong evidence of this tension. In its brief outlining the formation of a decision making process, the Vancouver special council committee on the arts' primary proposal was that the city create a public art advisory board. The council committee defines the board as "a citizen's committee, made up of art professionals and other experts as necessary" and argues that the committee had already acted in this capacity because it "functioned as a citizen's public art advisory board" (*Art in Public* 3). Essentially, "art professionals" and "citizens" are the two significant groups who would participate in making decisions about public art for the city. The council committee provides a role for both art professionals and citizens to air concerns about public art and also includes these two types of people as the appropriate sources for jury members. Thus, the council committee mixes the two designations which are in direct conflict in the different formulas of liberal rule.

The council committee's second proposal was the creation of "objective art selection and removal processes" (*Art in Public* 4). It defines such a process as "professional, arm's-length art/artist selection and removal procedures which provide for community consultation" (*Art in Public* 4). Writers who support civic public programs also emphasise the selection process as the key element in the structure of such frameworks. The common strategy is to equate public art that generated a negative response with a lack of public consultation and then to describe how a civic program facilitates access for citizens and thereby results in successful public art production. As well, theorists and critics cite a mixture of Canadian and American examples for both the "before" and the "after" without separating national context as relevant to these examples. For example, in order to demonstrate the benefits of Toronto's new policy, Hume argues that "As much as anything, the sorry tale of *Tilted Arc* underlines the importance of the selection process. In some respects, *how* we choose is more significant than *what* we choose" ("politics" M12). He uses the American example to establish the need for the program in Toronto even though he cites several Toronto examples throughout the piece and could have made his point with the much reviled *Airmen's Memorial* (mockingly labelled "Gumby Goes to Heaven") that was installed prior to the program.<sup>14</sup>

Rose's analysis of governmental strategies that link liberal democracies, and the changes of rule within these countries, helps to explain the desire to create new public art programs, the strong attention to a policy process for public art, and the mixing of Canadian and American examples. As long as the opinions of experts such as artists or patrons had value, cities like Vancouver did not need

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<sup>14</sup> In an article with a similar support of attention to process, Kate Taylor uses "Gumby" to demonstrate the "perils" of selecting work "with only the most cursory approval process" ("perils" C1).

a public art program. Average citizens did not have the basis to lend credence to arguments they might make against decisions made by artists or art connoisseurs concerning a given sculpture for a public park. However, with the move towards including "the man on the street," a park visitor's opinion has much greater weight when used by a newspaper, a politician, or a city council. At one level, the creation of a public art program fits within a strategy to salvage authority for art professionals within the production and maintenance of civic public art. The initial advisory committee consisted of experts from a variety of arts fields who presumably would like to see a level of professionalism included within a civic public art program.<sup>15</sup> With the move away from valuing all expertise, the program proposed in their report has to include business interests (the developers who must allot a portion of their budget to public art) and citizens or members of the community (as if artists or curators were not also citizens or members of the community).

Unlike the hyperbolic frenzy to identify the presence of novelty in so many of the designations which combine public and art, there actually is a new kind of pressure operating within the Vancouver public art program. However, the tension derives from the inclusion of contradictory strategies of liberal rule rather than from an intrinsic property of the area. Faced with the shift in value away from arts professionals and towards the average citizen, the advisory committee recommended a proposal that includes juries to make selections for each competition and that enables an on-going place for art expertise within the production of civic public art. The creation of this form of policy in Vancouver and other Canadian cities often seems to produce a desirable result. In a *Globe and*

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<sup>15</sup> Dafoe explains that "The city assembled a blue-ribbon committee - among the participants were curators Doris Shadbolt, artist Al McWilliams and architect Jeffrey Massey ("Going public" E2).

*Mail* article title "Art experts judged not expert enough," Craig McInnes argues that the new Toronto Public Art Commission overturns the exclusive powers of the art elite and ends their reign over civic art. He claims that this policy framework will result in a wider variety of art in Toronto, and it will soothe the repeated appearance of public dispute of unpopular choices, because more people will be able to participate in making decisions about proposed projects. McInnes cites (former) Mayor Arthur Eggleton's endorsement of the program: "There needs to be some give and take in the process so that it's not always a small, select group of people who are making their judgement supreme and we get one kind of art" (C2).

McInnes fits within a type of response which identifies public art programs as a cure for elitism in the arts, but there are others who emphasise the aspects where professionalism lingers. As I describe in Chapter 2, Drainie exemplifies the latter in her employment of a vitriolic representation of art experts and civic art policies to support her claims about Lea Vivot's populist art practice ("artistic guerrilla" C1). She claims that the artist defies by-laws and the accepted Canadian bureaucratic policy in order to put her public first. As well, Drainie argues that there is a need for artists like Vivot because civic public art processes conform to the view of the "arts establishment" more so than the "general public." To prove her point, she claims that Vivot's mockery of the selection of public art in Canada is the main reason critics and bureaucrats abhor the sculptures and ignore their popular appeal.

Despite her nationalistic description of Vivot and Vivot's context, Drainie slips over the border and uses the case of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington. She cites the contradiction between support from art critic's for Maya Lin's aesthetic approach and the opposition from veterans who would have preferred a realistic, figurative work ("artistic guerrilla" C1). In short, in arguments



both for and against civic public art programs, writers slip between purporting to focus on Canadian cities while also noticing similarities to American cases. Attention to a governmental approach enables analysis of the connection between Canadian civic art programs, American programs, and larger shifts in formulas of rule.

In terms of the creation of civic programs, and the relation to examples of controversy seemingly caused by lack of an accessible process, the comparison across borders can be based in the shared discourses which found such programs as well as the use of American systems as models for Canadian cities. The *Tilted Arc* debacle occurred in the U.S. but the designations deployed around that controversy are also common within discussions of civic public art projects or public(s) for work within Canadian discussions. Similarly, the strategies of neo-conservative attacks on arts funding in Canada deploy the same patterns such as attention to citizens and taxpayers over elitist arts professionals. However, Canadian writers also turn to studies of the structure of American funding systems, such as the NEA, and the resulting options in types of public art projects and their political effects without considering the differences between the national systems. As a result, they do not address the implications of the complexity of the multi-layered state funding system within Canada and various regions compared to the American style of scant state funding and greater levels of private foundations and private galleries. The discourses related to shifts in formulas of rule might be shared, but the policies being altered are different within each nation. As a result, the combination of new forms of civic public programs have a particular relationship to the existing Canadian funding structures and art production as well as to the connection to various types of politics.

Addressing the connections between forms of funding policy and larger social discourses enables a more complex approach to the notion of politics in

relation to public and art. A direct comparison of civic percent-for-art projects and independent or artist-run centre projects around the marker of activism is not productive. The frameworks which select and support each type have particular pressures and criteria. In some cases, proponents of activist public art identify the decision-making process as the defining factor in distinguishing various types of public art, yet they do not pursue a full attention to the policy relations involved in these processes. For example, Lehman argues that Montreal work produced under the one-per-cent program results in lack lustre public art. He claims that the "low level of risk-taking [is] due in part to the way one-per-cent artists are selected. The decisions are made by committee, and consensus often guarantees mediocrity" ("Art and architecture" 14). As well, *Vancouver Sun* art critic Michael Scott, in an article entitled "Critical art under assault," claims that "Vancouver's namby-pamby public art disappears into the sidewalks" ("Critical art" C7). Lehman and Scott extend expectations for the production and reception of public art that are based on Canada's "arm's length" policies to the new cases of civic programs. Lehman rates the civic work against a particular set of "risks" which he does not actually state or define. The justification for the "arm's length" style uses a discourse of the autonomy of art practice from governmental structures which produces assumptions such as the independence of artists from decisions made by committee (even though the older form in fact uses committees of "peers" to allocate grants). A critic can certainly prefer one type of project over another type, but it is not a fair comparison to judge both on the basis of putative activism. Not only does this approach fail to account for the particular pressures on civic programs within Canada, it also limits the analysis of the political strategies and effects involved in other types of projects.

### **3) Shifting approaches**

The political assessment of civic programs and their projects tend to fall into two categories: either supporters of activist projects deride their "namby-pamby" quality or proponents of democratic processes celebrate their construction of accessible and inclusive decision-making. As a result, discussions of this topic do not address the representational strategies in relation to their policy structure. Theorists cannot ignore the larger social shifts involved in the nexus of relations which relate to this area of art production and their assumptions about such practice. The current valuing of citizens and members of the community over experts and professionals affects not only bureaucrats and administrators of funding but also the framing and reception of art practice and art theory. There are particular political pressures involved with civic programs. The central factor is the opposition of citizen taxpayers as part of neo-conservative discourses to arts professionals (artists and administrators but also critics and theorists) as producers of liberal or activist goals. Art theorists need to consider this area as part of analysis of specific projects and of the overall terrain of public and art because it relates to the continuation of public arts funding, the structures of decision-making, the possibilities of art production, and assumptions involved with reception. In particular, addressing these developments requires shifting the assumption that the pressures evident in various combinations of public and art are solely the property of the projects themselves or of the special sphere of the art world.

Shifts in discourses concerning the role of expertise constitutes a key factor in the new pressures within theories and practices addressing public and art. Many theorists who aim to support larger movements for social change base their analysis of activist projects on a contradiction when they reproduce the

notion of public art as an escape from the gallery and connected to ordinary people. The celebration of the political value of work outside the gallery runs counter to discourses which give art theorists, and the practice which they aim to support, the authority to make truth claims. Both the supporters of activist public art and the opposition to public arts funding deploy the same designations of audience, community, and outside the control of arts professionals and arts institutions. For example, Johanna Powell, in a *Financial Post* article, invokes similar claims as those who believe art should escape the gallery. She asserts the benefits of cutting public funding by arguing that "government funding creates an artificial world, but art should be part of the real world" (Powell 19).

The slipperiness of the prevalent designations associated with public and art suggests that theorists need to consider the sets of assumptions linked to each designation and the effect of that deployment on their ability to discuss a given project or the overall area of public and art. Attention to the stakes involved in a project and in the debates or controversies around that work enables such a sorting process. Inside and outside the gallery or inside and outside formal funding structures, controversy, and audience are the most pressing designations because of their repetition, their deployment across different ideological positions, and their role in structuring other sets of designations. The notion of politics connects these three main trends and the desire to support particular activist effects drives the interest in the area. Yet, politics is rarely defined or specified beyond comparison to the restricted space inside the gallery, the banality of the civic committee, or the limited community attached to the art world. A consideration of stakes includes examining activist projects in terms of the strategies involved with a particular project and their interaction with the nexus of relations involved for that work.

## Conclusion

And she heaved a sigh of relief, as, indeed, well she might, for the transaction between a writer and the spirit of the age is one of infinite delicacy, and upon a nice arrangement between the two the whole fortune of [her] works depends. Orlando had so ordered it that she was in an extremely happy position; she need neither fight her age, nor submit to it; she was of it, yet remained herself. Now, therefore, she could write, and write she did. She wrote. She wrote. She wrote. - Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*.

My goal for this dissertation was not only to map trends and identify problems within analysis of the terrain of public and art, but to work from those insights and develop effective approaches for the discussion of future projects and events as well as for the overall area. I do not feel that I have finished something; I feel that I have just begun. I, like Orlando, heave a sigh of relief because I have finally reached a place from which I can produce the work that I have wanted to since first beginning this project. My starting point and main impetus throughout has been to engage with visual art projects that address notions of public and work with public space in order to participate in movements for social change around cultural identity, particularly gender and sexuality. Yet, this was not immediately possible because of the re-occurring assumptions which run through and slide across the various combinations of public and art. It soon became clear that art theorists with similar desires to mine are hampered by a lack of attention to the relationship between specific moments and the larger discourses and relations which relate to those moments. The happy position that I sought is a map of the prevalent patterns and their interconnections as well as a sense of the intended goals associated with these patterns. Furthermore, I required an outline of approaches which could sort through the terrain, maintain

those goals, and produce detailed analysis connected to projects, to events and to their nexus of relations.

The spirit of the age seems to agree with this plan for at the point when I was wrapping up the last chapter, two new items appeared, demanding inclusion to my archive. The *Vancouver Sun* ran a front page photograph of a public sculpture with a lead to a two page feature entitled "Whose art is this?" in which resident critic Michael Scott discusses twenty public art projects in the city. The same week, the Downtown Vancouver Association published a walking tour of the city's landmarks. The latter has a wonderfully ironic title: "A Circular Self-Guided Tour of Downtown Vancouver Architecture and Public Art." This circular quality of approaches to public and art is readily apparent in the Scott piece. The sub-title "the good, the bad and the ugly" repeats the title of a 1993 Ann Duncan item in *The Montreal Gazette*. In the earlier article, Duncan reports on responses from readers who were asked to choose a Montreal work for each of those three categories. The art critic quotes their explanations and comments on them. In a similar approach at the end of the feature, the *Sun* editors invite readers to tell them "what public art best serves Vancouver" (Scott, "Whose art" C8) and subsequently they published a brief editorial on the theme as well as a set of letters.

Scott's limited, repetitive approach is strikingly at odds with the belief that public and art is a fresh, hot, and new area which arises from tumultuous social pressure and speaks to social change. Under the main heading, the summation of the article states "Public art is a laudable concept, but Vancouver's recent efforts are more like polite public decoration than inspirational sculpture" ("Whose art" C5). The item consists of an article, photographs of most of the featured works, and a brief comment on each which lists the work's title, the artist(s), the date, the location, the cost, and the "rating." The latter is a one sentence pick or

pan from Scott followed by a letter grade. He gives two "Fs" and one "C+" to the three works produced through the civic public art program which appear in the feature. He gives straight "As" to several sculptures which Barrie Mowatt, an art dealer, had sponsored for placement along English Bay as well as to Lawrence Weiner's conceptual work on the facade of the VAG.<sup>1</sup> A figurative memorial to sprinter Harry Jerome and the Courthouse Lions, on the steps of what is now the VAG but was formerly the provincial courthouse, receive a "B+" and a "B" respectively.

The formula for assessing and comparing these works greatly restricts the conclusions Scott can reach and the level of information which he presents as relevant to them. Daniel L. Laskarin, an artist who produced one of the civic public art projects that Scott "failed," wrote a response focusing on Scott's method. Laskarin states that

The criteria he employs have little to do with the particular character of individual works of art, do little to elucidate them and less to appraise them in terms of how they may be relevant to their social context or to us. Instead, he offers us a facile judgment and grading system that either ignores or fails to understand how art operates (C8).

I have to agree with Laskarin. What insights does Scott's "public art report card" produce about any of the twenty works he addresses -- both for those he likes and those he does not? The artists who create projects through the civic program have no option but to negotiate the specifics of the selection and installation process, yet Scott's approach side-steps the variations in relations for different types of public art projects and reproduces all the standards of public art discussion. He spends the bulk of the article, through the example of Laskarin's *Working Landscape* (1998), lambasting the "shallow and largely mediocre" work

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<sup>1</sup> Installed in 1991, the Weiner piece consists of the text "PLACED UPON THE HORIZON (CASTING SHADOWS)" written in yellow cedar across the architrave of the facade.

which inevitably results from a public art process that is "swaddled by bureaucratic committee" ("Whose art" C5). By comparison, he celebrates the "art-loving" commercial dealer who "has side-stepped the entire process" and shown the city the kind of "high-priced sculpture from around the world" that they could have instead ("Whose art" C5). Scott claims that Vancouver's program does not fit trends "in the wider world" where people dispute art, and even "regularly come to blows over" its meaning, and that it pales by comparison to a city like Toronto that has an art "czarina" in Jane Perdue who "has both the zeal and the muscle to see that public art properly reflects a city's glory and diversity" ("Whose art" C5).

With the tug between the favourite designations within public and art compared to the particularities of the civic program in mind, I decided to undertake my own (non-circular) walking tour of some of the projects in Vancouver. I chose the Concord Pacific Place development in False Creek and convinced my girlfriend to accompany me so that she too could offer her response to the experience of touring the various works.<sup>2</sup> This area is one of the main products of the civic program with several projects including Bernie Miller and Alan Tregobov's *Street Light* (1997) -- the other "F" from Scott. Situated at the point where Davie, a major street through downtown, ends at the water edge, *Street Light* consists of metal scaffolding extending about forty feet into the air with metal grills suspended between the bars. Similar to the effect of newspaper images, the dots and spaces of the grills reproduce photographs of the various incarnations of the neighbourhood. Over the years, it has been the site of sawmills and floating labour camps as well as the grounds of Expo '86 which paved the way, literally, for the chic condominiums created by the multinational

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<sup>2</sup> After I completed the tour, Buster Simpson's *Brush With Illumination* was installed. Thus, I have not included discussion of this project which had run late.



development corporation. Dates and descriptions of each image are engraved into the concrete supports of their respective scaffolds as is a text listing the artists, title, and date. The images are easily visible if one looks up on approaching the work and are also meant to appear cast in shadow at its base.<sup>3</sup> Given the paucity of strong sunshine in Vancouver, this second component has been less than successful. In fact, even though we were there on a sunny evening, there was no shadow image from the grills. Thus, the connection between texts and images only works if viewers go to the trouble that we did of stepping back and forth from reading the text at the base and craning up at the panels. The young yuppie dwellers of the condominiums certainly did not stop their roller-blading along the seawall to engage in a similar activity.

From there we proceeded along the walk, dodging a Basenji, a Basset Hound, an English Springer Spaniel, several breeds of retriever and their well turned out owners, in order to find Henry Tsang's *Welcome to the land of light* (1997). This piece consists of a double line of texts that runs along the railing of the seawall. The top line is in Chinook Jargon and the bottom in oddly structured English, which suggests that it is a direct translation of the first text. For example, the first phrase reads "Greetings! Good you arrive here, where light be under land" and the second "Future it be now. Here, you begin live like new." In addition, there are three separate plaques spaced apart in the middle of the work. The first lists the title, artist name, all of the texts (with punctuation, unlike the railing) and has a border of simply drawn icons representing various forms of communication (such as a satellite, a telephone, and clasped hands). The other two can only be called didactic panels. The central one includes four photographs of various historical incarnations of the False Creek site and states,

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<sup>3</sup> The grills are designed so that each image comes into true focus once per year -- coinciding with the date of the photograph or of the event represented.

rather obviously, that *Welcome to the land of light* is "An art installation on the seawall handrail with aluminum letters and fibre optic lighting." As well, a paragraph of text provides the interpretation of the work including that "This public artwork speaks about how technology promises to bring cultures together in the new global village on this site." The third panel describes the derivation and use of Chinook Jargon as "a nineteenth century lingua franca" which is a "dialect of the Columbia River Chinook in Oregon with elements from English, French and Nootkan (Nuu-chan-nulth)." It outlines that the usage of this pidgin language covered the North West Coast and down into Northern California and developed out of the need of various First Nations and other labourers to communicate with each other and with employers. We both found it odd that a text-based public art work required three different panels to explain its meaning to would-be viewers.

At this point, we decided to brave the elegant "private property, no trespassing" signs, which adorn every opening from the condominium development onto the narrow strip of supposedly public walkway, and cut through the area to seek more of the works. We emerged in a strip of shops offering designer appliances and interior decoration services where a sign promising homemade Italian gelatto side-tracked us briefly from our goal. The last work we encountered was Barbara Steinman's *Perennials* (1997) an installation with several components including: a curved glass screen with one large leaf engraved on each panel -- this is visible to traffic and passers-by on Pacific Boulevard; a pond in the shape of a leaf and divided into the compartments of a leaf's segment, with water flowing inside each division -- its form is probably best visible from the high rise units overlooking the work; and seating arranged in sets of three in-between trees planted along the side of the pond. Each black stone seat has a single word engraved along the border of the top surface. One trio

reads "exotic, seasonal, airborne," another "wild, hybrid, cultivated," and the last "perennial, transplanted, uprooted." The absence of dust along the outer half, in unmistakable patterns, bears testament to the fact that people frequently make use of the intended purpose for the stone slabs. A metal plaque on a nearby column bears the title, artist name, and date. The column with the title plaque as well as the border of the pond bear more of the elegant "private property" signs and include the admonition of "no rollerblading or skateboarding."

The end result of the tour, and our discussion as we considered each piece and their relationship to the immediate context, is that I thoroughly disagree with Scott and others who deride civic public art programs for producing work that does not take risks, or is dull, boring and does not make one think. On the contrary, I find the whole process and the relationship of the projects to that process quite perplexing. My disagreement with such critics is not because I loved the work we saw. Miller and Tregobov's work indeed does not function as was intended and without the text panels, the multiple layers of meaning in Tsang's work is difficult to access (even for a doctoral candidate in Communications); yet with the panels, the work becomes overly fixed and pedantic. But kvetching about the form of these works is not anymore meaningful. It is too easy to dismiss them by trotting out the standard tropes on public art. As my girlfriend said, the use of the designation "circular" in the business association's walking tour is meant to convey that the trip will be comforting and familiar to undertake because you know where you will end up. I have to say that by being amongst the first artists to try out this different policy for producing work in Vancouver, and attempting to generate work that runs against the grain of the mania for corporate development in this city, these artists did indeed take risks. If critics and theorists wish to assist in creating more successful strategies for civic public projects or other public art work, then

engaging with the specifics of the relations involved in these projects would be much more meaningful and effective.

If the program is problematic, what should we have instead? Scott claims that other cities have something better. Yet, Jane Perdue, his admired art "czarina," wrote to the *Sun* to point out that the Vancouver program is actually modeled after Toronto's and is not that different in structure (C8). At one level, a position such as Scott's clearly derives from the unrealistic desire to be rid of the civic program entirely while still maintaining that the funds be spent on art. Furthermore, this view ignores the shift in truth claims between professionals and citizens. Sticking one's head in the sand and claiming that arts professionals are better than pig farming politicians when it comes to deciding about art has not been productive. Arts budgets get cut, fusses over projects continue. By looking at the civic policy as part of larger discourses in liberal rule, rather than some inexplicable love of red-tape over free expression, it is possible to begin an assessment of the possibilities of art production through these programs and, potentially, to develop a means to adapt the policy to work with the goals of those who want to see a variety of public art projects created through such programs.

At another level, the dismissal of projects produced through civic programs ignores the representational strategies arising from, and effective within, different sets of relations. Scott compares commercial sculpture, while other writers compare activist projects to the banal other of the civic program; in either case, they assume that there is one criteria for all public art projects regardless of the nexus in which they are produced and installed. It is not practical to produce a *Benchmarks* style activist project through a program which requires the addition of public art as part of major private developments. The problem with Tsang's or Miller and Tregebov's project is not simply technical or aesthetic. Is there any way that one could produce a left wing critique of the multinational development

through a public art project funded by that development and situated amongst the owners who literally buy into the same values and discourses as those who built the site and have a major say in the selection of the work? The derisive snort in response to this question by those who dismiss civic programs arises from their unquestioned agreement with the assumptions associated with Canada's "arms-length" system. Similar to Jackie Stacey's argument that film and cultural studies need to address the assumptions related to approaches within the discipline in order to develop and expand those methods, I argue that art theorists need to consider their expectations about representational strategies and political effects associated with the older form of Canadian arts funding and policy. These standards are not necessarily inappropriate, but they do need greater investigation and particularly need consideration in light of shifts in larger discourses and the creation of other funding options.

Arguing that civic programs arise from current social shifts does not mean that such funding should replace "arms-length" bodies. I hope that attention to the newer form could enable the development of strategies to support the continuation of the older form and the specificity of the Canadian funding system which supports a diversity of work. At the same time, such attention could expand the participation for arts professionals within the civic programs and therefore within the production of imagery for the somewhat public spaces of a city like Vancouver that gleefully knocks down anything that is vaguely old or not completely profitable. Steinman's *Perennials* suggests one type of strategy for working with the specifics of this program. Rather than engaging head on with the gentrifying process of development that results in the exclusionary environment of Concord Pacific Place and the supposedly public seawall, Steinman obliquely interrupts the restricted symbolism of that space. Many probably do just sit on those panels to rest, but my lover and I derived pleasure

from the clever combination of words and Steinman's inclusion of labels like "exotic" and "hybrid" alongside the ubiquitous forest green and cream "private property" signs on the columns and walk ways immediately adjacent to her work.

Steinman's words are instantly recognisable to those who work with movements for social change, even if they could more commonly be read as descriptions of seeds and plants. The work did make the space a little more inviting for us after our experience of persevering in reading every bit of text and examining every component of the previous works despite the fascination which the usual users of that section of seawall had for two dykes holding hands and encroaching on the not-quite private space (I would not be surprised if there was a rash of calls to physiotherapy offices for the neck and back injuries caused from craning while high speed rollerblading). In this way, her work addresses the exclusionary space, but not the economic and social relations which created it. However, the two pieces that do try to discuss the displaced communities, the economic history, or the notion of identity through language, are unable to compete with the process which developed the work and the powerful sets of symbolic, discursive, and practical relations in which the work is situated. This is not to point at some artists and condemn them while giving Steinman a "B" for figuring out certain stronger components. Instead, a comparison of the apparent goals and the final forms allow reconsideration for future artists who take the risk of trying to negotiate this incredibly difficult course. As much as Scott dislikes certain art projects, I dislike the condominium development and its associated creation of private public space more. Thus, I would love to see artists who do come up with effective means to address such formations and their associated discourses.

Adding to the production of these approaches should be a central goal of art theorists who wish to engage in larger movements for social change. To that

end, it is crucial to focus on the specificity of works in terms of both the representational strategies and also their nexus of relations. Laskarin speaks to this lack as does Perdue when she asserts that "On a recent trip, I learned about and visited a number of successful public art projects that were not mentioned in [Scott's] review" (C8). Perdue refers to other civic projects, but for me the most glaring absence from the selected twenty was *Marker of Change* because it is the one item that has generated unparalleled interest in the topic of public art in Vancouver. Perhaps Scott omitted the monument because it does not fit his binary comparison of showman's commercial sculpture versus drab civic project. As well, inclusion of the work would undermine his assertion that projects created by committee inherently fail to stir up a fight.

More significantly, I find the monument impossible to omit from a survey of public art in Vancouver because of the difference in attention to specific representational strategies, and in political positions, between Scott's approach and mine. *Marker of Change* does not easily fit the common designations associated with public and art and thus it demonstrates the limitations in existing analysis of the area. It is a permanent monument, chosen by committee, and approved through a civic Parks Board, and yet it is also very much connected to activist, feminist politics. The project aligns with the ideal of a work that arose from, speaks to, and represents a particular community. However, it does so through a supposedly out-moded, apolitical, and universalising form of public art. Many discussions of this terrain try to separate social activist projects from other art forms by supporting community-connected work as superior to its shallow opposite or by using the designation of community as a container for the troublesome duo of not-High Art and identity politics. Scott exemplifies the latter when he gives the perfectly backhanded compliment that Vancouver's public art program "has real vitality at the neighbourhood level - where community-based

projects coax amateurs out of their home to participate in craft-oriented works" ("Whose art" C5).

Further demonstrating problematic assumptions in analysis of public and art, *Marker of Change* exists outside of a gallery, in the space of the city, and in the space where the issues it addresses really do occur. Yet, the emphasis on the creation of a feminist form of monument, that also specifically references the murder of the fourteen women in Montreal as a pivotal moment of gendered violence, destabilizes a simple comparison with inside or outside the gallery and the associated notion of social relevance as a product of escaping the confines of the art world. In short, the political effect of this work derives from the interaction of its existence as a visual art project with the subject and focus of that work. These components cannot be separated or reduced. As a result, the project insists on the importance of cultural identity in the potential role of public projects as well as in debates about public and art.

Examination of the stakes involved for the controversy over this project in comparison to other public and art disputes functions to illuminate the assumptions associated with the designation of controversy. It was the Vancouver Women's Monument Project -- the proposal of the idea before the installation of *Marker of Change* -- which generated the dispute. Thus, for this event, the desire to produce a monument which would represent gendered cultural identity caused the argument, rather than the actual representational strategies of that work. Discussions of the debate, as the project proceeded towards installation, tried desperately to separate the stakes from the form and present the subject as the significant concern while dismissing the value of a public art form. Others take the opposite view and claim that all public and art events cause a fuss and thus this one event is not terribly meaningful. The relation between the impetus to create such a monument and the selection and



installation of *Marker of Change* disrupts both the hyberbolic deployment of controversy as measure of worth and its simplistic use to blanket all public and art events. This event did involve contentious stakes which demonstrate the pressure on notions of identity and belonging as connected to the designation public in combination with art. For other supposedly controversial events, it is clear that theorists apply the designation in the absence of similarly significant stakes or deploy the designation to argue the presence of such relations rather than developing a complex notion of politics and social change.

Other than the two press events staged by the organising committee (the unveiling and the inauguration on December 6, 1997), there has been little published attention to the work since installation. Some would say that is because a monument in a park is of no interest: people just pass the work by and do not notice it. I argue that once installed, without the obvious signs of tumult, the work becomes much more difficult to address as contentious and connected to movements for social change. Furthermore, art theorists who look at public and art projects rest on the notion of audience and community connection. How would one prove this for a work in front of a heritage building which houses a train and bus terminal and which borders an economically depressed area of town threatened by the ever approaching gentrifying forces of Concord Pacific Place? When I pass the monument on my way to and from work, I frequently see people resting on the benches or eating take out food. Observance of the habitual use of the work does not necessarily assess the meaning and effect of that project. No work would impact every person who passed it by. For many, the meaningful interaction will occur from those who already know of the project and seek it out rather than from an ideal of a chance encounter which produces a moment of revelation. For me, the feminist stakes are embedded in Beth Alber's representational strategies and the possibilities for gathering, mourning,

contemplating as well as for the use of the work as a representational image every early December.

Before I started this research and analysis, I would not have been able to assess the multiple levels of complexity which make the public art projects at Concord Pacific Place or the Vancouver Women's Monument Project so thought provoking and puzzling. I too would have become enmeshed in each event as a special moment, isolated from each other and from the myriad of public and art combinations. I might have fallen for the trap that Scott's bombastic style and lack of logic is peculiar to him and thus not particularly meaningful. I know that I would have been left unable to respond to the gap between my desire to support the goals of Tsang's or Miller and Tregebov's work and my lack of satisfaction with the result of their projects as well as with the absence of attention to *Marker of Change* now that it is installed. My sigh of relief, my happy position, is that finally I can articulate an analysis of what is at stake and what is meaningful about these works. My hope is that this ability continues for future projects and events. More so, I wish for my existing and future discussion to add to the strategies of artists and theorists who take these kind of risks.

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## APPENDIX A

**Appendix A1: Canadian art theory**

Average Good Looks. "Taking Voice." *Questions of Community: Artists, Audiences, Coalitions*. Eds. Augaitis, Daina, Lorne Falk, Sylvie Gilbert, and Mary Anne Moser. Banff, Alberta: Walter Philips Gallery, 1995. 151-162.

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## **Appendix D2: Event -- Cent jours d'art contemporain 1991**

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## APPENDIX E

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Cruikshank, John. "Newman: a canvas of strong opinions." Appendix D1.

Dafoe, Chris. "Going public, Vancouver style." Appendix C1.

Dostie, Bruno. "Les «Cent Jours» retrouvent leurs atouts et Claude Gosselin joue la carte de l'Art dans l'espace public ...." Appendix D2.

Duncan, Ann. "Public Works." Appendix D2.

Dumont, Jean. "CIAC: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.

Dumont, Jean. "Jour un des Cent Jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.

Lehman, Henry. "Art and architecture make uneasy allies." Appendix C1.

des Rivières, Paul. "L'événement de la semaine: Les Cent jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.

Taylor, Kate. "When the whole is less than the sum of its art." Appendix D2.

Walker, Susan. "One percent solution sparks boom in 'public' art." Appendix C1.

Wood, Alan. "Artropolis 93 is up on the issues." Appendix D3.

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Allen, Jerry. "Introduction." Appendix B2.

Becker, Jack. "Foreward." Appendix B2.

Brent Ingram, Gordon. "Public Art and Its Discontents." Appendix B1.

Cembalest, Robin. "Public Sculpture: Race, Sex, and Politics." Appendix B2.

Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.

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Gamble, Allison. "Reframing a movement, *Sculpture Chicago's 'Culture in Action.'*" Appendix B2.

Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.

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Lacy, Suzanne. "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys." Appendix A2.

Lamoureux, Johanne. "Questioning the Public: Addressing the Response." Appendix A1.

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### **Appendix E2: Funding**

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### **News**

Aquin, Stéphane. "La fierté à un cube." Appendix C2.

Abley, Mark. "It's too soon to sneer." Appendix C2.

Baillargeon, Stéphane. "Les Cent jours d'art contemporain, prise neuf." Appendix D2.

Bentley Mays, John. "Me and my museum." Appendix C6.

Bentley Mays, John. "National Gallery should tune out static over painting." Appendix D1.

Conlogue, Ray. "Gallery denies political meddling killed FLQ crisis exhibit." Appendix C6.

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- Duncan, Ann. "Underground art: Original works replace ads at Peel Métro." Appendix C1.
- Dumont, Jean. "CIAC: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.
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- Gauthier, Gilles. "Le monument destiné à commémorer les Fêtes du 350e anniversaire de Montréal sera installé place Jacques-Cartier." Appendix C2.
- Hume, Christopher. "The Arts meets the 'cut it' culture." Appendix C6.
- Hume, Christopher. "Why AGO can't afford cultural nationalism." Appendix C6.
- Hume, Christopher. "The politics of public art." Appendix C1.
- Kappler, Brian. "'Meaningless' perspective." Appendix C2.
- Lamey, Mary. "Museums that make it." Appendix C6.
- Lee, Jeff. "Park board approves monument honoring women killed by men." Appendix C3.
- Lehman, Henry. "Art and architecture make uneasy allies." Appendix C1.
- Lehman, Henry. "If public art is the measure of a society's greatness, what does Montreal's new art suggest about our city." Appendix C1.
- Morton, Brian. "Murdered woman monument 'tasteless cause,' MP argues." Appendix C3.
- Portman, Jamie. "We may not know much about art ... and it shows." Appendix D1.
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- des Rivières, Paule. "L'événement de la semaine: Les Cent jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.
- Rosenberg, Ann. "Plop art." Appendix C1.

Scott, Michael. "Critical art under assault." Appendix C1.

Stewart, Edison. "Gallery visitors divided on merits of costly 'box.'" Appendix D1.

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Taylor, Kate. "When the whole is less than the sum of its art." Appendix D2.

Taylor, Kate. "Debate over sculpture fails to address the meat of the matter."  
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Walker, Susan. "One percent solution sparks boom in 'public' art." Appendix C1.

Ward, Doug. "Circled benches selected for women's monument." Appendix C3.

Wood, Alan. "Artropolis 93 is up on the issues." Appendix D3.

York, Geoffrey. "MPs steer support toward 'flesh dress.'" Appendix D1.

Young, Kathryn. "Artist defends meat dress." Appendix D1.

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Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

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Lacy, Suzanne. "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys." Appendix A2.

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### **News**

Aquin, Stéphane. "La fierté à un cube." Appendix C2.

Baele, Nancy. "100 days of contemporary art." Appendix D2.

Baele, Nancy. "Urban art guerrillas: Gallery setting drains blood from street culture works." Appendix C4.

Berton, Pierre. "The Archer & The Rock: What have we learned?" Appendix C1.

Dafoe, Chris, Kate Fillion, and Canadian Press. "A gender gap cast in stone." Appendix C1.

Dafoe, Chris. "Going public, Vancouver style." Appendix C1.

Dostie, Bruno. "Les «Cent Jours» retrouvent leurs atouts et Claude Gosselin joue la carte de l'Art dans l'espace public ...." Appendix D2.

Duncan, Ann. "Public Works." Appendix D2.

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Dumont, Jean. "Jour un des Cent Jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.

Hume, Christopher. "The politics of public art." Appendix C1.

Lamey, Mary. "Museums that make it." Appendix C6.

Lehman, Henry. "If public art is the measure of a society's greatness, what does Montreal's new art suggest about our city." Appendix C1.

Lehman, Henry. "On view: all the city's an art gallery." Appendix C1.

McLellan, Wendy. "Public art planner wants images to reflect city's changing character." Appendix C1.

Pinard, Guy. "Le métro, c'est aussi une immense galerie d'art." Appendix C1.

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Rosenberg, Ann. "Plop art." Appendix C1.

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Chandler, John. "Public Art and Transportation *Highways to Society*." Appendix B2.

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Durant, Mark Alice. "Activist Art in the Shadow of Rebellion." Appendix B2.

Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.

Gray, Kate. "Public Installations, Interventions and Performances." Appendix B1.

Hixson, Kathryn. "Gilbert Boyer." Appendix D2.

Ingram, Gordon Brent. "Public Art and Its Discontents." Appendix B1.

Kastner, Jeffrey. "Editor's Note." Appendix B2.

Lorente, Pedro. "The city's beating art." Appendix B3.

MacDonald, Marie-Paul. "The New Urban Landscape." Appendix B1.

Miles, Malcolm. "Opinion: Public Art - Gallery Art by Another Name?" Appendix B3.

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Crimp, Douglas. *On the Museum's Ruins*. Appendix A4.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Alternative Space." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* and the Site of Urban 'Revitalization.'" Appendix A2.

Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

Jones, Seitu. "Public Art That Inspires: Public Art That Informs." Appendix A2.

Lamouroux, Johanne. "The Museum Flat." Appendix A4.

Lewis, Mark. "Public Interest." Appendix A1.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Public Constructions." Appendix A2.

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Rice, Danielle. "The 'Rocky' Dilemma: Museums, Monuments, and Popular Culture in the Postmodern Era." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception." Appendix A2.

Shaw, Nancy and Lisa Robertson. "A Sunday Drive." Appendix A1.

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#### **Appendix E4: Permanent compared to temporary public art**

##### **News**

Dafoe, Chris. "Going public, Vancouver style." Appendix C1.

Dafoe, Chris. "Art breathes life into abandoned store." Appendix D3.

Laurence, Robin. "Ephemeral works form passing public fancy." Appendix C1.

Lehman, Henry. "If public art is the measure of a society's greatness, what does Montreal's new art suggest about our city." Appendix C1.

McLellan, Wendy. "Public art planner wants images to reflect city's changing character." Appendix C1.

Rosenberg, Ann. "Jarvis's crackling canvases, bold banners." Appendix C4.

Rosenberg, Ann. "Plop art." Appendix C1.

Wilson, Peter. "Artists booked for Library competition." Appendix C1.

Wilson, Peter. "Putting art in its place." Appendix D3.

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Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

### **Other**

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## **Appendix E5: Audience**

### **News**

Baillargeon, Stéphane. "Les Cent jours d'art contemporain, prise neuf." Appendix D2.

Bentley Mays, John. "Me and my museum." Appendix C6.

Bentley Mays, John. "Art you can touch, sit on and even drink." Appendix C4.

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Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

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### **Other**

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### **Appendix E6: Controversy**

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Aquin, Stéphane. "La fierté à un cube." Appendix C2.

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Bentley Mays, John. "Me and my museum." Appendix C6.

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Couillard de Lespinay, Denis. "Montréal au cube." Appendix C2.

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Dafoe, Chris. "Misreading the meaning of a monument." Appendix C3.

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Kappler, Brian. "'Meaningless' perspective." Appendix C2.

Lehman, Henry. "Controversial sculpture is actually a bore." Appendix C2.

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Sheehan, Al. "Monument to slain women okayed." Appendix C3.

Ward, Doug. "Circled benches selected for women's monument." Appendix C3.

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- Cronin, Ray. "Temporary Public Art in Windsor." Appendix B1.
- Durant, Mark Alice. "Activist Art in the Shadow of Rebellion." Appendix B2.
- Gamble, Allison. "Reframing a movement: *Sculpture Chicago's 'Culture in Action.'*" Appendix B2.
- Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.
- Gustafson, Paula. "The Women's Monument Project." Appendix B1.
- Hochfield, Sylvia. "The Moral Rights (and Wrongs) of Public Art." Appendix B2.
- Labossière, Robert. "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding." Appendix B1.
- Larson, Jacqueline. "Taking it to the streets . . . ." Appendix D4.
- Lewis, Mark. "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline." Appendix B4.
- Mills, Josephine. "Beth Alber." Appendix C3.
- Paradissis, Athena. "100 Days of contemporary art in Montreal." Appendix D2.
- Robertson, Lisa. "Benched Art: Negotiating the Rhetorics of Taste." Appendix D4.

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- Bal, Mieke. "The Discourse of the Museum." Appendix A4.
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- Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.
- Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis.*" Appendix A2.
- Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne. "Introduction." *Thinking About Exhibitions.* Appendix A4.
- Lamoureux, Johanne. "Questioning the Public: Addressing the Response." Appendix A1.

Maksymowicz, Virginia. "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Appendix A2.

Mitchell, W.J.T. "Introduction: Utopia and Critique." Appendix A2.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

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Senie, Harriet F. "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

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### **News**

Abley, Mark. "It's too soon to sneer." Appendix C2.

Bentley Mays, John. "Beefs about 'flesh dress' must not fall on deaf ears." Appendix D1.

Coyne, Andrew. "The audience as partners." Appendix C7.

"Dress made from raw beef leaves opponents stewing." Appendix D1.

Duncan, Ann. "Rothko bashers aren't playing fair." Appendix D1.

Hume, Christopher. "Facing up to the funding crunch." Appendix C7.

Kappler, Brian. "'Meaningless' perspective." Appendix C2.

Lehman, Henry. "On view: all the city's an art gallery." Appendix C1.

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Wright, Lynne. "Beauty in the eye of the beholder - or the elite?" Appendix D1.

York, Geoffrey. "MPs steer support toward 'flesh dress.'" Appendix D1.

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Killacky, John, R. "On Cultural Citizenship." Appendix B2.

Walker, Hamza. "Public domain - Frank Stella." Appendix B2.

### **Appendix E8: Monument**

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### **News**

Bentley Mays, John. "In the spring, this man's fancy turns to public art." Appendix C1.

Dafoe, Chris, Kate Fillion, and Canadian Press. "A gender gap cast in stone." Appendix C1.

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Laurence, Robin. "Ephemeral works form passing public fancy." Appendix C1.

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Baird, George. "Praxis and Representation." Appendix A1.

Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.

Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

Jones, Seitu. "Public Art That Inspires: Public Art That Informs." Appendix A2.

Lewis, Mark. "Public Interest." Appendix A1.

Mitchell, W.J.T. "Introduction: Utopia and Critique." Appendix A2.

Raven, Arlene. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

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Baele, Nancy. "Urban art guerrillas: Gallery setting drains blood from street culture works." Appendix C4.

Cloutier, Gérard. "Le «cube»: oui, mais ailleurs!" Appendix C2.

Duncan, Ann. "Public Works." Appendix D2.

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Dumont, Jean. "Jour un des Cent Jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.

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Milroy, Sarah. "Exhibition explores spectacles of place." Appendix C4.

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Taylor, Kate. "A flawed, frustrating, but fascinating retrospective." Appendix C4.

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Wickersham, Claire. "Percent-for-Art: Variations on a theme." Appendix B2.

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## **Appendix E10: Public sphere**

### **News**

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Drainie, Bronwyn. "An artistic guerrilla strikes at night and John Q. Public loves it." Appendix C1.

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Bentley Mays, John. "Rothko buy a good portent of things to come at NGC." Appendix D1.

Bentley Mays, John. "Fashioning moral messages from cultural indignities." Appendix D1.

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- Lee, Jeff. "Park board approves monument honoring women killed by men."  
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- McLellan, Wendy. "Public art planner wants images to reflect city's changing character." Appendix C1.
- Mills, Josephine. "*Shifting Boundaries*: Public art meets public transit." Appendix C1.
- "Monument issue stirs up debate." Appendix C3.
- Morton, Brian. "Murdered woman monument 'tasteless cause,' MP argues."  
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- Prokash, Kevin. "Canadians eye endowments." Appendix C7.
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Young, Kathryn. "Artist defends meat dress." Appendix D1.

"\$200,000 expenditure for AIDS art riles MP." Appendix C7.

### **Art Magazines**

Allen, Jerry. "Introduction." Appendix B2.

Berger, Maurice. "Too Shocking to Show?" Appendix B2.

Carrington, Lucie. "Power to the people." Appendix B3.

Cembalest, Robin. "Public Sculpture: Race, Sex, and Politics." Appendix B2.

Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.

Durant, Mark Alice. "Activist Art in the Shadow of Rebellion." Appendix B2.

Gablik, Suzi. "Removing the frame: An interview with 'Culture in Action' Curator Mary Jane Jacob." Appendix B2.

Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.

Hixson, Kathryn. "Gilbert Boyer." Appendix D2.

Hochfield, Sylvia. "The Moral Rights (and Wrongs) of Public Art." Appendix B2.

Ingram, Gordon Brent. "Public Art and Its Discontents." Appendix B1.

Kastner, Jeffrey. "Editor's Note." Appendix B2.

Labossière, Robert. "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding." Appendix B1.

Lamoureux, Johanne. "La Statistique candienne: A State Ethics." Appendix B1.

MacDonald, Marie-Paul. "The New Urban Landscape." Appendix B1.

Seaman, Patricia. "Women on Site." Appendix B1.

### **Theory**

Average Good Looks. "Taking Voice." Appendix A1.

Baerwaldt, Wayne. "Situating Art Within Existing Cultural Events." Appendix A1.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Defining National Values: American Monuments, Murals, and Memorials." Appendix A2.

Tsang, Henry. "Inside, Outside, Upside Down: In Search of Cultural Space with the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver." Appendix A1.

### **Other**

A. T. Eight Artropolis Society. *Artropolis 93: Public Art and Art About Public Issues*. Appendix D3.

## **Appendix E12: Process**

All of Appendix D5 (event -- Vancouver Public Art Program).

### **News**

Baele, Nancy. "100 days of contemporary art." Appendix D2.

Bentley Mays, John. "In the spring, this man's fancy turns to public art." Appendix C1.

Bentley Mays, John. "Rothko buy a good portent of things to come at NGC." Appendix D1.

Dafoe, Chris. "Going public, Vancouver style." Appendix C1.

Hume, Christopher. "The politics of public art." Appendix C1.

Lee, Jeff. "Park board approves monument honoring women killed by men." Appendix C3.

McInnes, Craig. "Art experts judged not expert enough." Appendix C1.

"Monument issue stirs up debate." Appendix C3.

Morton, Brian. "Murdered woman monument 'tasteless cause,' MP argues."  
Appendix C3.

Rosenberg, Ann. "Plop art." Appendix C1.

Scott, Michael. "Whose art is this?" Appendix C1.

Sheehan, Al. "Monument to slain women okayed." Appendix C3.

Taylor, Kate. "The perils of public art." Appendix C1.

Ward, Doug. "Circled benches selected for women's monument." Appendix C3.

Wilson, Peter. "Putting art in its place." Appendix D3.

### **Art Magazines**

Chandler, John. "Public Art and Transportation *Highways to Society*." Appendix B2.

Hochfield, Sylvia. "The Moral Rights (and Wrongs) of Public Art." Appendix B2.

Lewis, Mark, Janine Marchessault, Andrew Payne. "Public Imaginary: for the public access collective." Appendix B4.

Wetenhall, John. "A Brief History of Percent-for-Art in America." Appendix B2.

Wickersham, Claire. "Percent-for-Art: Variations on a theme." Appendix B2.

"Unsponsored: Independent Public Artists." Appendix B2.

### **Theory**

Average Good Looks. "Taking Voice." Appendix A1.

Baird, George. "Praxis and Representation." Appendix A1.

Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: history, theory, politics*. Appendix A4.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Alternative Space." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City."  
Appendix A2.

Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.

Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

Jacob, Mary Jane. "An Unfashionable Audience." Appendix A2.

Lippard, Lucy, R. "Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

### **Other**

CIAC - Centre International d'Art Contemporain de Montréal. "Un thème général: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.

### **Appendix E13: In/out gallery**

All of Appendix C4 (news -- art projects in and located both inside and outside galleries).

All of Appendix C5 (art project both in and outside gallery -- *Lost Illusions*).

### **News**

Baele, Nancy. "100 days of contemporary art." Appendix D2.

Bentley Mays, John. "National Gallery should tune out static over painting." Appendix D1.

Conlogue, Ray. "Out of hushed halls, sculpture easier to embrace." Appendix C1.

Dafoe, Chris. "Art breathes life into abandoned store." Appendix D3.

Drainie, Bronwyn. "An artistic guerrilla strikes at night and John Q. Public loves it." Appendix C1.



Duncan, Ann. "Variety and a bargain: Downtown shows have something for everyone and they're free." Appendix C6.

Duncan, Ann. "Readers rate Montreal's public art and choose the good, the bad and the ugly." Appendix C1.

Duncan, Ann. "Public Works." Appendix D2.

Duncan, Ann. "Underground art: Original works replace ads at Peel Métro." Appendix C1.

Dumont, Jean. "CIAC: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.

Dumont, Jean. "Jour un des Cent Jours d'art contemporain." Appendix D2.

Gustafson, Paula. "Local Street Art Expresses Community Creativity." Appendix D4.

Laurence, Robin. "Ephemeral works form passing public fancy." Appendix C1.

Lepage, Jocelyne. "L'art du promeneur solitaire, là-haut sur la montagne ...." Appendix D2.

Lepage, Jocelyne. "De plus en plus un musée, mais toujours un événement." Appendix D2.

McLellan, Wendy. "Public art planner wants images to reflect city's changing character." Appendix C1.

des Rivières, Paule. "Claude Gosselin: Le magicien des Cent Jours." Appendix D2.

Taylor, Kate. "When the whole is less than the sum of its art." Appendix D2.

Walker, Susan. "One percent solution sparks boom in 'public' art." Appendix C1.

Wilson, Peter. "Putting art in its place." Appendix D3.

### **Art Magazines**

"Artist reaches masses through underground gallery." Appendix B2.

Baird, George. "Being Out in Public: Questions of Praxis and Representation." Appendix B4.

- Becker, Jack. "Here & Gone: Temporary Public Art." Appendix B2.
- Berger, Maurice. "Too Shocking to Show?" Appendix B2.
- Carrington, Lucie. "Power to the people." Appendix B3.
- Cembalest, Robin. "Public Sculpture: Race, Sex, and Politics." Appendix B2.
- Cronin, Ray. "Temporary Public Art in Windsor." Appendix B1.
- Cummins, Louis. "La dialectique site/non-site: une utopie cartographique." Appendix B1.
- Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.
- Gablik, Suzi. "Removing the frame: An interview with 'Culture in Action' Curator Mary Jane Jacob." Appendix B2.
- Gamble, Allison. "Reframing a movement: *Sculpture Chicago's 'Culture in Action.'*" Appendix B2.
- Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.
- Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.
- Guenther, Len. "Mark Lewis." Appendix B1.
- Kastner, Jeffrey. "Editor's Note." Appendix B2.
- Labossière, Robert. "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding." Appendix B1.
- Larson, Jacqueline. "Taking it to the streets . . . ." Appendix D4.
- Lewis, Mark. "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline." Appendix B4.
- Lewis, Mark, Janine Marchessault, Andrew Payne. "Public Imaginary: for the public access collective." Appendix B4.
- Miles, Malcolm. "Opinion: Public Art - Gallery Art by Another Name?" Appendix B3.
- Paradissis, Athena. "100 Days of contemporary art in Montreal." Appendix D2.
- Robertson, Lisa. "Benched Art: Negotiating the Rhetorics of Taste." Appendix D4.

Walker, Hamza. "Public domain - Frank Stella." Appendix B2.

Wetenhall, John. "A Brief History of Percent-for-Art in America." Appendix B2.

Wickersham, Claire. "Percent-for-Art: Variations on a theme." Appendix B2.

"Unsponsored: Independent Public Artists." Appendix B2.

### **Theory**

Average Good Looks. "Taking Voice." Appendix A1.

Baca, Judith F. "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society." Appendix A2.

Baerwaldt, Wayne. "Situating Art Within Existing Cultural Events." Appendix A1.

Couldry, Nick. "Speaking Up in a Public Space: The Strange Case of Rachel Whiteread's *House*." Appendix A3.

Crichton, E. G. "Is the NAMES Quilt Art?" Appendix A2.

Crimp, Douglas. "Strategies of Public Address: Which Media, Which Publics?" Appendix A2.

Crimp, Douglas. *On the Museum's Ruins*. Appendix A4.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Alternative Space." Appendix A2.

Dowler, Kevin. "In Defense of the Realm: Public Controversy and the Apologetics of Art." Appendix D1.

Fraser, Andrea. "In and Out of Place." Appendix A4.

Jacob, Mary Jane. "An Unfashionable Audience." Appendix A2.

Jones, Seitu. "Public Art That Inspires: Public Art That Informs." Appendix A2.

Lacy, Suzanne. "Debated Territory; Toward a Critical Language for Public Art." Appendix A2.

Lacy, Suzanne. "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys." Appendix A2.

Lamouruex, Johanne. "The Museum Flat." Appendix A4.

Lewis, Mark. "Public Interest." Appendix A1.

Lippard, Lucy, R. "Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be." Appendix A2.

Maksymowicz, Virginia. "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Appendix A2.

Mitchell, W.J.T. "An Interview with Barbara Kruger." Appendix A2.

Nairne, Sandy. "The Institutionalization of Dissent." Appendix A4.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

Raven, Arlene. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Rice, Danielle. "The 'Rocky' Dilemma: Museums, Monuments, and Popular Culture in the Postmodern Era." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception." Appendix A2.

Tsang, Henry. "Inside, Outside, Upside Down: In Search of Cultural Space with the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver." Appendix A1.

### **Other**

A. T. Eight Artropolis Society. *Artropolis 93: Public Art and Art About Public Issues*. Appendix D3.

CIAC - Centre International d'Art Contemporain de Montréal. Press Release. Montreal: 1 août 1991. Appendix D2.

## **Appendix E14: Community**

### **News**

Bentley Mays, John. "In the spring, this man's fancy turns to public art." Appendix C1.

Drainie, Bronwyn. "Art lessons from our American cousins." Appendix C7.

Carrier, Roch. "What price culture?" Appendix C7.

Collins, Anne. "Cultural funding is about more than money." Appendix C7.

Coyne, Andrew. "The audience as partners." Appendix C7.

Dafoe, Chris. "Art breathes life into abandoned store." Appendix D3.

Drainie, Bronwyn. "Minorities and cultural intimidation." Appendix C6.

Dumont, Jean. "CIAC: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.

Fulford, Robert. "Legacy of a museum busybody." Appendix C6.

Godfrey, Stephen. "Can this voice put out the fire?" Appendix D1.

Gustafson, Paula. "Local Street Art Expresses Community Creativity." Appendix D4.

Milroy, Sarah. "Exhibition explores spectacles of place." Appendix C4.

Prokash, Kevin. "Canadians eye endowments." Appendix C7.

Scott, Michael. "Whose art is this?" Appendix C1.

Taylor, Kate. "Putting the multi into the cultural." Appendix C6.

### **Art Magazines**

Artsave (a project of people for the American way). "The Public Art Controversy." Appendix B2.

Berger, Maurice. "Too Shocking to Show?" Appendix B2.

Carrington, Lucie. "Power to the people." Appendix B3.

Cronin, Ray. "Temporary Public Art in Windsor." Appendix B1.

Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.

Gablik, Suzi. "Removing the frame: An interview with 'Culture in Action' Curator Mary Jane Jacob." Appendix B2.

Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.

Gray, Kate. "Public Installations, Interventions and Performances." Appendix B1.

Hochfield, Sylvia. "The Moral Rights (and Wrongs) of Public Art." Appendix B2.

Labossière, Robert. "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding." Appendix B1.

Lageira, Jacinto. "Dan Graham: le miroir de la cité." Appendix B1.

Lewis, Mark. "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline." Appendix B4.

Lewis, Mark, Janine Marchessault, Andrew Payne. "Public Imaginary: for the public access collective." Appendix B4.

Miles, Malcolm. "Opinion: Public Art - Gallery Art by Another Name?" Appendix B3.

Walley, John. "Art , Architecture & Engineering." Appendix B2.

Wetenhall, John. "A Brief History of Percent-for-Art in America." Appendix B2.

Wickersham, Claire. "Percent-for-Art: Variations on a theme." Appendix B2.

"Un-sponsored: Independent Public Artists." Appendix B2.

### **Theory**

Baca, Judith F. "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society." Appendix A2.

Couldry, Nick. "Speaking Up in a Public Space: The Strange Case of Rachel Whiteread's *House*." Appendix A3.

Crimp, Douglas. *On the Museum's Ruins*. Appendix A4.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City." Appendix A2.

Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.

Jacob, Mary Jane. "An Unfashionable Audience." Appendix A2.

Jones, Seitu. "Public Art That Inspires: Public Art That Informs." Appendix A2.

Karp, Ivan. "Introduction: Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture." Appendix A4.

Lippard, Lucy, R. "Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be." Appendix A2.

Maksymowicz, Virginia. "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Appendix A2.

Moser, Mary Anne. "Introduction." Appendix A1.

Nairne, Sandy. "The Institutionalization of Dissent." Appendix A4.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Public Constructions." Appendix A2.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

Raven, Arlene. "Word of Honor." Appendix A2..

Raven, Arlene. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Tsang, Henry. "Inside, Outside, Upside Down: In Search of Cultural Space with the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver." Appendix A1.

### **Other**

A. T. Eight Artropolis Society. *Artropolis 93: Public Art and Art About Public Issues*. Appendix D3.

## **Appendix E15: Transit or advertising space**

All of Appendix D4 (Event -- *Benchmarks*)

### **News**

Cunningham, Dave. "Art for politics' sake: Vancouver gallery exhibition comes under fire for being heavy-handed propaganda." Appendix C5.

Dault, Gary Michael. "Byrne's billboards want it both ways." Appendix C4.

Duncan, Ann. "Underground art: Original works replace ads at Peel Métro." Appendix C1.

Hume, Christopher. "The Arts meets the 'cut it' culture." Appendix C6.

"L'art dans le métro." Appendix C1.

Mills, Josephine. "*Shifting Boundaries*: Public art meets public transit." Appendix C1.

Pinard, Guy. "Le métro, c'est aussi une immense galerie d'art." Appendix C1.

"Une exposition consacrée à l'art dans les métros." Appendix C1.

### **Art Magazines**

"Artist reaches masses through underground gallery." Appendix B2.

Berger, Maurice. "Too Shocking to Show?" Appendix B2.

Cronin, Ray. "Temporary Public Art in Windsor." Appendix B1.

Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.

Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.

McDonnell, Sara. "Art Policy for LA Metro." Appendix B2.

McDonnell, Sara. "CALTRAIN Runs With Art." Appendix B2.

Miles, Malcolm. "Opinion: Public Art - Gallery Art by Another Name?" Appendix B3.



## **Theory**

Average Good Looks. "Taking Voice." Appendix A1.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art." Appendix A2.

## **Other**

A. T. Eight Artropolis Society. *Artropolis 93: Public Art and Art About Public Issues*. Appendix D3.

## **Appendix E16: Modernism**

### **News**

Bentley Mays, John. "Lost Illusions an expression of barren confusions." Appendix C5.

Bentley Mays, John. "Fashioning moral messages from cultural indignities." Appendix D1.

Bentley Mays, John. "Beefs about 'flesh dress' must not fall on deaf ears." Appendix D1.

Bentley Mays, John. "National Gallery should tune out static over painting." Appendix D1.

Berton, Pierre. "The Archer & The Rock: What have we learned?" Appendix C1.

Bordo, Jonathan. "Yo, Canada! It's Rothko calling!" Appendix D1.

Drainie, Bronwyn. "Voice of Fire's elitist message sure to make Canadians burn." Appendix D1.

"Dress made from raw beef leaves opponents stewing." Appendix D1.

Duncan, Ann. "Rothko bashers aren't playing fair." Appendix D1.

Dumont, Jean. "CIAC: Art et espace public." Appendix D2.

Godfrey, Stephen. "Can this voice put out the fire?" Appendix D1.

Portman, Jamie. "We may not know much about art ... and it shows." Appendix D1.

Prokash, Kevin. "Canadians eye endowments." Appendix C7.

Quattrin, Linda. "No. 16 is no bowl of fruit." Appendix D1.

Taylor, Kate. "When the whole is less than the sum of its art." Appendix D2.

Taylor, Kate. "Debate over sculpture fails to address the meat of the matter." Appendix D1.

Wood, Alan. "Artropolis 93 is up on the issues." Appendix D3.

Wright, Lynne. "Beauty in the eye of the beholder - or the elite?" Appendix D1.

Young, Kathryn. "Artist defends meat dress." Appendix D1.

### **Art Magazines**

Gablik, Suzi. "Removing the frame: An interview with 'Culture in Action' Curator Mary Jane Jacob." Appendix B2.

Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.

Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.

Gray, Kate. "Public Installations, Interventions and Performances." Appendix B1.

Labossière, Robert. "A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding." Appendix B1.

Lageira, Jacinto. "Dan Graham: le miroir de la cité." Appendix B1.

Lewis, Mark. "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline." Appendix B4.

Lewis, Mark, Janine Marchessault, Andrew Payne. "Public Imaginary: for the public access collective." Appendix B4.

Walker, Hamza. "Public domain - Frank Stella." Appendix B2.

Wetenhall, John. "A Brief History of Percent-for-Art in America." Appendix B2.

Wickersham, Claire. "Percent-for-Art: Variations on a theme." Appendix B2.

"Unsponsored: Independent Public Artists." Appendix B2.

## Theory

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Couldry, Nick. "Speaking Up in a Public Space: The Strange Case of Rachel Whiteread's *House*." Appendix A3.

Crichton, E. G. "Is the NAMES Quilt Art?" Appendix A2.

Crimp, Douglas. *On the Museum's Ruins*. Appendix A4.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Alternative Space." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City." Appendix A2.

Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.

Dowler, Kevin. "In Defense of the Realm: Public Controversy and the Apologetics of Art." Appendix D1.

Fraser, Andrea. "In and Out of Place." Appendix A4.

Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

Jacob, Mary Jane. "An Unfashionable Audience." Appendix A2.

Lacy, Suzanne. "Debated Territory; Toward a Critical Language for Public Art." Appendix A2.

Lacy, Suzanne. "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys." Appendix A2.

Lamouruex, Johanne. "The Museum Flat." Appendix A4.

Lamoureux, Johanne. "Questioning the Public: Addressing the Response." Appendix A1.

Lewis, Mark. "Public Interest." Appendix A1.

Lippard, Lucy, R. "Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be." Appendix A2.

Maksymowicz, Virginia. "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Appendix A2.

O'Brian, John. "Introduction: Bruising the Public Eye." Appendix A1.

Owens, Craig. "The Birth and Death of the Viewer: On the Public Function of Art." Appendix A2.

Shaw, Nancy and Lisa Robertson. "A Sunday Drive." Appendix A1.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Public Constructions." Appendix A2.

Raven, Arlene. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Rice, Danielle. "The 'Rocky' Dilemma: Museums, Monuments, and Popular Culture in the Postmodern Era." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Tsang, Henry. "Inside, Outside, Upside Down: In Search of Cultural Space with the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver." Appendix A1.

## **Appendix E17: Political**

All of Appendix C5 (art project both in and outside gallery -- *Lost Illusions*).

### **News**

Alison Appelbe. "Activist artists find a new canvas." Appendix D4.

Bentley Mays, John. "Beefs about 'flesh dress' must not fall on deaf ears." Appendix D1.

Gustafson, Paula. "Local Street Art Expresses Community Creativity." Appendix D4.

Wood, Alan. "Artropolis 93 is up on the issues." Appendix D3.

### **Art Magazines**

Berger, Maurice. "Too Shocking to Show?" Appendix B2.

Cembalest, Robin. "Public Sculpture: Race, Sex, and Politics." Appendix B2.

- Cronin, Ray. "Temporary Public Art in Windsor." Appendix B1.
- Drobnick, Jim. "Contesting Urban Spaces." Appendix B1.
- Durant, Mark Alice. "Activist Art in the Shadow of Rebellion." Appendix B2.
- Gamble, Allison. "Reframing a movement: *Sculpture Chicago's 'Culture in Action.'*" Appendix B2.
- Glassman, Marc. "Some Uncertain Signs." Appendix B4.
- Grand, John K. "Which Public? Whose Art?" Appendix B1.
- Gray, Kate. "Public Installations, Interventions and Performances." Appendix B1.
- Hochfield, Sylvia. "The Moral Rights (and Wrongs) of Public Art." Appendix B2.
- Ingram, Gordon Brent. "Public Art and Its Discontents." Appendix B1.
- Lageira, Jacinto. "Dan Graham: le miroir de la cité." Appendix B1.
- Larson, Jacqueline. "Taking it to the streets . . . ." Appendix D4.
- Lewis, Mark. "Some Notes on Public Art: Authority and Decline." Appendix B4.
- Lewis, Mark, Janine Marchessault, Andrew Payne. "Public Imaginary: for the public access collective." Appendix B4.
- Robertson, Lisa. "Benched Art: Negotiating the Rhetorics of Taste." Appendix D4.

### **Theory**

- Baca, Judith F. "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society." Appendix A2.
- Baerwaldt, Wayne. "Situating Art Within Existing Cultural Events." Appendix A1.
- Baird, George. "Praxis and Representation." Appendix A1.
- Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: history, theory, politics.* Appendix A4.
- Crichton, E. G. "Is the NAMES Quilt Art?" Appendix A2.

Crimp, Douglas. "Strategies of Public Address: Which Media, Which Publics?" Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Alternative Space." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City." Appendix A2.

Deutsche, Rosalyn. "Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* and the Site of Urban 'Revitalization.'" Appendix A2.

Disponzio, Joseph. "George Segal's Sculpture on a Theme of Gay Liberation and the Sexual-Political Equivocation of Public Consciousness." Appendix A2.

Duncan, Carol. "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship." Appendix A4.

Graves, Donna. "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*." Appendix A2.

Jacob, Mary Jane. "An Unfashionable Audience." Appendix A2.

Karp, Ivan. "Introduction: Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture." Appendix A4.

Lacy, Suzanne. "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys." Appendix A2.

Lippard, Lucy, R. "Looking Around: Where We Are, Where We Could Be." Appendix A2.

Maksymowicz, Virginia. "Through the Back Door: Alternative Approaches to Public Art." Appendix A2.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Public Constructions." Appendix A2.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Temporality and Public Art." Appendix A2.

Raven, Arlene. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Rosler, Martha. "Fragments of a Metropolitan Viewpoint." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Introduction." Appendix A2.

Senie, Harriet F. and Sally Webster. "Politics, Patronage, and Public Art."  
Appendix A2.

**Other**

A. T. Eight Artropolis Society. *Artropolis 93: Public Art and Art About Public  
Issues*. Appendix D3.